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'It is merely crossing [...] the distance is quite imaginary'

**Textual cultures of settler emigration in nineteenth-century british literature and art**

Shaikh, Fariha Najwa

*Awarding institution:*  
King's College London

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**‘IT IS MERELY CROSSING [...]**  
**THE DISTANCE IS QUITE IMAGINARY’:**  
**TEXTUAL CULTURES OF SETTLER EMIGRATION IN**  
**NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE AND ART**

by

Fariha Najwa Shaikh

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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Department of English Literature

2014

*In memory of my maternal grandfather*

*Mohammad Akram Ali*

*I hope news of this reaches you*



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## ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century hundreds of thousands of men, women and children moved away from Britain in search of better lives in the colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand and in North America. This demographic shift was also a textual enterprise. Emigrants themselves wrote about their experiences in their diaries and letters. Their accounts were published in periodicals, memoirs and travel accounts, pamphlets and leaflets. This thesis interrogates the intersections between nineteenth-century colonial emigration and its textual encounters. Settler emigration produced a monumental shift in the way in which ordinary, everyday people in the nineteenth century, regardless of whether or not they emigrated, thought about the ability of text to negotiate the geographical distance separating Britain from her colonies. The literature of emigration set into circulation a new set of issues surrounding notions of home at a distance, a mediated sense of place and the extension of kinship ties over time and space. These concerns were pervasive: they shaped the aesthetic practices of genres that were not directly related to emigration, such as narrative paintings and novels.

To this end, this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part looks at the literature arising directly out of the moment of emigration. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter looks at emigrants' letters that were printed in order to encourage people to emigrate. The second chapter examines shipboard periodicals that emigrants made during the four-month long voyage to Australia. The third chapter focuses on Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill's accounts of settlement in Upper Canada in *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) and *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) respectively. The second part of the thesis takes up the concerns raised by texts studied in the first part and examines how they influence the aesthetic practices of representing distance in narrative paintings and novels. It is divided into two chapters. The fourth chapter focuses on how narrative paintings such as Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855), Richard Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* (1858), James Collinson's *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* (1850), Thomas Webster's *A Letter from the*

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*Colonies* (1852) and Abraham Solomon's *Second Class – the Parting* (1854) use emigrants' letters, advertising bills and other texts in order to explore the troubling effects of emigration on domesticity at home in Britain. The fifth and last chapter of the thesis looks at representations of the textual culture of emigration in Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) and *David Copperfield* (1850) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848).

For both emigrants *and* those who stayed behind, the experience of nineteenth-century colonial emigration entailed a radical shifting of the way in which one understood one's relationship to places one inhabited, potentially left behind and possibly might move to. Collectively, across all five chapters, this thesis demonstrates the ways in which emigration culture shaped the aesthetic practices of texts that re-conceptualised what it meant to produce and be part of a widening world.

## INTRODUCTION

On 10 August 1852, a twenty-three year old man, Charles Henry Lines, set sail for Melbourne in the *Ballarat*. The *Ballarat* had been due to sail on Saturday 31 July 1852, but the departure had been delayed. Thinking that the ship would sail on Friday 6 August, Lines travelled down from his home in London, to Gravesend, only to find that the ship would in fact arrive the following morning, on Saturday 7 August. To pass the time, Lines met with friends at Gravesend and, as the ship had not arrived yet, spent the night on shore. The atmosphere was one of feverish buoyancy: Lines described the night as ‘spreesh and expensive, as might be expected of young fellows bidding adieu to the pleasures of City life’. The next day, the *Ballarat* arrived, and Lines took a boat out with his friends to her, ‘where a new World, complete in itself, met our view and claimed us as its citizens’. Waking up on Sunday morning, he breakfasted on board the ship, received some friends in his cabin and then went ashore to take tea with his friends. A fire had been lit in the neighbourhood: a chill that he had caught the previous night on board the ship tempted him to spend the night on shore again. Unknown to him, that very night, his mother was making her way down to Gravesend, to see him before he set off. The following morning, on Monday 9 August, he woke up, took breakfast and went on board the *Ballarat*, where to his utmost surprise, he found his mother waiting for him. ‘I received a most unexpected visit from my poor dear Mother’, he wrote, ‘who, as unexpectedly, gave me a Sov[ereign]’.<sup>1</sup> Lines’s mother’s surprise visit and her equally surprise gift of a sovereign are marked by a quiet poignancy. Both she and her son knew that they would never see each other again in their lives.

The story of Line’s departure can be found in his diary that he kept on board the *Ballarat*. It records the experiences and emotions of a young man ready to embrace

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Henry Lines, *Papers, 1850–91, including Diary, 15 Aug.–5 Nov. 1852, kept on a Voyage from Gravesend to Melbourne, on the Clipper Ballarat*, p. 1 [15 August 1852]. Sydney, Mitchell Library, Z MLMSS 3348: Microfilm CY 3943.

the 'new world', and yet, who cannot leave the 'old' one behind. Only ten days after sailing, he writes:

We have lost the last traces of Old England some days, and the same trackless view of land and water, meets the view at every moment, the Sun invitingly shining, has involuntarily caused me several times to look over the ship's side as if expecting to see the green peacefully picturesque scenery of our Boyhoods [*sic*] home.<sup>2</sup>

The image of his childhood landscape superimposed onto the seascape around him is more than a trick of the light and imagination. Far from constituting a clean break from his previous life, the voyage out is a jumble of places and times, a place where Lines's youth and present, his childhood and future homes are all imbricated in each other. Crossing the ocean is a confused and confusing experience: loss is twinned with hope; home is simultaneously left far behind and yet to be made.

Lines records his ambivalent sense of connection to both home and colony in the personal place of his diary, but the textual experience of emigration is part of a much wider cultural phenomenon that is set in motion by the large number of people leaving the shores of Britain during the course of the nineteenth century. Driven by Malthusian fears of overpopulation, an unprecedented number of people moved away from Britain in the nineteenth-century to settle in her colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and in the United States. Emigration statistics are notoriously hard to calculate, but one estimate is that between 1815 and 1850, a minimum of 600,000 people left Britain.<sup>3</sup> This demographic shift was also a textual enterprise. Emigrants produced their own texts: they recorded their experiences of the voyage out in diaries, as Lines did, sometimes sending these diaries back to their families in England as evidence of their having arrived. On board the ship, and with little else to do, they made periodicals, put on plays, wrote letters to their families back in England. In the colonies, they continued to write to their families and produced accounts of their settlement. As we shall see, this sense of connection to Britain and to her colonies was distributed differently across classes, genders and genres. A middle-class emigrant

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<sup>2</sup> Lines, p. 2 [20 August 1852].

<sup>3</sup> Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), p. 118.

woman did not necessarily feel the same way about emigrating as a former prostitute, nor did a working-class labourer who had to leave his wife and children behind to look for a job overseas experience the same emotions as a labourer who was not yet married. Emigrants chose different genres in which to write about their experiences of emigration. Some wrote personal letters to their family but wanted them to be published, others wrote diaries, still others wrote periodical articles. Keen to support the outward flow of population, emigration societies published emigration manuals, guidebooks, pamphlets and newspaper articles. These provided practical knowledge of emigration, but at the same time, sold the general public a glowing report of the colonies: life outside of England, regardless of whether it was in Canada, Australia or New Zealand, was materially better than it was in England. Emigration was the topic of the day. Legislation surrounding emigration was also produced. Bills, acts and reports all publicly debated the pros and cons of emigration. These texts, arising directly out of the practices of nineteenth-century emigration, set into circulation new ways of thinking about the connections between England and her colonies. The colonies were at once metonymic projections of 'home' and frighteningly unfamiliar, distant places. The task of 'emigration literature'<sup>4</sup> was to overcome that sense of distance and produce a sense of familiarity. Concerns over how to negotiate the distance between England and her colonies shaped the aesthetics of emigration literature, but in turn, emigration literature set into play new ways of imagining the connections between homes, both near and afar. These seeped into established genres such as narrative paintings and novels. As we shall see, the texts of emigration, be they maps, letters, or periodicals, become a recurrent motif in novels and art as sites of enquiry into what it meant to be part of and produce a world that was simultaneously expanding and, at the same time, coming into closer contact with itself.

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<sup>4</sup> In *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), James Belich makes no distinction between 'booster literature' and 'emigration literature'. He argues that the two are interchangeable terms that refer to the literature that is produced to 'boost' the number of emigrants (p. 153). Throughout this thesis, I use 'emigration literature' to refer to texts that arise directly out of the moment of settler emigration — this term thus includes the manuscript shipboard periodicals discussed in Chapter Two which were not produced as propaganda. I use 'booster literature' only to refer to texts that are intended to encourage emigration.



## Histories, Places and Peoples

This thesis takes as its focus the years between 1830 and 1870. These dates are by no means start or end points of emigration itself: people emigrated from Britain to the settler colonies before 1830, and continued to do so long after 1870. They are, however, important temporal markers, and span a period of time during which the government and philanthropists worked to consolidate the idea of emigration as a solution to social problems at home and an acceptable means of individual betterment. Prior to 1830, the British government had experimented on a small scale with emigration. The end of the Napoleonic Wars left hundreds of thousands out of employment. Industrialization, as well as the Corn Laws, played their part in intensifying the difficulties of unemployment and social unrest.<sup>5</sup> In 1815, ‘the Corn Law pushed the price of a loaf of bread to one shilling, at a time when wages ranged from eight shillings per week for farm labourers, to thirty-six for the best skilled workers in London’.<sup>6</sup> It seemed that the political economist Thomas Malthus’s predictions that human population would outstrip food resources were becoming true. Troubled with the idea of how best to deal with this ‘redundant population’,<sup>7</sup> the government decided to move a small number of people to the Cape of Good Hope and to Upper Canada between 1819 and 1821.<sup>8</sup> The idea that the labouring poor could be sent to the colonies ‘owed little example to the past’,<sup>9</sup> and, as with all social experiments, unanticipated problems arose. When the first batch of settlers to the

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<sup>5</sup> H. J. M. Johnson, *British Emigration Policy, 1815–30: Shovelling out Paupers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 4–5.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Fender, *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, ed. by Geoffrey Gilbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; [1798]), p. 30. This is Malthus’s famous phrase for the poor who consumed resources, without producing them. In the second edition of *Essay*, published in 1803, Malthus expanded and developed his thoughts on emigration in an entire chapter devoted to it. His thoughts are very much a product of his time, given that mass emigration from Britain had not yet started. More of a ‘weak palliative’ than an ‘adequate remedy’, emigration all too often led to ‘failures in the establishment of new colonies’, Thomas R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, facsim. edn. (London: J. Johnston, 1803; London: Routledge, 1996), p. 387; p. 391.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 3, ‘Assisted Emigration to Upper Canada and The Cape of Good Hope, 1819–1821’, in Johnson, pp. 32–56.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, p. 7.

Cape arrived, they realised that contrary to the accounts they had been given, the soil was too acidic, the sources of water frequently ran dry and the water of springs was too brackish to drink.<sup>10</sup> Part of the problem, too, was that there was a ready African labour population in the Cape.<sup>11</sup>

By the 1830s, however, Britain had become more acquainted with the practicalities of emigration.<sup>12</sup> In the early years of the decade, the government laid the foundations of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission. Commissioners were appointed to explore the possibilities with regard to emigration.<sup>13</sup> In 1834, the government passed the Poor Law Amendment Act, which allowed parishes to use the 'Rates raised or to be raised for the Relief of the Poor in such Parish' for the purposes of 'defraying the Expences of the Emigration of poor Persons having Settlements in such Parish, and willing to emigrate'.<sup>14</sup> The Act dramatically changed people's relationships to place and their sense of local attachments<sup>15</sup> but it also laid the

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<sup>10</sup> Johnson, p. 40. This was not the first time that a plan to move people to a colony had met with unanticipated problems. In 1788, when the First Fleet (the collective name of the first eleven ships which landed in Australia) arrived at Botany Bay, both convicts and crew were reduced to a diet of 'slow starvation', when the British government realised too late that the assumptions they had made regarding the fertility of the soil, the amount of rainfall and the ability of convicts to become farm labourers were grossly wrong. See Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966), pp. 45–46.

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed examination on the problems of this experiment, see Johnson, pp. 44–48.

<sup>12</sup> Other critics have also identified 1830 as a key turning point in the history of emigration. See for example Belich, p. 146. See also Richards, *Britannia's*, pp. 117–118.

<sup>13</sup> Fred H. Hitchens, *The Colonial Land and Emigration Commission* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931), pp. 9–11.

<sup>14</sup> *An Act for the Amendment and Better Administration of the Laws Relating to the Poor in England and Wales* (London: George Eyre and Andrew Spottiswode, 1834), p. 66. The Poor Law did not specify which countries or colonies the poor were to be sent. The Act went on to stipulate that people who had agreed to emigrate out and then refused to, or if they returned home once having emigrated, were required to return the money paid to them for defraying the expenses of their emigration to the parish. It may seem that paupers were at the whim of richer parish members, but Gary Howells argues otherwise in 'For I was tired of England Sir': English Pauper Emigrant Strategies, 1834–60, *Social History*, 23 (1998), 181–194, in which he argues that pauper emigrants were not 'passive victims of the elite "shovelled out" and thoughtlessly dumped into a new world' (181), but could actively negotiate the terms on which they emigrated out.

<sup>15</sup> K. D. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity, and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 71–2. See also Michael E. Rose,

foundations for developing a system of reform that combined the ‘amelioration of social conditions at home with the consolidation of a liberal British empire overseas’.<sup>16</sup> The work of advocates of emigration, such as Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Robert Torrens and Charles Buller, meant that the view of emigration as a means of ‘social excretion’<sup>17</sup> slowly receded, and began to be replaced with a more positive one of emigration as a personally profitable move and as a national endeavour, for ‘[i]f the colonies acquired a greater population, they would become immensely more valuable to the parent state’.<sup>18</sup> As Martin Doyle, the author of *Hints on Emigration to Upper Canada* writes in 1832, whereas emigration was once ‘a measure of relief [...] hitherto embarrassed with cost and difficulty’, it is ‘now assuming a more attractive form, and recommending itself to all the honest and industrious classes’.<sup>19</sup> This change in attitude underpinned the movement of the hundreds of thousands of people who emigrated from Britain over the next four decades. By 1870, advancements in travel technologies, the replacement of sailing ships by steamships and the discovery and production of new routes to colonies (such as the Suez Canal in 1869) changed the contexts within which people were emigrating. Moreover, a shifting engagement with empire characterises the later decades of the century. Elleke Boehmer has identified this period of ‘high imperialism’ as one in which ‘most British imperialists cherished an unambiguously heroic image of themselves as conquerors and civilizers of the world’.<sup>20</sup>

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‘Settlement, Removal and the New Poor Law’, in *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Derek Fraser (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 25–44 and Josephine McDonagh, ‘On Settling and Being Unsettled: Legitimacy and Settlement around 1850’, in *Legitimacy and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Law, Literature and History*, ed. by Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 48–66, especially pp. 52–55.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Gray, ‘“Shovelling out your paupers”: The British State and Irish Famine Migration 1846–50’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 33 (1999), 47–65 (p. 48).

<sup>17</sup> Belich, p. 145.

<sup>18</sup> Johnson, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Doyle, *Hints on Emigration to Upper Canada, Especially Addressed to the Middle and Lower Classes in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Dublin: William Curry, 1832), p. 3. Original emphasis. Martin Doyle was the pseudonym of the Irish philanthropist and writer, William Hickey (1787–1875).

<sup>20</sup> Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 23.

This thesis primarily focusses on emigration to the British colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, these colonies were popular end destinations for nineteenth-century British emigrants. Secondly, these were the colonies that eventually grew into a predominantly white, Anglophone world. Thirdly, in the nineteenth century itself, these white settler colonies were seen as distinct from the wider British Empire. Unlike India and the Cape, for example, these supposedly English-speaking, white colonies were seen to be a part of England.<sup>21</sup> This thesis includes discussions of emigration to the United States of America where it is appropriate to the argument, but at the same time it recognises the important political differences between Britain and the United States. Although the popularity of the British colonies, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, waxed and waned during the period under study, the United States remained by far the most popular destination throughout the century. As Stephen Fender notes, America had become ‘the “other” – the alternative, radical dispensation’<sup>22</sup> because it had ‘struck out in a new constitutional direction’, a ‘democratic republic’.<sup>23</sup> The whole issue of emigration to the United States had become ‘inscribed within the discourse for and against the extension of the franchise and a reform of the tax system’: guidebooks on emigration to the States were filled with satire ‘on the depressed condition of the voteless British poor paying their tythes and taxes to a hard-hearted parish, a distant Church authority and an unrepresentative government’.<sup>24</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Britain was keen to divert the flow of people from its rogue child to its Canadian colonies. By offering financial incentives to emigrants, and ensuring that a supporting bureaucracy of agents was present to make both the voyage out and the immediate experience after arriving easier, the British government hoped to redirect population flow towards Canada.<sup>25</sup> Assisted emigration schemes, such as the Petworth Emigration Scheme (1832–1837), sponsored by the Earl of Egremont and

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<sup>21</sup> Margot Finn, ‘Victorianism at the Frontier: The White Settler Colonies’, in *The Victorian World*, ed. by Martin Hewitt (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 656–670 (p. 657–658).

<sup>22</sup> Fender, p.38.

<sup>23</sup> Fender, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> Fender, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, pp. 24–6.

promoted by Thomas Sockett, the Reverend of Petworth, played an important part in developing British settlements in Canada. Canada was an attractive prospect: in comparison to the colonies in the Southern Hemisphere, it was just across the Atlantic and the voyage took on average three to four weeks, as opposed to twelve or more. In the early 1820s, the novelist and colonizer, John Galt, set up the Canada Company, a joint-stock company which bought land in Ontario, developed it and sold it at a profit to British emigrants. By 1824, it had grown into a projected one-million-pound corporation which included some of the City's senior financial figures, with Galt as secretary. The Company was influential in directing population flow towards Canada.<sup>26</sup> Factors, such as the cholera epidemic of 1832 and the Rebellion of 1837 in Canada caused a temporary dip in the colony's popularity, but for the most part, Canada received a steady number of emigrants throughout the century.<sup>27</sup>

It took longer for Australia to become a popular destination, due to the taint of its history as a penal settlement. Following the American War of Independence in 1783, Britain needed a new place to send her convicts, and in 1788, founded the colony of New South Wales. Britain also established other colonies. Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) was occupied in 1803, but became a separate colony in 1825; the Swan River Company established Western Australia in 1829; in 1835, South Australia was created in order to provide a place where Wakefield's ideas of 'systematic colonization' could be experimented. Victoria and Queensland, which were both originally parts of New South Wales, became separate colonies in 1851 and 1859 respectively.<sup>28</sup> Transportation to Australia would continue as late as 1867, when the last convict ship sailed for Western Australia, although the practice had been phasing

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<sup>26</sup> See an introductory but detailed biography of Galt, see Paul Henderson Scott, 'Galt, John (1779–1839)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10316>> [accessed 15 June 2014] and Roger Hall and Nick Whistler, 'Galt, John', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, <[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/galt\\_john\\_7E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/galt_john_7E.html)> [accessed 30 May 2014].

<sup>27</sup> See John A. R. Marriott, *Empire Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 26–27 for a concise history of Canada's relationship with Britain.

<sup>28</sup> Marriott, pp. 72–73.

out for some years before this.<sup>29</sup> However, as the need for a labouring population in the colonies increased, the government opened the colonies for free emigration at various points during the course of the century. Notwithstanding its distance from Britain, and the long voyage of approximately three to four months needed to reach it, Australia grew in popularity throughout the century. The years after 1841 ‘heralded a surge in free [e]migration’: ‘1841 witnessed a one-and-a-half fold increase in immigrant numbers over the previous highest level recorded the year before’.<sup>30</sup> The discovery of gold in 1851 in Australia,<sup>31</sup> precipitated a gold rush: right through to the 1870s and beyond, Australia attracted a large number of free emigrants.

By the 1850s, the notion that emigration was a legitimate means of alleviating social distress at home had firmly taken hold. The mid-century saw the founding of various charitable and philanthropic bodies that promoted emigration to the colonies.<sup>32</sup> Whereas the Poor Law targeted pauper emigration, charitable organisations targeted other sectors of society. The philanthropist Caroline Chisholm, for example, campaigned to help emigrants settle in Australia. In 1839, she moved with her family from Madras, India, where her husband had been stationed, to Sydney. In 1841, she set up a ‘Home’ for young female emigrants who had arrived at Sydney but had been unable to find a job. She found jobs for these girls in the bush, often for sometimes double the wages that they would have received in town. Soon after, she started tracking down jobs for men as well. Part of the plan was also to alleviate the perceived gender imbalance caused by emigration: she hoped that by placing single women as domestic hands in married families, bachelors in the area would soon catch drift and

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<sup>29</sup> For a detailed and concise history of the transportation and free emigration to Australia, see A. G. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 358.

<sup>30</sup> Deborah Oxley and Eric Richards, ‘Convict Women and Assisted Female Emigrants Compared: 1841 – A Turning Point?’, in *Visible Women: Female Immigrants in Colonial Australia*, ed. by Eric Richards (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Gold was first discovered in Bathurst, New South Wales in 1851, though the first rush occurred in Ballarat, Victoria in the same year. It soon spread all over the country.

<sup>32</sup> Assisted emigration schemes existed before this time: in 1805, for example, Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk helped Scottish farmers resettle in Canada: see ‘The Selkirk Experiments: Misdirected Efforts’, in Norman MacDonald, *Canada, 1763–1841 Immigration and Settlement: The Administration of Imperial Land Regulations* (London: Longman’s, Green, 1939), pp. 151–174.

consider them as potential wives. In 1846, she returned to England, with hundreds of thousands of ‘statements’ from emigrants that she had collected during her stay in Sydney and used these as evidence of the efficacy of emigration to help set up the Family Colonization Loan Society, a charity aimed at helping the family of emigrants to emigrate.<sup>33</sup> Emigrants who had saved most of the costs of emigration themselves could apply to the Society for small interest-free loans which had to be paid back within two years. Emigrants who were intending to join their families in Australia, or whole families who were intended to emigrate were given priority.<sup>34</sup> As we shall see, the family was an important unit of settler emigration.

Many other philanthropists besides Chisholm also founded their schemes during the mid-century. These were mainly aimed at assisting the emigration of single women to the colonies, in the hope that this would simultaneously provide women with jobs and homes *and* address demographic imbalances of the sexes between home and colony. As more and more young labouring men moved away from Britain, the government and general public began to see emigration as one of the causes of the high number of unmarried women in Britain. But, emigration could also be the solution to this problem. In 1862, in his infamous essay, ‘Why are Women Redundant’, William Rathbone Greg asserted that Britain ‘must restore by an emigration of women that natural proportion between the sexes in the old country and in the new ones, which has been disturbed by an emigration of men, and the disturbance of which has wrought so much mischief in both lands’.<sup>35</sup> Yet from a decade earlier, philanthropic schemes

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<sup>33</sup> This short account has been drawn from Caroline Chisholm, *The Story of the Life of Mrs Caroline Chisholm, The Emigrant’s Friend, and Her Adventures in Australia* (London: Trelawny Saunders, 1852).

<sup>34</sup> Caroline Chisholm, ‘A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters’, *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, pp. 19–24 (p. 19).

<sup>35</sup> William Rathbone Greg, ‘Why Are Women Redundant?’, *National Review*, 28 April 1862, 434–460 (p. 443). While Greg supported emigration as a solution to the gender imbalances of home and colony, his views were heavily driven by the idea that a woman without a husband remained a burden on and contributed little to society. Women ‘who remain unmarried’, he writes, ‘constitute the problem to be solved, the evil and anomaly to be cured’ (p. 440). In the context of his argument, unmarried women are an ‘evil’ because they go against the rules of nature. His views were heavily contested in Frances Power Cobbe’s rejoinder, ‘What Shall We Do with Our Old Maids?’, *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, November 1862, pp. 594–610.

targeting the emigration of single women were becoming popular. For instance, in 1849, Sidney Herbert, with whom Caroline Chisholm had corresponded when setting up the Family Colonization Loan Society, established the Fund for Promoting Female Emigration.<sup>36</sup> The fund assisted the emigration of distressed needlewomen to Australia. In his promotional material, Herbert cited the lack of work available for needlewoman in England and the lack of women in the colonies as reasons for why his scheme was necessary.<sup>37</sup> In 1846, with the financial support of Angela Burdett-Coutts, Dickens set up Urania Cottage, a house that sought to assist fallen women start new lives in Australia.<sup>38</sup> In 1862, Maria Rye set up the Female Middle Class Emigration Society (1862) which also helped single women emigrate.<sup>39</sup>

Assisted migration, whether through the parish or through charitable organisations, such as those outlined above, played a key part in helping people to emigrate. These emigration schemes were supported by a vast outpouring of text: printed letters from assisted emigrants, advertisements, guidebooks and manuals, as well as information leaflets and pamphlets. In addition to this, personal, family and kinship networks were hugely important in proliferating news of emigration. While emigration schemes and projects helped those who could not afford the passage out, a large number of emigrants were self-financed.<sup>40</sup> As Marjory Harper argues, '[p]rivate encouragement and practical assistance from family friends, and community,

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<sup>36</sup> H. C. G. Matthew, 'Herbert, Sidney, first Baron Herbert of Lea (1810–1861)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13047>> [accessed 14 May 2014].

<sup>37</sup> J. M. W., 'A Few Words about Mr. Sidney Herbert's Emigration Scheme', *Sharpe's London Journal*, 11 January 1850, 99–103 (p. 101). For a discussion of Sidney Herbert's Scheme within the context of gender and work, see Lynn Mae Alexander, *Women, Work and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), pp. 117–119.

<sup>38</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Urania Cottage, see Chapter Five, 'Emigration as Philanthropy'.

<sup>39</sup> See Marion Diamond, *Emigration and Empire: The Life of Maria S. Rye* (London: Garland, 1999). This thesis does not focus on single female emigration, which is an area of study in its own right, and there are a number of good accounts that outline the complexities of the issue. See for example, Rita S. Kranidis, *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Emigration: Contested Subjects* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999) and Jan Gothard, *Blue China: Single Female Migration to Colonial Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> Richards, *Britannia's*, p. 11.



transmitted primarily by letter and remittance but occasionally through visits home, were of inestimable and enduring importance in stimulating secondary migration and directing patterns of settlement'.<sup>41</sup> As far as possible, this thesis seeks to situate these moments of intimate, private contact alongside the claims of print, but it also asserts that, more often than not, it is not possible to maintain such a divide: one of the reasons why emigration literature is so compelling is because of the ways in which it deliberately blurs the boundaries between private and public spheres.

Even such a brief account of settler emigration indicates its complexity, and the vast range of cultural and political subjects with which it intersected. Emigration literature extended kinship ties over time and space; it tried to make unfamiliar landscapes inhabitable and 'knowable'; it made ordinary, everyday people realise that they were living in, and making, an expanding world. As this thesis demonstrates, text is crucial to the project of nineteenth-century settler emigration.

### **Textual Encounters**

This thesis argues that nineteenth-century settler emigration was a textual phenomenon. It is impossible to talk of the processes and experiences of settler emigration without taking into account the array of genres and media that were produced by, and responded to, it. If emigration was the bodily experience of moving through space and time to settle in new and foreign places, then texts relating to emigration were the objects that mediated this move and produced new ways of thinking about it. In order fully to explore the textual nature of settler emigration, I use a cross-genre and multi-media approach. I focus on 'emigration literature' — the texts that arise directly out of the practices of nineteenth-century settler emigration such as emigrant's handbooks and manuals, printed emigrant's letters, shipboard periodicals and accounts of settling. At the same time, I am interested in the ways in which these texts acquire a particular representational and symbolic force in genres and

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<sup>41</sup> Marjory Harper, 'British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire', in *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 75–87 (p. 83).

media that are not directly related to emigration, such as novels and narrative paintings.

Various critics have made claims for the novel as *the* Victorian genre of mobility. In *Portable Property*, for example, John Plotz argues that the novel lies ‘at the heart of reflections on portability’.<sup>42</sup> According to him, this is because the novel itself is a mobile artefact: it is ‘novel circulation that profited from the triumphant explosion of book and periodical consumption [and] from its association with new forms of rapid transit’. The arrival of the railway, for example, meant the emergence of ‘a profoundly mobile readership, for whom travel was an occasion for, rather than impediment to, immersion in printed matter’.<sup>43</sup> The idea that novels moved between countries and continents, often for the purposes of colonial subjugation as well as for British settlers, is not new.<sup>44</sup> As Josephine McDonagh argues, novels were ‘loved’ by travellers and emigrants because they ‘tell powerful and complex stories about people’s relationships to places’: they ‘served to remind readers of their love of home, while simultaneously encouraging them to make emotional connections to new landscapes and environments’.<sup>45</sup> However, Plotz lets the mobility of the text fade into the background of the argument, and focuses instead on the mobile material world in the novel, arguing that the novel ‘reflects’<sup>46</sup> on portability through its depictions of a mobile material world. In novels, even the most simple, ordinary everyday objects become ‘precious relics overseas’ that ‘connote family, England, and the prospect of ready cash all at once’.<sup>47</sup> Thus, although he recognises the mobility of the novel, he does not take into account the fact that novels — and a broad range of other textual material — often moved *with* people.

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<sup>42</sup> John Plotz, *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Plotz, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> See for example, Priyamvada Gopal, *The Indian Novel in English: Nation, History, and Narration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 15–17.

<sup>45</sup> Josephine McDonagh, ‘Place, Region and Migration’, in *The Nineteenth-Century Novel, 1820–1880*, ed. by John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 361–376 (pp. 372–3).

<sup>46</sup> Plotz, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Plotz, p. xv.

In 'British Settler Emigration in Print', Jude Piesse argues that the context of the novel's periodical publication needs to be taken into account if we are to understand fully the relationships between settler emigration and printed texts. She argues that there are 'intimate links between the periodical form and concepts of motion and flow'.<sup>48</sup> Whereas these are now 'overlooked', it was 'commonplace' for nineteenth-century periodicals to highlight the 'connection between their own form and forces of modern motion in any number of articles on their systems of production, composition and distribution'.<sup>49</sup> Thus she makes a case for seeing 'deep running intertwinements between periodicals and those modes of modern movement which most concern emigration': 'many widely read periodicals aimed at middle and working-class consumers engaged with settler emigration reiteratively and centrally'.<sup>50</sup> Piesse thus convincingly argues that engaging with the mobility of periodicals is central to our understanding of the relationships between settler emigration and print.

This thesis shares affinities with Plotz and Piesse's methods of reading, in that it understands texts not as static entities with fixed spatio-temporal markers, but as objects that are determined by the 'geographies' of their production and consumption.<sup>51</sup> However, it also understands the novel's engagement with emigration as a dialogue with a wider cultural concern at the time. The concerns of this thesis are broader than identifying the literary trope of emigration in Victorian novels. Accordingly, it deliberately eschews a novel-centric or single-genre approach in its study of the textual cultures of emigration. While emigration is rarely a central feature in nineteenth-century canonical novels, it has widespread presence in a broad range of other media. Taking the focus away from the novel allows fresh debates to emerge and new questions to be raised. How do texts directly related to emigration, such as printed emigrants' letters and shipboard periodicals, register concerns over mobility

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<sup>48</sup> Judith Piesse, 'British Settler Emigration in Print: Mainstream Models and Counter-Currents, 1832–1877' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2012), p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> Piesse, 'British', p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Piesse, 'British', p. 9. See also Piesse, 'British', pp. 45–7 for a brief account of how periodicals circulated in settler colonies.

<sup>51</sup> See Miles Ogborn, and Charles W. J. Withers, 'Introduction: Book Geography, Book History', in *Geographies of the Book*, ed. by Miles Ogborn and Charles W. J. Withers (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 1–25.

and settlement? If the concerns with emigration really were as wide-ranging as I am suggesting, how do genres, such as narrative painting and the novel, engage with it? What kinds of voices emerge from this cross-disciplinary, multi-genre study?

The decision to take the focus away from the novel is informed by the belief that nineteenth-century settler emigration ‘touched the lives of everyone, everywhere’ in Britain.<sup>52</sup> An inevitable consequence of this wider field of analysis — and one that this thesis embraces — is the incorporation of new source material. Thus, this thesis brings to light printed and manuscript sources from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Historical Collection at the Foyle Special Collections Library, King’s College London; the Mitchell Library, Sydney; Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney; Vaughan Library, Sydney and National Greenwich Maritime Museum, London. The inclusion of ephemera, such as shipboard periodicals is hugely important for the study of emigration culture. Extending the scope beyond the written word into the visual realm shows that emigration paintings critiqued the pro-emigration streak of booster literature and instead focussed on the more troubling aspects of emigration. The unfamiliar, but exciting, experience of moving away and settling in new and distant places forced emigrants to adapt their existing vocabulary and modes of narration. Broadening the range of media across which we read allows us to interrogate not only the ways in which literature sought to represent emigration, but also how new genres and formations arose through which emigration could be narrated.

In *Antipodal England*, Janet C. Myers also adopts a cross-genre and cross-media approach, reading across a range of printed and visual sources. She aims to ‘broaden current scholarship on British imperialism’ by ‘juxtaposing novels with other genres’,<sup>53</sup> but rather than identifying an interrelationship between novels and emigration literature, she ‘pair[s] novels with archival sources such as letters written by governesses who emigrated to Australia, personal accounts of the Australian gold rush, and emigrant guides’, with the aim of extending our reading of the ‘narratological uses

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<sup>52</sup> Alexander Murdoch, *British Emigration 1603–1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Janet C. Myers, *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 12.

of emigration plots'.<sup>54</sup> Thus, she reads a range of emigration literature, paintings and printed images alongside novels and asserts that although emigration is often a minor sub-plot, it is in fact a central concern of the novel. For example, the Micawbers and Peggottys benefit from the 'transformative power of emigration'<sup>55</sup> in *David Copperfield*: the plot 'assumes that emigrants can have the best of both worlds: they can remake themselves in the colony and still remain loyal to their home nation'.<sup>56</sup> Her thinking is influenced by Edward Said's famous work on Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where he argues that the Bertram properties are sustained by their slave plantations: the imperial centre that the novel depicts is always underpinned, supported and sustained by colonial wealth, which it then makes invisible.<sup>57</sup> In the same way, the 'Australian settler experience similarly helped to shape British conceptions of home and national identity': 'liminality of emigration' in novels 'belies this centrality'.<sup>58</sup> Myers' 'liminal-yet-central' argument overstates the importance of emigration in the novel. There is an implicit suggestion that although the novel appears not to be overtly concerned with emigration, nonetheless, it somehow should be, and if we change the way in which we read, we can make a claim for its centrality.

This thesis does not use emigration literature as 'evidence' against which to measure the realism of emigration plots in novels. Rather, it understands emigration literature as being concerned with a quite specific set of issues which are pervasive and inform the ways in which emigration is narrated in novels and narrative paintings. As friends and families became separated from each other through emigration, uneasy tensions over the mediation of this spatial and temporal divide arise. How were those who had never emigrated to know if the tales of the colonies circulating at home were true? What medium of expression could adequately convey the truth of the emigrant's experience? Which modes of representation would most elicit the audience's sympathies for those who had left all they had known behind and travelled to strange,

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<sup>54</sup> Myers, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Myers, p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> Myers, p. 40.

<sup>57</sup> See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p. 102; pp. 106–114.

<sup>58</sup> Myers, p. 3.

new lands? Emigration literature is concerned with the difficulty of trying to convey the realities of one place to another and making a distant place familiar. However, they are highly mobile texts and, in the eyes of the nineteenth-century reading public, their mobility had the risk of compromising their authenticity: how was one to know whether the text from far-off places did not contain fabricated stories of success? Emigration literature addressed these concerns as they negotiated the geographic divide through their constant evocations of the material world. Inevitably, emigrants often faced material failure: their crops failed and their money ran out, but nonetheless, in emigration literature, the material world took on an unshakeable solidity in defining and conveying the veracity of the emigrant experience.

In recent scholarship, literary critics have been increasingly interested in the mobile material world in the novel, especially in the context of empire. In *The Ideas in Things*, for example, Elaine Freedgood argues that even ‘apparently nonsymbolic objects’ can be read for their ‘fugitive meaning’.<sup>59</sup> Freedgood traces the colonial histories of three global commodities — mahogany, calico and tobacco — and reads them back into their respective novels — *Jane Eyre*, *Mary Barton* and *Great Expectations* to demonstrate how they inform the plots. Suzanne Daly, in *The Empire Inside*, follows a similar mode of argument in her readings of Indian commodities in the mid-century domestic novel. She argues that ‘the complicated and evolving relationship of England to India is mediated in novels through the relationship of English people to what were understood to be Indian things’.<sup>60</sup> Once objects become mobile, they accrue certain meanings, suppress certain histories and generate new responses.<sup>61</sup> Freedgood and Daly focus on the ways in which the novel suppresses the colonial histories of circulating objects so that they appear inert and non-symbolic. In contrast, in

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<sup>59</sup> Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 4. Freedgood calls this style of reading ‘strong metonymic reading’. See pp. 12–17.

<sup>60</sup> Suzanne Daly, *The Empire Inside: Indian Commodities in Victorian Domestic Novels* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Arjun Appadurai’s famous reading of the object accumulating a ‘social life’ is an important foundation for these arguments. See Arjun Appadurai, ‘Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 1–63.

emigration literature, commodities are always in motion. In this thesis, I discuss the ways in which their motion is a constituent feature of these texts. Furthermore, I assert that the mobility of the text itself is a key concern in emigration literature. On the one hand, the mobility of the text of emigration literature — the manuscript or printed letter, the loose sheets of the shipboard periodical — generates a culture of suspicion.<sup>62</sup> How were people to know if the text had not been tampered with during its travels? How were they to know if accounts of distant places were not fabricated? In an attempt to make itself believable, emigration literature frequently used the material world to construct and refer to itself. To use the words of Elizabeth Ermarth, ‘the language that appears referential, innocently pointing toward an objective world beyond it’ is also ‘self-reflexive, gesturing toward its own principles of operation’.<sup>63</sup> Emigration literature is filled with the stuff of everyday settler life — nails, seeds, foodstuff, tools, for example, but while the material world in the text ostensibly refers to the contexts of emigration, it simultaneously ‘gestures’ to the processes of its own production in an attempt to convey to the reader that its authenticity has not been compromised by its mobility. Accounts of the materiality of settler life are intended to show the reader that the author really had emigrated, and that the text authentically relates the facts of settler life.

These shared aesthetics of mobility and materiality in the context of emigration literature held greater sway over the nineteenth-century cultural imagination than has been previously granted.<sup>64</sup> When emigration makes it into the visual and novelistic folds, it does so in textual form: the texts of emigration culture, be they letters, or colonial magazines and periodicals, all become motifs in novels and paintings and the site of a complex enquiry into what it means to move away and remake a home elsewhere. Emigration literature, so deeply concerned with its own materiality and

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<sup>62</sup> For a more detailed account of suspicion and reading, see ‘Interpretation as Exercise of Suspicion’, in Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. by Denis Savage (London: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 32–36 and Alison Scott-Baumann, *Ricoeur and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (London: Continuum, 2009) pp. 93 – 95.

<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel: Time, Space and Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. xiii.

<sup>64</sup> See Paul Basu, and Simon Coleman, ‘Introduction: Migrant Worlds, Material Cultures’, *Mobilities*, 3 (2008), 313–330.

mobility, itself becomes a textual object in novels and art and in so doing, shapes the aesthetic representations of distance, mobility and home.

### **Interconnected Zones**

The predominant interest of this thesis is in migration from Britain to her colonies. This focus ostensibly sets up a metropole-colony binary, where emigrants are continually looking back to their mother country with feelings of nostalgia, and for literary models in which to articulate their new experiences. However, rather than understanding settler emigration as a unidirectional flow from metropole to colony, this thesis recognises that nineteenth-century settler emigration is a messy entanglement of the mobilities of people, ideas and things. As Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson assert in *Empire and Globalisation*, attending to the “networks” of contact and communication forged by migrants’ is a means of ‘analysing with greater precision [the] long-distance connections over extended periods of time’. This method of inquiry allows ‘an interconnected zone constituted by multiple points of contact and complex circuits of exchange’ to emerge. Magee and Thompson argue that this networked, interconnected zone is ‘not just the preserve of an “official mind” in Whitehall’, but ‘a field of enterprise for the whole of British society’,<sup>65</sup> an important point that underpins many of the central assertions of this thesis. It is imperative that we recognise that the colonies were determined by ‘multiple points of contact’ and were imbricated in ‘complex circuits of exchange’ that involved countries aside from Britain. From the earliest days of its settlement, when the First Fleet was driven by starvation to trade with India, China and Jakarta, Australia established trading routes with India.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, as recent important research has shown, the Indian Ocean was a rich network of trade relations.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 16–17.

<sup>66</sup> Blainey, p. 51.

<sup>67</sup> See *Cultures of Trade: Indian Ocean Exchanges*, ed. by Devleena Ghosh and Stephen Muecke (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2007) and *Britain’s Oceanic Empire: Atlantic and*



The ‘interconnected zones’ of emigration are made more complex by the fact that emigrants rarely settled down immediately once they had arrived in their new destinations. Some moved from settlement to settlement, in search of jobs or the best lands, or to be near their friends and family. Others returned to England. As little record of international movement was kept at the time, it is difficult to arrive at a statistic for back-migrants. Their motives for returning are multiple and varied. Wilbur Shepperson argues that it is because they were ‘disenchanted’ by what they had seen, or by the discrepancies between what they had read and what they had experienced (an phenomenon that is explored in the third chapter of this thesis).<sup>68</sup> As Dudley Baines argues, back-migration was a way in which ‘[p]otential emigrants received information about overseas countries’:<sup>69</sup> emigrants returned with personal anecdotes ‘about both the costs and benefits of emigration’. As Baines argues, ‘if the bulk of the returned emigrants had been failures, they would have been less likely to induce the emigration of others’.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, there were moments of particular, intense activity. In the late eighteenth through to the early nineteenth centuries, for example, Scottish farmers and labourers were evicted from their homes to make land for sheep farming. These evictions are known collectively as the Highland Clearances. Many died, from starvation or the harsh climate, but many also emigrated to across the Atlantic or to Australia and New Zealand. During the period of the Great

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*Indian Ocean Worlds, c.1550–1850*, ed. by H. V. Bowen, Elizabeth Mancke and John G. Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Wilbur Stanley Shepperson, *Emigration and Disenchantment: Portraits of Englishmen Repatriated from the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965). See also Marjory Harper, ‘Introduction’, in *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000*, ed. by Marjory Harper (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 1–14 for a brief, theoretical introduction to back migration and Eric Richards’ essay in Harper’s volume, ‘Running Home from Australia: Intercontinental Mobility and Migrant Expectations in the Nineteenth Century’, pp. 77–104 for a discussion more relevant to this study. Nineteenth-century shipboard periodicals produced on the voyage back provide a fascinating insight into the experiences of emigrants and their motivations for returning. See for example, *The Parramatta Times* (Liverpool: D. Marples, 1886), produced on an 1886 voyage from Sydney to London.

<sup>69</sup> Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 23.

<sup>70</sup> Baines, pp. 28–9.

Hunger in Ireland (1845-1852), hundreds of thousands of people fled to Britain, her colonies and to the States.<sup>71</sup> This thesis does not focus on these moments of particular activity, on the literature of the Gold Rush to Australia, or on convict transportation, except where these issues intersect with the material otherwise discussed. Nor is this thesis interested in the specific instances or politics of parish-assisted emigration.<sup>72</sup> Rather, this thesis takes a more expansive approach and understands emigration and its textual culture as a general phenomenon that affected nineteenth-century Britain. While it interrogates how people conceived of the relationship between England and her colonies in the context of emigration, this thesis simultaneously recognises that this is one strand in a complex network. Other countries apart from Britain in the nineteenth century were also experiencing emigration. In 1858, an article in *Household Words* expressed anxiety over the large numbers of ‘Chinamen’ who, ‘contrary to their long-established usages and habits [...] are swarming (no other word is so expressive of the manner of their emigration) into other climes’.<sup>73</sup> Temporarily taking the focus away from Britain and her colonies shows that places which were unrelated to Britain were also experiencing the widespread effects of emigration as people across Asia and Russia uprooted themselves to make new homes elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> Nineteenth-century British settler emigration was thus truly part of a much more global story of human migration.

The particular strand of British emigration to her colonies in this complex network of global migrations warrants our attention. As Alex Murdoch argues, ‘nineteenth century [*sic*] emigration became part of the popular culture of Britain’.<sup>75</sup> ‘Emigration history’, he continues, ‘has attracted the interest of economic and social historians and demographic specialists [...] but has been viewed more generally as

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<sup>71</sup> See for example, Alexander MacKenzie, *The History of the Highland Clearances, with a foreword by John Prebble* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1991); and Donald M. MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750–1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> This is with the exception of the parish-assisted Petworth Emigration Scheme discussed in the first chapter. However, this is included in the thesis because the scheme was a hub of textual activity; I focus on the politics of the scheme only insofar as it extends my argument.

<sup>73</sup> ‘John Chinaman in Australia’, *Household Words*, 17 April 1858, p. 416.

<sup>74</sup> See for example Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, *Globalising Migration History: The Eurasian Experience: 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Murdoch, p. 6.

peripheral to British history, almost as if British emigrants were no longer part of British history once they had left Britain'.<sup>76</sup> Eric Richards similarly argues that settler emigration is 'rarely given prominence' as a 'feature of modern British history', yet it was 'Britain's most fundamental and enduring legacy to the modern world'.<sup>77</sup> This thesis asserts the centrality of settler emigration to the making of the modern world, but in sharp distinction to other accounts, it situates its enquiries specifically within the literature of the time. It seeks to trace the shared aesthetics of mobility and textuality: while emigration gave rise to a range of new literatures and modes of narration, at the same time, text informed and influenced experiences of migration and settlement.

### Settler, Emigrant and Colonist

During the period under study in this thesis, the terms relating to people who moved away from Britain to make new homes in the colonies underwent a shift in their connotations and meanings. In *Replenishing the Earth*, James Belich argues that 'emigrant' and 'colonist' were used throughout the century to refer to people who moved away to new lands, but these terms were not as widely-used as 'settler'. While 'emigrant' was the 'standard term for out-migrant'<sup>78</sup> in the nineteenth century, it also carried negative connotations in certain contexts. This was partly a result of the inauspicious beginnings of emigration, when it was viewed as a means of social excretion, but Wakefield's plan for 'systematic colonization' in the early 1830s further solidified the stigma associated with the term 'emigrant'. Wakefield's plan, set out in *A Letter to Sydney*, was, as Fred Hitchins argues, to 'restrict' the available amount of land 'by selling it, never giving it away or granting it free':

capital was to be supplied with adequate labor by making the price for land so high that immigrants would have to work for wages for some time before they could save enough to become independent

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<sup>76</sup> Murdoch, pp. 6–7.

<sup>77</sup> Richards, *Britannia's*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Belich, p. 149.

landowners; but when they were able to buy land the purchase money was to be used to introduce more laborers.<sup>79</sup>

Wakefield's plan gave the term 'colonist' a positive connotation which 'emigrant' did not necessarily have. Whereas the 'emigrant' was poor and plebian, the 'colonist' was monied and genteel. Whereas 'emigrant' connoted disorganized emigration, 'colonist' connoted 'organized colonization'. However, because of its class implications, it failed to take on as a popular term.

Belich is right to note that the terms 'emigrant' and 'colonist' were heavily embedded in class ideologies, but they were also gendered terms as well. Emigrant handbooks and manuals, for example, emphasised a male experience of emigration. They focussed on accounts of soil, climate and tools: things that any settling man who needed to clear the bush would need to know and take.<sup>80</sup> For Belich, however, the term that is used most prolifically and that frames nineteenth-century emigration within an ideological framework is 'settler'.<sup>81</sup> Without the class implications of the term 'colonist' or the stigma of the term 'emigrant', and with the promise of success, Belich argues it is easy to see why 'settler' became such a popular term.<sup>82</sup> While the use of the term 'settler' became popular, however, this does not render the terms 'emigrant' and 'colonist' invalid: all three of these terms are richly complex in their ambiguities and ideologies.<sup>83</sup>

Belich further argues that while '[a]ttitudes to emigration, and attitudes to emigrants, were amorphous, camouflaged and varied', some 'discernible' 'patterns' can be identified which 'cohered into what might be described as an ideology — *the* ideology of the Settler Revolution'. According to him, settlerism is on a par with the

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<sup>79</sup> Hitchens, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> See for example A. Backwoodsman, *Statistical Sketches of Upper Canada* (London: John Murray, 1832). To counter these manuals directed at emigrant men, Catharine Parr Traill wrote, *The Female Emigrant's Guide: And Hints on Canadian Housekeeping* (Toronto: Maclear, 1854) which, understandably, provided a very different set of instructions surrounding domestic housekeeping in the bush.

<sup>81</sup> Belich has little to say on how gender inflects the three terms under consideration.

<sup>82</sup> Belich, pp. 149–150.

<sup>83</sup> Unless otherwise stated, when I use the term 'emigrant' in this thesis, it is in the general, neutral sense of the word, and not with its nineteenth-century negative connotations.

‘other great Anglophone “isms” of its day, such as socialism, evangelism, and racism’.<sup>84</sup> The ideology of settlerism was propagated through both formal and informal forms, that is, through printed texts and private correspondence. Broadly speaking, in both these forms, settlerism was concerned with evocations of the new lands as a paradise, the promise of land ownership and labour, and of financial and political independence.

Given that the terms ‘emigrant’ and ‘colonist’ both have ideological implications, it is interesting that Belich picks up on the word ‘settler’ without pausing to comment on the central meaning of this word: to settle. This concern with a potential rootedness and belonging is all the more important because of the mobile conditions that emigration necessarily set into play. Settlement — the problems and politics of moving away and making a new home — is central to emigration literature and is thus an overarching concern in this thesis.<sup>85</sup>

One of the problems of the term ‘settle’, however, is its stress on rootedness and belonging, without attending to the conflict embedded in the act of settling. Eric Richards is particularly blind to this when he writes, ‘the people of the British Isles clearly set the pace, pioneering mass migration, sustaining the outward flows, and *helping to repopulate other continents*’.<sup>86</sup> As Sarah Nuttall argues, the term ‘settler’ is steeped in the ‘politics of conquest and subjugation’:

The notion of the settler, which always also implies a native, carries with it in its originary sense a master-slave dialectic based on land: a relationship based on conquest and ownership on the one hand and on dispossession and subjugation on the other; in which one party acts and the other is acted upon; a relationship of response rather than co-intervention.<sup>87</sup>

At all times, this thesis is sensitive to these acts of wilful textual and physical repression. For the most part, as texts of colonization, emigration literature holds out

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<sup>84</sup> Belich, p. 153.

<sup>85</sup> See also Tamara S. Wagner, ‘Introduction: Narrating Domestic Portability: Emigration, Domesticity and Genre Formation’, in *Victorian Settler Narratives: Emigrants, Cosmopolitans and Returnees in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), pp. 1–22.

<sup>86</sup> Richards, *Britannia’s*, p. 3. Emphasis added.

<sup>87</sup> Sarah Nuttall, ‘Subjectivities of Whiteness’, in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, ed. by Annie E. Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 245–262 (p. 245).

the promise that the new lands are not populated, and thus propagates the myth of empty spaces. This thesis recognises that encounters in the text with First Nation, Aboriginal or American Indian people are rare, but it pays close attention to these moments when they occur. While the central concern of the thesis is on British emigration to the colonies, it asserts that it is not possible to tell this story of global modernity without taking into account the physical violence of settlement and the occasional moments of intimate contact that occur.<sup>88</sup>

David Harvey argues that globalization, even in its early forms, can be described as a form of ‘time-space compression’, a phrase which refers to the ‘speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us’.<sup>89</sup> This is particularly true of the Victorian era: improvements in travel and communication technologies, postal services and global trade, for example, brought far-off and distant places into contact with each other. When critics have talked about the Victorian world ‘shrinking’, they have usually done so in terms that assert the progress and development of Britain.<sup>90</sup> Emigration was a key feature of these moments of Victorian modernity and globalisation, and there is no doubt that it was affected by these developments. However, this is only one side of the story of nineteenth-century modernity and emigration. Although the extension of kinship ties and feelings of national bonding were enabled by these technologies, at times, the world could also seem enormously large to emigrants and their families.

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<sup>88</sup> See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Routledge, 2006), especially, ‘Introduction: Criticism in the Contact Zone’, pp. 1–12. For accounts of the violence and exploitation of colonial settlement in Australia, see Janine Roberts, *Massacres to Mining: The Colonisation of Aboriginal Australia* (Bristol: Investigative Media Productions, 2008) and Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia*, rev. edn. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006). For accounts specific to Canada, see *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada*, ed. by Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock (Toronto: UBC, 2006). There are a number of good chapters in this book relating specifically to the nineteenth-century from the 1830s through to the 1870s.

<sup>89</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 240. See also Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 17–21 for an interesting and alternative account of spatio-temporal relationships of modernity.

<sup>90</sup> See for example, Peter J. Hugill, ‘The Shrinking Victorian World’, in *The Victorian World*, ed. by Martin Hewitt (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 73–89.

Over and over again in their letters, emigrants stressed that they would most likely never see their families again, but hoped to meet them in the hereafter. And, while emigration extended the parameters of the knowable world for Britain and her inhabitants, a widening world for British settlers simultaneously meant a shrinking world for indigenous peoples.<sup>91</sup>

## Chapters

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part examines three genres arising directly out of the practices of nineteenth-century settler emigration: printed emigrants' letters, manuscript shipboard periodicals, and settler narratives. Each chapter in the first part focusses on a particular genre. Collectively, these three chapters explore how emigration texts negotiate the temporal and spatial distance that separated Britain from her colonies.

Chapter One looks at printed emigrants' letters, a genre that has hitherto been neglected in both literary and historical studies of emigration on account of their dubious authenticity. Publishers saw emigrants' letters written to friends, family, emigration societies and philanthropists as a valuable source of information on emigration. Letters were often printed and circulated in a wide array of places, from periodicals to emigration society reports, pamphlets to edited collections. This chapter explores the ways in which printed emigrants' letters manage the text's transition from manuscript to print. These letters provide first-hand accounts of emigration, of the

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<sup>91</sup> The 'shrinking world' of native people was troubling for some living in the nineteenth century as well. For a brief introduction, see David A. Nock, 'Horatio Hale: Forgotten Victorian Author of Positive Aboriginal Representation', in *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada*, ed. by Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock (Toronto: UBC, 2006), pp. 32–50 and the Appendix in this volume, 'The Fair Play Papers — The Future of Our Indians', pp. 321–330, which are a collection of Hale's writings in which he writes of 'the scattered remnants of a people, who against their will, had been forced to give up their old customs, laws and traditions' (p. 323). A more general and widespread sentiment, however, was that the rapidly decreasing numbers of indigenous peoples were a result of evolutionary 'progress'. See Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003), especially Ch. 8, 'Darwin and After', pp. 164–188. For a more general introduction covering Canada and Australia, see Julie Evans et al., *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights: Indigenous Peoples in British Settler Colonies, 1830–1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

colonies and of settling. They exude an intimate, personal tone and provide readers with a vicarious experience of emigration. At the same time, however, printed letters have been taken out of the context of small, personal networks of circulation and placed in the larger, and more public circulation, of print. Editors were keen to impress upon a suspicious reading public that the letter's mobility, as it travels from the colonies back to Britain and into print, has not compromised its authenticity. Producing the effect of being authentic was an integral part of these letters' commodity status: potential emigrants had to be convinced that the tales of the colonies in the letters really were true if they were going to buy them.

Chapter Two takes up the concerns of the first chapter regarding the grey areas between public and private spheres and the binaries of manuscript and print in the context of two manuscript shipboard periodicals, the *Alfred* (1839) and the *Open Sea* (1868). These were periodicals that emigrants themselves had made during the voyage to Australia. Whereas success is the inevitable narrative conclusion of printed emigrants' letters (and other propaganda), shipboard periodicals remain distinct from these genres because of their ostensible lack of participation in these narratives. Manuscript shipboard periodicals aim to invest themselves with the qualities of printed, land-based periodicals through their mimicry of them. Thus, rather than focussing on the *colony* as a place of settlement, these periodicals produce a culture of settlement *on board the ship*. In constructing the voyage out as a preparatory stage to the actual task of settlement in the colonies, these periodicals thus participate in the colonial push to turn emigrants into successful settlers.

Chapter Three focusses on the semi-autobiographical accounts of settlement by Susanna Moodie and her sister, Catharine Parr Traill. It argues that the sketch form as practised by Moodie in *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852) and by Parr Traill in *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836), is an attempt to counter the tall tales of success circulating in booster literature. In this way, it takes on the concerns raised in the second chapter of what form is suitable for expressing the experiences of settlement. It argues that the sketch form is intimately linked to the female experience of settlement: sketches could be written in the small hours of the night when the day-time chores were finished and children were in bed. Sketches thus capture a sense of these snatched fragments of time



and simultaneously evoke the fragmented sensibility which comes when faced with such new surroundings.

The first part of this thesis thus brings into focus some of the critical ideas of emigration literature. All three chapters demonstrate that different texts of emigration literature manage and mediate the geographical distance between Britain and her colonies in different ways. Collectively, these chapters show that a variety of genres of emigration literature understand emigration and text as interrelated concepts. Writing produces a sense of settlement: it brings disparate ideas together and stabilises the confusing experiences of emigration into a textual form. At the same time, the authority of these texts was destabilised by the geographical distance between themselves and the places they described. In the printed texts of emigration literature — the letters and Moodie and Parr Traill's accounts of settlement — this destabilization was seen as something to be overcome in order for the reader's trust to be gained. Manuscript shipboard periodicals, on the other hand, embraced this destabilization, and between the gap of manuscript and print found a space in which to perform settlement.

The second part of this thesis examines the ways in which the tropes, concerns and rhetoric of emigration literature are absorbed into genres and media that are not directly related to settler emigration. The almost ubiquitous presence of emigration as a narrative resolution in novels, and the number of paintings that take emigration as a subject matter, frame the central assumption of the thesis that emigration was a pervasive cultural concern in the nineteenth century. The last two chapters of the thesis, which focus on narrative painting and novels respectively, interrogate the ways in which emigration literature shapes the aesthetic representations of emigration. While asserting that emigration is represented in these paintings and novels in particular ways, the second part of the thesis also seeks to establish the ways in which these genres produce alternative ways of thinking about and critiquing emigration.

Chapter Four looks at representations of emigration in narrative paintings. The chapter explores how even in the visual realm, emigration is rendered into its textual components. It focusses in particular on five paintings of the mid-century: Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855), Richard Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of*

*Home* (1858), Thomas Webster's *A Letter from the Colonies* (1852), James Collinson's *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* (1850) and Abraham Solomon's *Second Class – the Parting* (1854). The chapter argues that these emigration paintings eschewed the standard narrative of successful emigration that circulated in print. Instead, these paintings construct a dynamic between image and text in order to emphasise the pain and uncertainty of emigration. In each of the paintings, emigration is rendered into its textual components, be it an emigrant's letter, a map, a shipping advertisement or the name of the ship. Thus, even when emigration is incorporated into visual culture, it still manifests itself through the texts of emigration literature.

Chapter Five takes up this reading and interrogates the ways in which emigration literature becomes a trope in Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) and *David Copperfield* (1850) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848). This chapter asserts that to ask how central or liminal emigration is to the plot of the novel is to miss the point. What is far more interesting is the ways in which the novels discussed here register the effects of emigration. They draw on the familiar tropes of emigration literature, but at the same time, they imagine a world in which emigration literature connects emigrants and their families and weaves them into the larger global network of the British empire. Thus, collectively, the last two chapters of this thesis demonstrate the hold that emigration literature had over the cultural imagination. Not only does it produce a stock of common tropes that other genres and media drew on, it also *becomes* a motif in them, a site of interrogation for the interrogation of texts that produced a widening settler world.

**PART ONE**

**EMIGRATION LITERATURE**

## CHAPTER ONE

### Printed Emigrants' Letters: Networks of Affect and Authenticity

'In the multitude of Councillors there is safety':<sup>1</sup> this quotation from the Bible appears as the epigraph to *Counsel for Emigrants*, an emigrant handbook that was published in 1834 by the Scottish publisher John Mathison. Within its covers, the handbook collects a 'multitude' of 'counsel': the handbook can best be described as a miscellany of information. It reproduces excerpts from a variety of different sources, such as newspaper accounts, other emigrant manuals and letters, and organises them under themes, such as 'Leaving Home', 'The Voyage', and 'Routes to Upper Canada'. The epigraph thus affirms the validity of the information that the handbook contains and prescribes a moral economy of reading. It encourages the reader to peruse a wide variety of texts before they commit to moving abroad: to read more is to know more, to safeguard oneself against the dangers and pitfalls of emigration. '[F]lights of imagination', the editor informs the reader, 'are migratory excursions which we ought to indulge in as little as possible'; it is far better to 'sit down to the consultation', 'call witnesses' and 'examine documents', and 'ask advice from every one whom we may think capable of giving it'.<sup>2</sup>

For prospective emigrants and curious readers alike, there was no lack of available information on emigration in the nineteenth-century print market. Regardless of whether the publishers were big with strong, colonial identifications, or whether they were small and hoping to make a profit from the huge interest in emigration, they were keen to produce texts on emigration. Accounts of emigration and settlement, emigrant manuals, emigrant letters, periodical articles, pamphlets, as well as official

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<sup>1</sup> *Counsel for Emigrants, and Interesting Information from Numerous Sources; With Original Letters from Canada and the United States* (Aberdeen: John Mathison, 1834), title page. Volume subsequently referred to as '*Counsel*'.

<sup>2</sup> *Counsel*, p. ii.

documentation on emigration flooded the market. As James Belich argues, ‘the sheer scale’ of publishing in booster literature was ‘impressive’: it was ‘one of the largest genres in nineteenth-century literature’.<sup>3</sup> John Barnes et al. echo this when they argue that, ‘produced non-commercially by settlement agencies and religious organisations, the books that hundreds of thousands of emigrant readers took with them served to make this little-regarded genre one of the most remunerative areas of publishing in the nineteenth century’.<sup>4</sup> *Counsel* evidently falls into this category of texts that not only fed an emerging appetite for knowledge on emigration, but also ‘boosted’ interest by providing potential and casual armchair emigrants with accounts of distant lands and information on how to emigrate. Yet, despite the suggestion of *Counsel*’s epigraph, this availability of information could be confusing, as well as enlightening. The proliferation made it easier to circulate *misinformation*: authors and editors took advantage of the chances of uncovering conflicting advice to assert that, unlike *other* texts in circulation, *theirs* contained true facts. ‘[F]inding that many contradictory reports and ideas have been circulating’ on the subject of New Zealand’s ‘prosperity’, Charles Heaphy writes that he has ‘been induced, at the request of a considerable number of persons, both here and in the colony, to write a brief account of the present state of settlements in that country’.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, he was well-placed to offer his opinion: he had sailed with the New Zealand Company as their resident artist and Surveyor on their first expedition to New Zealand in 1839 and two years later, he joined the expedition that founded Nelson. On the other hand, he was well aware that his association with the Company made him open to the charge of being biased. ‘[I]t may be imagined’, he writes, ‘that I am interested in upholding [the Company’s] principles, and am now writing by its dictation’, but this, ‘however, is not the case’: ‘I must disclaim any

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<sup>3</sup> James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> John Barnes et al., ‘A Place in the World’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 1830–1914*, ed. by David McKitterick, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), VI, pp. 595–634 (p. 602).

<sup>5</sup> Charles Heaphy, *Narrative of a Residence in Various Parts of New Zealand: Together with a Description of the Present State of the Company’s Settlements* (London: Smith & Elder, 1842), p. vii.

participation or interference of it in my writings'.<sup>6</sup> Like much of booster literature, Heaphy's guide balances a fine line between providing true and authentic facts and selling fantastical tales.

Printed emigrants' letters were no exception in this. These were letters that ordinary, everyday emigrants had written home to their families and friends, which were then published in a vast array of places: in newspaper and periodical columns, in pamphlets and leaflets, as appendices to emigration society reports and emigration manuals, and in independent volumes. Almost invariably, they contained positive stories of emigration. While emigrants might acknowledge in their letters a difficult voyage and initial problems after they arrived, the conclusion of most, if not all, is a resounding story of success in the colonies. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which printed emigrants' letters aimed to counter any suspicion that the reader may have over the authenticity of these stories. It argues that printed emigrants' letters evoke the material world — that of the colonies, but also that of the text itself — in order to avert the reader's suspicion and assert the authenticity of the text.

The range of places in which printed emigrants' letters appeared, as well as the sheer volume of them that were in circulation stand as testimony to the popularity of the genre. Despite this, printed emigrants' letters have been largely marginalised in studies of emigration literature. In *Invisible Immigrants*, leading historian of nineteenth-century settler emigration, Charlotte Erickson, argues that 'government documents, pamphlet literature, and the immigrant and trade union press' give us a 'distorted picture' of emigration.<sup>7</sup> David Gerber argues that including printed letters in his edited collection of manuscript letters, *Authors of Their Lives*, would have introduced the 'imposing and time-consuming' 'problem of authentication':<sup>8</sup> one cannot test for 'mischievous editing' as source manuscripts have rarely survived.<sup>9</sup> Unlike Gerber, Wendy Cameron et al. include published letters in their collection of letters, but their

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<sup>6</sup> Heaphy, p. vii.

<sup>7</sup> Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: the Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: the Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Gerber, p. 10.

decision seems to be forced by circumstance, rather than made out of choice. Recognising that their decision is unusual as most editors 'have excluded all but those in manuscript form' in their collections, Cameron et al. justify their decision by arguing that the 'small amount of extant correspondence from poor immigrants who went to early nineteenth-century Upper Canada does not offer that luxury' of working solely with manuscript letters.<sup>10</sup> They console themselves by 'tak[ing] comfort'<sup>11</sup> in Erickson's argument that '[p]rivate letters were no more unbiased than published ones':<sup>12</sup> Cameron et al.'s words border on lament here, an elegy for the aura of the manuscript that print can never replace.

If we are to come to a fuller understanding of the connection that emigration literature created on personal and national levels to distant places, we need to bring printed emigrants' letters to the debate. Circulating in the public sphere, printed emigrants' letters created a sense of connection across time and space between different peoples and places. It brought news of the colonies to the reading public's field of reference at home. Yet, on the other hand, this sense of connection is ambivalent and troubled: there is no doubt that the origins of printed emigrants' letters are the result of a *disconnection* and *discontinuity*, as they attempt to recreate a physical, face-to-face relationship out of a network of textual relations.

Instead of focussing on the revelatory function of printed emigrants' letters and asking what they can tell us about 'social change and economic conditions in the British

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<sup>10</sup> *English Immigrant Voices: Labourers' Letters from Upper Canada in the 1830s*, ed. by Wendy Cameron, Sheila Haines and Mary McDougall Maude (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. xxi. Examples of edited collections of printed letters include Erickson's *Invisible* (1972), Gerber's *Authors of Their Lives* (2006); David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); *Letters from Irish Australia, 1825–1929*, ed. by Patrick James O'Farrell and Brian Trainor (Sydney: New South Wales University Press; Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Cameron et al., p. xxi.

<sup>12</sup> Erickson, *Invisible*, p. 4. As David Gerber argues in *Authors* (2006), it is no less difficult to judge the motives behind the writing of manuscript letters than printed ones. Success stories may have been 'honest lies', a form of face-saving for the emigrants who had left England against the advice of their families. We have no way of reading beyond or even perceiving any 'strategic silence[s]' (p. 99), nor can we answer the questions that arise from the existence of the letters that survive. This problem of verifying original intent in the manuscript letters is similar to that of verifying inaccurate editorial intervention in printed letters.

Isles',<sup>13</sup> we need to ask instead what kinds of cultural work this body of texts performed within their contemporary context. How do printed letters negotiate the history of their manuscript origins? Through what kinds of networks do they circulate? How do they perform their own authenticity? To what extent did this sense of authenticity secure the printed letters' commodity status? And, to ask the most basic question of all: how are we to read them?<sup>14</sup> Understandably, the letters require a different methodological approach. As William Jones argues, published letters 'rarely survive in sequences':<sup>15</sup> it is unusual to find more than a couple of letters written by the same person. Furthermore, all too often, writers of published emigrants' letters are not 'socially representative' and it is difficult to track down biographical information on them in order to 'offset the bias evident in their contents'.<sup>16</sup> As Jones argues, however, these 'very real problems and limitations'<sup>17</sup> of working with printed letters also provide opportunities to construct new and different methodologies of reading. Furthermore, extending the field of analysis to printed emigrants' letters allows us to understand one of the ways in which the nineteenth century engaged with the problems of knowing distant places through text.

### **Public Privacies: Intersecting Networks**

In 1832, a bricklayer by the name of Richard Neal left his home in Sutton, Sussex to emigrate to Upper Canada. Arriving after a voyage of nearly two months, he travelled

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<sup>13</sup> Eric Richards, 'Voices of British and Irish Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Australia', in *Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants: A Social History of Migration*, ed. by Colin G. Pooley and Ian D. Whyte (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 19–41 (p. 22).

<sup>14</sup> Critics have previously proposed methodologies of reading emigrants' letters, but these are either not relevant to the present case of printed emigrants' letters, or else display a lack of understanding of the literacy levels of emigrants. For example, see Orm Øverland 'Learning to Read Immigrant Letters: Reflections towards a Textual Theory', in *Norwegian-American Essays*, ed. by Øyvind T. Gulliksen et al. (Oslo: Norwegian American Historical Association, Norway, 1996), pp. 207–225.

<sup>15</sup> William D. Jones, 'Going into Print: Published Immigrant Letters, Webs of Personal Relations, and the Emergence of the Welsh Public Sphere', in *Letters Across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, ed. by Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 175–199 (p. 176).

<sup>16</sup> Jones, p. 176.

<sup>17</sup> Jones, p. 176.



down the border to North America, eventually settling in Dundas, Canada. He wrote home to his 'friends and relations' with news:

I never had one hour sickness all the time we were on the sea. [...] Joseph Leggett and Elias were a little sick, but not much. [...] When we landed at York, some went one way and some the other. I stopped there, Elias and Joseph Leggett went with Hilton, 180 miles further; they promised to write to me, but I have no letter from them [...] I promised to send you a state of the country: I will as soon as I can.<sup>18</sup>

Neal's letter survives in both manuscript and print forms:<sup>19</sup> one of the places where it appears in print is in *Emigration: Letters from Sussex Emigrants*, a collection of emigrants' letters edited by Thomas Sockett, a Reverend of Petworth parish, and published in 1833 by a small local publisher, John Phillips.<sup>20</sup> Neal had emigrated out on a parish-assisted emigration scheme organised by Sockett in 1832. Sockett developed the scheme largely as a response to the Swing Riots of 1830, when rural labourers across southern England were 'burning ricks and barns, destroying the threshing machines that were taking their winter work, and joining forces to demand higher wages and more job security'.<sup>21</sup> By emigrating, the rural unemployed could seek gainful employment in the colonies. Sockett heavily advertised the scheme by placing

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<sup>18</sup> *Emigration: Letters from Sussex Emigrants: Who sailed From Portsmouth, in April 1832, on Board the Ships, Lord Melville and Eveline, for Upper Canada: Extracts from Various Writers on Emigration to Canada, and from Canadian Newspapers, with Reference to the Letters: Capt. Hale's Instructions to Emigrants and a Gazetteer of the Places Named in the Letters*, ed. by Thomas Sockett (London: John Phillips, 1833), pp. 6–7. Volume subsequently referred to as 'Sussex Emigrants'.

<sup>19</sup> Neal's letter provides a good example of the 'reprintability' of emigrants' letters: this letter also appeared in the *Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport Herald* on 16 September 1833 and in *Emigration: Extracts from Various Writers on Emigration, with Authentic Copies of Letters from Emigrants from Norfolk, Suffolk, and Sussex* (Norwich: Bacon and Kinnbrook, 1834). The manuscript is held at the West Sussex Record Office, WSRO Goodwood, MS 650, f.110. See Cameron et al., p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> The relationship between Sockett and his publisher was mutually beneficial: Phillips published Sockett's emigrational literature and, in turn, Sockett advertised the emigration literature that Phillips sold in his bookshop in his own letters to stimulate interest at parliamentary level for parish-assisted emigration. See Thomas Sockett, *Emigration: A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Containing a Statement of the Method Pursued by the Petworth Committee, in sending out Emigrants to Upper Canada, in the Years 1832 and 1833, and a Plan upon which the Sums required for Defraying the Expence of Emigration May be Raised* (London: John Phillips, 1834).

<sup>21</sup> Wendy Cameron and Mary McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada: The Petworth Project, 1832–1837* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 26.

‘broadsheet advertisements in public places in villages and along the main roads where toll gates offered a stopping point and a convenient wall’.<sup>22</sup> In all, Sockett sent out seven groups of emigrants between the years 1832 and 1837.<sup>23</sup> After the first group, he collected letters emigrants had written home to their friends and families and published them on single sheets and pamphlets, which he priced at either a penny or tuppence or gave away free. Once he had amassed enough letters, he republished them along with some new ones in the edited collection in which Neal’s letter appears.<sup>24</sup>

In *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, Clare Brant argues that ‘the varied and often unpredictable circulation of letters confounds simple distinctions between public and private’.<sup>25</sup> Although her argument is made with reference to the eighteenth century, it is particularly pertinent here. Neal’s letter highlights the way in which printed emigrants’ letters slipped between the neat distinctions of ‘public’ and ‘private’. His address to ‘friends and relations’ shows that the letter is originally meant for more than one person. There is nothing unusual in this: emigrants’ letters were often collective and collaborative endeavours. To reduce the costs of paper, postage and receipt, emigrants often shared their pieces of paper: Sockett records as many as five people writing their letters on one sheet of paper.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, as is likely to be the case with Neal’s original letter, they were ‘in some circumstances read aloud — to friends and neighbours grouped together, or by a literate person to an illiterate family’. As such, they were ‘often written to some extent for public consumption’.<sup>27</sup> When the

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<sup>22</sup> Cameron and Maude, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> Cameron and Maude, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> Sockett promoted the Petworth Project through a variety of literature. In 1834, he produced *Canada: Letters from Persons who have Emigrated to Upper Canada Under the Management of the Petworth Emigration Committee*, ed. by Thomas Sockett (Petworth: John Phillips, 1834) and an account of the voyage from the superintendent’s perspective: James Marr Brydone, *Narrative of a Voyage, with a Party of Emigrants, Sent out From Sussex, in 1834, By the Petworth Emigration Committee* (Petworth: John Phillips, 1834).

<sup>25</sup> Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, pp. 37–41.

<sup>27</sup> O’Farrell, p. 3. Erickson has a different opinion to this mode of thought. In *Invisible Immigrants*, she argues that the ‘picture of the widely circulated letter [...] was probably an inaccurate one’, as the majority of emigrants ‘wrote private letters, not intended for oral “publication” in the village’ (p. 36). The intended audience varied from letter to letter: while some may have contained strict instructions to let no one outside the family read it, others

letter is circulated in networks of print, the body of people constituting the 'public' is considerably enlarged. Clearly, in neither their manuscript nor their print forms, do emigrants' letters conform to the notion of a sealed epistle between two correspondents. Rather than pitching a binary between the terms 'public' and 'private', it may be more useful to consider instead printed emigrants' letters as operating 'within a third site, either a zone of overlap between public and private or a realm of more uncertain relations'.<sup>28</sup>

Neal's letter, containing information on the whereabouts and health of Joseph Leggett and Elias, would no doubt have brought reassuring news to those who knew these two men in the village. Print extends the kinship and friends networks that Neal's manuscript letter circulates in, but how would the reader situated outside these networks have responded to such news? Evidently, all answers to this question are necessarily speculative, and we can in no way seek to understand or cover the range of ways in which the collection of letters would have been read. Nonetheless, one thing remains certain: printed letters provide glimpses into supposedly closed networks. Unsurprisingly, when emigrants wrote home to their families, they wrote home not only with news of how they were faring, but also of their hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future. David Fitzpatrick picks up on the affective charge when he writes that the 'consolatory function of emigrant letters has been largely ignored by previous editors in the field':<sup>29</sup> letters 'reassured the reader' that even though the emigrants had departed, 'familial solidarity was intact'.<sup>30</sup> The fear of loss of kinship over time and distance is more than apparent in the letters. Sixteen-year-old John Luff writes to his aunt, 'I hope you will give yourself no more uneasiness about me at present; though the distance is far that we are from each other, I should like to see you once more,

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were written with the thought of publication in mind. Cf. Frederick Hasted, an emigrant to Upper Canada in 1834, who asks that not only his letter be shown to a number of his former acquaintances, but that it be published '[f]or the good of the poor, and the satisfaction of my friends', in *Letters from Settlers in Upper Canada* (London: Marchant, 1834), p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Oceans*, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Oceans*, p. 22.

though I am resigned to the will of him that devises all things'.<sup>31</sup> 'You are there, and I am here', writes another emigrant, 'I live in hopes (to) meet again where the Angels do also'.<sup>32</sup> Another seeks to reassure his parents with news of more immediate solace: 'Dear father and mother, we left you almost broken-hearted, but you may be satisfied that we have bettered our condition by coming here'.<sup>33</sup>

The emotional charge that these letters carry is hugely important in determining the popularity of emigrants' letters as a genre. Such personal sentiments, openly circulating in print, construct the reader as someone who is privy to these personal moments. Importantly, it also allows them to understand the kinds of emotional risks that emigrants took when they decided to move. One of the reasons printed emigrants' letters generate interest is because they position the reader as a voyeur, pruriently looking on into supposedly personal lives. As the rest of the chapter will show, beyond generating interest, the letters' interstitial position between personal and public spheres also shapes the ways in which they construct their own authenticities and make the unfamiliar life of the colonies familiar to a reading audience in Britain.

### **A Collective Polyphony**

The popularity of printed letters is attested to by the astonishing array of places in which they were printed: newspaper and periodical columns, pamphlets and leaflets, emigrant guidebooks and manuals, and as well as in edited collections. *Household Words*, for example, published a number of letters from emigrants, as did newspapers and society magazines which had their own emigration schemes, such as the *Ragged School Magazine*. Given this, it seems necessary to focus on a particular outlet where they were published. Thus, most of my examples in this chapter are drawn from collections of printed emigrants' letters that were published as stand-alone volumes. In order to gain as comprehensive an account as possible, I have chosen to focus on edited collections which cover a wide range of time, end-destinations, publishers and

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<sup>31</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 11.

emigration societies. Two of the volumes I examine are Benjamin Smith's *Twenty-Four Letters from Labourers in America to their Friends in England* (1829) and *Letters from Settlers & Labouring Emigrants in the New Zealand Company's Settlements of Wellington, Nelson & New Plymouth* (1843).<sup>34</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters* publishes sequences of letters from a few families and also a few miscellaneous letters from single emigrants. The first sequence of letters, from the Watson family, is by far the largest, covering the years 1819 to 1827. The first few letters are from John and Mary Watson to John's father. In 1823, John writes home, 'We wish very much to see brother William and Stephen: if they come they cannot be in a worse situation than we were when we landed, and for many months after; but then their prospects would be better than by remaining in England'. Presumably, John receives news that Stephen will follow, for two years later (the next letter to appear in the sequence), he writes home anxiously: 'As for brother Stephen, we should like to know if he is gone back too; for we expected him this last winter, but have been disappointed; we are rather uneasy at not receiving a letter before this'. After six letters from John and Mary, the first letter from Stephen and his wife Elizabeth appears being written back home to his parents. There appears to have been some miscommunication between members of the family as Stephen and Elizabeth had arrived in New York in 1823, with their children Thomas and their daughter Mary Jane Watson. Thomas, has been 'taken' — presumably for an apprenticeship of some sort — by a certain 'Mr. William Fisher', while Mary Jane has been pseudo-adopted by a 'Quaker gentleman in Connecticut, who has taken her as his own' (19) and will 'keep and clothe [her] and [...] send her to school'. In 1825, Mary Jane sends her first letter home, signing it as 'Watson'; by 1827, she has married and become Mary Jane Coulson. By 1826, another Watson brother arrives in America to settle — Mary Jane copies out his letter in her own letter to her grandmother in England. As the years go by, the collection of voices writing back from America grows: the Watson sequence is

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<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Smith, ed., *Twenty-Four Letters from Labourers in America to their Friends in England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Edward Rainford, 1829). Volume subsequently referred to as '*Twenty-Four Letters*'. *Letters from Settlers & Labouring Emigrants, in the New Zealand Company's Settlements of Wellington, Nelson, & New Plymouth, from February 1842 to January 1843* (London: Smith & Elder, 1843), p. 8. Volume subsequently referred to as '*Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*'.

arranged chronologically — a seemingly neutral order — but the suggestion of change and progress is all the more powerful for it.

The letters in *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* are organised not according to family, but place; the volume is divided into letters from Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth. Though the collection does not cover as wide a time range as those in *Twenty-Four Letters*, nonetheless, it captures a snapshot of a place undergoing rapid change. For example, in the Wellington section alone, one can trace the day-to-day events of the town. Writing to his parents on 12 March 1842, G. Fellingham comments that, '[s]ince the arrival of the last three emigrant vessels, our town has begun to look quite lively. Every person seems to have an inclination to build houses and fences in their ground; others are letting it, so that the town seems all life'.<sup>35</sup> Three weeks later, on 2 April, H. S. Tiffen writes that the 'Manewatu and other lands were opened for selection'.<sup>36</sup> But in June, things suddenly changed. George Beavan writes on the 30<sup>th</sup> that the town is 'almost at a standstill at present': 'we have had a dreadful fire, upwards of sixty houses burnt, and a great many stores of all kinds'.<sup>37</sup> This was still the subject of conversation more than a month later. In the middle of an account of the 'first show' of the 'Horticultural Society' in which he proudly announces he 'got the four first prizes for vegetables', Joseph White writes of the 'awful fire' they had about 'six weeks since' which 'burnt fifty-nine of the best houses in the town':

the damage was reckoned to be £16,000; it happened about midnight; it was all burnt in less than half an hour. Many were obliged to catch their children in their arms, and escaped with nothing but their bed linen on. Some of the largest shopkeepers declared the next morning that they had not enough in the world to buy them a breakfast; fortunately no lives were lost.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 57. White's letter is dated 24<sup>th</sup> December, yet he writes of the fire (which happened in June) having occurred six weeks ago. The discrepancy suggests that White composed his letter over many months, which was not an uncommon practice at the time, although there is no available evidence to corroborate this.

By January the next year, the town had righted itself. An officer of the ‘Surveying Staff’ wrote home that ‘We have a capital cricket club here, of which I am a member; we played a match for a dinner about a fortnight ago, and I had the good fortune to be on the winning side. There has been a great stir in Wellington, in consequence of the election of the first mayor’.<sup>39</sup>

The pleasure of reading collections such as *Twenty-Four Letters* and *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* is that a narrative thread develops through the collection as one begins to trace changes that occur in a place and family over time. However, both *Twenty-Four Letters* and *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* are unusual in their organisation of letters. In the vast majority of cases, letters were organised in an *ad hoc* fashion, as in the case of Sockett’s *Letters from Sussex Emigrants*, Charles Barclay’s *Letters from the Dorking Emigrants who Went to Upper Canada* (1832) and S. H. Collins’s *The Emigrant’s Guide to and Description of the United States of America*.<sup>40</sup>

Barclay’s letters are an appendix to a report of the Dorking Society for Emigration. Dorking emigrants were travelling with the Petworth emigrants on the ship chartered by Sockett, but were under the charge of Barclay.<sup>41</sup> The liaison was not a happy one. Dorking emigrants received two-thirds the assistance that was given to the Petworth emigrants and as a result, their meals were reduced to a diet of bread and salt beef during the last weeks of the voyage. Christopher Able, the superintendent chosen by Barclay, also seems to have had little control in the ship: daily arguments and quarrelling soon became common occurrences. Paradoxically, given that these letters were intended to promote the emigration scheme, the difficulties of the voyage are reflected in the letters. William Willard, for example, writes, ‘I was deprived of my new blankets they was stolen out of my birth and one old one placed in the room, and many more things, James’s best hat, Charlotte’s bonnet, Maria’s shawl and caps

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<sup>39</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, pp. 62–3.

<sup>40</sup> *Letters from the Dorking Emigrants who went to Upper Canada in the Spring of 1832*, ed. by Charles Barclay (Dorking: Robert Best Ede, 1832). Volume subsequently referred to as ‘*Dorking Emigrants*’. S.H. Collins, *The Emigrant’s Guide to and Description of the United States of America: Including Several Authentic and Highly Important Letters from English Emigrants now in America, to their Friends in England*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (Hull: Joseph Noble, [1830]). Volume subsequently referred to as ‘*Emigrant’s Guide*’.

<sup>41</sup> See Cameron and Maude, pp. 55–56.

besides [sic]'.<sup>42</sup> He hints darkly, 'I know where they went to, some had them', but does not mention any names.<sup>43</sup>

*Sussex Emigrants* and *Dorking Emigrants* are both published in order to direct population flow towards what was then known as 'Upper Canada' and is now present-day Ontario. Although Collin's *Emigrant's Guide* publishes letters from emigrants to the United States, no comment is made on the destination. However, emigration to the States was distinctly different from emigration to the colonies. As Stephen Fender argues, whereas the colonies were metonymic projections of Britain, 'children' of the Mother Country, the States was the 'the "other" — the alternative, radical dispensation'. Radical support for emigration to America meant that 'the whole issue' had become 'inscribed within the discourse for and against the extension of the franchise and a reform of the tax system'.<sup>44</sup> In spite of the important political and ideological differences between Canada and the United States, the printed emigrants' letters which encouraged emigration to these destinations shared a discourse on issues surrounding mobility and settlement, which is why they have been included in this chapter.

Two further collections are Caroline Chisholm's pamphlets *Comfort for the Poor!* (1847) and *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered* (1847).<sup>45</sup> These pamphlets are collections of 'statements', which are Chisholm's interviews of emigrants to Australia, but with all the questions removed and the answers collected together in a paragraph. As has been highlighted in the Introduction, Chisholm was a keen supporter of emigration: she had spent a number of years collecting statements from emigrants as

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<sup>42</sup> *Dorking Emigrants*, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on this incident, see Cameron and Maude, p. 58.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Fender, *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 38. See also Fender, pp. 34–37 for a longer discussion on the root causes for radical support for emigration to America. Briefly, his argument is that a combination of increased taxes and unemployment, the Corn Law (1815), and the repeal of the income tax led to increased radical agitation and these were the main reasons for supporting emigration to America.

<sup>45</sup> Caroline Chisholm, *Comfort for the Poor! Meat Three Times a Day!! Voluntary Information from the People of New South Wales, Collected in that Colony by Mrs. Chisholm in 1845–46* (London: John Ollivier, 1847); Caroline Chisholm, *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered in a Letter Dedicated, by Permission, to Earl Grey*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (London: John Ollivier, 1847).



evidence for the success of emigration and in preparation for her own emigration scheme, the Family Colonization Loan Society which was established in 1849. She also published a few of these statements in her advertisement for the scheme in *Household Words*.<sup>46</sup> Strictly speaking, the statements are not 'letters', but they share much in common with them, which is why they have been included in my inquiry. As in the case of letters, for example, the emigrants' voices in the statements are to be read by those 'back home'; they contain similar news of prosperity, happiness and success that all emigrants shared; and, as we shall see below, they are similarly concerned with their own status as authentic texts.

Sockett, Barclay, Collins and Chisholm's collections are all determined by what Leah Price calls the 'discontinuous structure of the anthology'.<sup>47</sup> The mediating hand of the editor is sometimes made apparent in the form of a preface, where readers are informed of how the letters were obtained and reassured that no changes have been made apart from to the spellings. Across the collection, however, there is no overriding narrative to unify the disparate texts in the collection of printed emigrants' letters. Instead, the 'collections of letters, like collections of anthology pieces, are strung together from self-contained texts signed by multiple authors':<sup>48</sup> the 'self-contained' nature of each individual letter challenges how we read across the gaps that simultaneously connect and separate them. It is important to remember, however, that this is also the case when letters are arranged by theme. The aim of the themed collection is not to create an epistolary narrative: the sense of development and change that emerges is a result of the reader organising the disparate elements of various letters into a narrative. Even in the vast majority of collections where there is no unifying narrative, the impressions are just as rich. In the collection, each emigrant's letter is patterned against another: each letter voices a unique set of experiences, fears

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<sup>46</sup> See Caroline Chisholm, 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters', *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, pp. 19–24. See also Julie M. Barst, 'Pushing the Envelope: Caroline Chisholm, Colonial Australia, and the Transformative Power of Postal Networks', *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism*, 33 (2011), 200–216, for a discussion on Chisholm's reliance on a global postal service.

<sup>47</sup> Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: from Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 91.

<sup>48</sup> Price, p. 14.

and hopes, and yet shares the same generic features of the surrounding letters. Reading through the collection, one forms an idea of how to emigrate and of what the experience of it was like. Thus, the impressions that one forms of emigrant experience are a result of cumulative contact with the polyphony of the collection, however it is organised.

The drive to publish such collections of letters was, in part, a self-interested measure on the part of both editors and publishers. Publishing emigrants' letters had remunerative potential, and given that any given volume could have, as few or as many, and, as little or as much, organisation as desired, they were relatively quick and easy to put together. The best example of such opportunistic publishing in this study is perhaps Robert Best Ede, who published *Dorking Emigrants*. Based in Dorking, Ede was also a local newsagent, an agent for *Sussex Agricultural Express*, a bookseller, a printer, a vendor, offered a circulating library and a reading room.<sup>49</sup> His publishing business ran for fifteen years from 1832 to 1845, and the fact that he decided to publish *Dorking Emigrants* suggests that he took advantage of local events to make a quick pound or two for himself.

The same is true of bigger publishing companies with strong colonial identifications such as Smith & Elder,<sup>50</sup> which published *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* in 1843, when the New Zealand Company was going through a particularly difficult time. The Company was formed in 1839, following a merger between the New Zealand Colonisation Company, the New Zealand Land Company and the 1825 New Zealand Company, in a plan for 'systematic colonization' spearheaded by Edward Gibbon

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<sup>49</sup> 'Robert Best Ede', *British Book Trade Index*

<<http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/Details.htm?TraderID=21832>> [Accessed 10 November 2011]. From 1835, Ede also had an office at 79 Bishopsgate which closed at the same time as his Dorking branch in 1845. See 'Robert Best Ede', *British Book Trade Index*

<<http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/Details.htm?TraderID=21833>> [Accessed 22 March 2014].

<sup>50</sup> Smith & Elder is an example of a metropolitan publisher actively involved in promoting and encouraging colonial emigration. By the mid-1840s, Smith & Elder had already developed a strong interest in colonial publishing, and this extended to colonial emigrational literature. At the back of this edition of *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* is an advertisement of 'Works on Emigration, Recently Published by Smith & Elder,' which indicates the extent of their emigrational publishing. See also Bill Bell, *A Half-Century of Publishing: Smith & Elder Imprints 1817-1870* (Bristol: Simon Eliot and Michael Turner, 1996).

Wakefield, but by 1843 it had had to declare itself insolvent and was suffering once again from tense relations with the Colonial Office.<sup>51</sup> The letters in the collection are an effort to make some money and renew public trust in the company: cumulatively, they project an image of a young, thriving town with a mix of agricultural labourers and artisans, but which would welcome more affluent emigrants. This image is repeated over and over again in each letter: the collection thus projects New Zealand as an example of successful emigration.

### Disseminating Information

Despite being propaganda, printed emigrants' letters were also sold and consumed as sources of information, providing a fresh alternative to the dull and dry lists of imperatives that at times dominated emigrant handbooks and guides.<sup>52</sup> As we have seen, they gave interested readers insight into the emotional investments required by emigration. However, they also provided a wealth of detail on the practicalities of emigration by relying on local colour and lively personal accounts. Emigrants were keen to share the newness of their experiences with their friends and family back in Britain: their letters are filled with accounts of the meticulous preparations for the voyage and of life in the colonies. Part of the task of the letters, therefore, is to negotiate the transfer of one reality — that of everyday life in the colonies — to another — the interested reader in Britain. Publishers and editors saw this transfer as one of the key selling points of their literature: over and over again, the claim they make is that their collection offers 'information' on emigration. *Counsel's* aim, for example, is to provide information that is 'useful and necessary to the emigrant'.<sup>53</sup> Collins's *Emigrant's Guide* gives 'a detailed account of all which is essential and really useful to the Emigrant' and aims to 'furnish him with such information as is absolutely necessary to

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<sup>51</sup> For more information on the history of the Company, see Patricia Burns, *Fatal Success: A History of the New Zealand Company*, ed. by Henry Richardson (London: Heinemann Reed, 1989).

<sup>52</sup> A. C. Buchanan's *For the Information of Emigrants arriving at New York, and who are Desirous of Settling in Canada* (Quebec: [n. pub.], 1834), for example, is a leaflet filled with dense text and dry imperatives.

<sup>53</sup> *Counsel*, p. xi.

enable him to judge rightly of the advantages or disadvantages attending a removal to that country'.<sup>54</sup> Smith & Elder publish *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants* in response to 'numerous applications [...] for information respecting New Zealand'.<sup>55</sup> As we shall see below, the 'information' in the letters is designed to assert a positive sense of difference and the idea that life in the colonies is like that in Britain, but better.

Having taken the journey to the colonies themselves, emigrants were in a good position to offer advice to those in Britain who wanted to follow. In 1829, James and Harriot Parks wrote to their father with an inventory of foodstuff necessary for the voyage:

Be sure to bring plenty of flour, some dried ham, and other bacon, plenty of potatoes, plenty of butter, sugar, tea, coffee, oatmeal, patent groats, rice, salt, vinegar, a few bottles of port wine to make sap, if you are ill. Take care your biscu'ts [*sic*] are good: be sure to bring plenty of flour and rice; don't be afraid of bringing too much, nor few. Great many in our vessel would give 3 times the value of a thing before they got over. Take ginger with you for your sap; plenty of rush candles: we had not near enough.<sup>56</sup>

'We had not near enough': the letter acts as a forewarner, advising those reading it how to avoid the pitfalls of emigration by learning from the experiences of those who have gone before. James and Harriot Parks emigrated with other members of their family: letters from John and Hester Parks are also included in the collection.<sup>57</sup> The latter couple wrote home to their father, echoing the advice to 'bring plenty of flour to sea' but also exhorting him to 'not let Mr. Beck buy a parcel of salt beef 3 years old, as he did for us, and sea-biscuits not fit to eat'.<sup>58</sup> Swindling emigrants seems to have been something of an occupation for Mr. Beck. James and Harriot Parks continue the complaints against him in a poetic tirade:

Be sure and don't let that infernal rogue lay in your provisions, nor anybody else; but see it all put up yourself [...] we had beef 2 years old

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<sup>54</sup> Collins, *Emigrant's Guide*, Preface, [n.p.].

<sup>55</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters*, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, the letters do not make clear how James and Harriot are related to John and Hester. They are presumably two siblings and their partners.

<sup>58</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters*, pp. 28–9.

not fit for a dog; our tea was not half tea; our oatmeal was half ground peas; our split peas, gray peas; our biscuits was the worst that could be got.<sup>59</sup>

Openly circulating in print, these accusations against Mr. Beck became a form of ‘internationalised gossip’:<sup>60</sup> not only do they potentially damage his reputation (the lack of available historical information means that it is not possible to trace whether or not this is intentional), but they also warn other emigrants against relying on him.

Emigrants’ letters were more than just a means of advising family members on how to organise the journey out, or what to expect from the settlement: they are frequently filled with requests for things to be sent over, such as the example below:

It would be desirable if you could send or bring some seeds; an English pint of good potatoe [*sic*] oats, barley, a few seeds of the best kinds of potatoe, some yellow turnip seeds, early carrots, onions, caraway seed, some greens and cabbage seeds, a few roots of strawberries. We have wild gooseberries in the woods, but not garden gooseberries.<sup>61</sup>

Requests for seeds such as this are commonplace in emigrants’ letters. John Plotz argues in *Portable Property*, that in the context of migration, familiar everyday plants can become iconic signifiers of identity. He cites the example of Harriet Tytler, an Englishwoman, ‘born, bred and married in India’ who steals and first tastes strawberries at the age of eight. Plotz writes that ‘Tytler cannot literally resist the chance literally to ingest England. That bit of strawberry theft exemplifies the cultural practices that allow self-styled exiles to think of England as a tangible alma mater, not a distant speck on the map’.<sup>62</sup> Familiar everyday plants carry the same symbolic weight for emigrants: the eagerness of the emigrant quoted earlier for ‘*English* potato oats’ is not mere chance, but an assertion of identity. It speaks of a need to recreate the foreign landscape in the image of England. The planting of seeds from England in the colonies literalises the transplantation of ‘home’ in foreign landscapes. Francis Brady, emigrant

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<sup>59</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters*, p. 31.

<sup>60</sup> See Gerber, *Authors*, pp. 98–109.

<sup>61</sup> *Counsel*, p. 34. Unfortunately, we have no biographical information on the emigrant, only that they were writing to their brother.

<sup>62</sup> John Plotz, *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 45.

to New Zealand ‘advise[s] all persons to take garden seeds with them, the sweetbriar and the hawthorn-berry in particular, though the country abounds with the most beautiful shrubs and myrtles, there is nothing so suitable for hedges’.<sup>63</sup>

Nostalgia is implicit within these requests, not only for the familiar sights of England, but also because of the domestic practices that centre around such plants, such as gooseberry- or strawberry-picking. However, as well as encoding a backward glance towards England, such requests can also be a glance to the future. One emigrant, for example, writes:

We are very ill off here for clover to the cattle; it is not to be bought; I mean *red* clover, which is best. Will you therefore bring as much as sow two acres; the quantity will be about 16 lb. Could you also bring some rye grass seed, a little will do as we can raise more from it. We have Timothy grass here in its place, but we want to try it.<sup>64</sup>

Clearly, here the desire is not to recreate the familiar country hedgerows and gardens of England, but to find the right kind of fodder for cattle. The request speaks of labour and trade. Requests for seeds thus compact many different meanings into them.

Although these personal requests in print may be worded the same as in the manuscript version, they take the form of implied advice when they circulate in public networks.

The implication of such statements would have been apparent to potential readers: aware that emigrants before them had required these things, they would have been reminded or warned to pack similar things.

But if such requests speak of a lack in the colonies, there is plenty in the letters to show the colonies as a vibrant, thriving place:

Do not distress yourself preparing great store of things, as if you could get nothing here. We can buy cotton prints, and cotton of all kinds, as cheap as at home. You may bring a few cuts of worsted for stockings, but we have far finer wool, and cheaper, than with you.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Settlers & Labouring Emigrants*, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Counsel*, p. 58.

<sup>65</sup> *Counsel*, p. 59. Names are blanked out in this volume. The letter is introduced as: ‘Extract of a Letter from Mrs. ---- to Mrs. ---- from the same place of the same date’.

The comment ‘as if you could get nothing here’ serves to allay potential fears back home that the colonies were undeveloped places marked by the absence of any society. Cumulatively, the image they build of the colonies is that of an already established way of life: by stressing the similarities between Britain and the colonies, the implicit reassurance is that the emigrant would not be travelling to the depths of wilderness, but to a place where the needs of everyday life could be readily sustained. This reading is supported by the lists of prices of everyday commodities in the colonies, a hallmark of the genre. The following, from George Boxall, a Petworth emigrant, is a typical example:

This is the prices of this country. Barrel of flour, 196 lbs. price £1. 5s. Pork, 3d. per lb. Best green tea, 3s. 9d. Best butter, 7.5d. Sugar, 6d. Tobacco, 1s. a pound. Best mutton and beef, 2.5 a pound. We makes [sic] our own soap and candles. Price for work; sawyers, 10s. per hundred, single men about £20.<sup>66</sup>

Another emigrant writes:

I will now state the prices of a few things in their money: you will mind that a dollar is equal to 4s. 2d. English money, and a cent is equal to one halfpenny, and no more [...] Whenever “corn” is mentioned, it means “Indian corn”, all other kinds being called “grain”. Shelled corn 45 cents per bushel; flour 4 dollars 62½ cents per barrel of 96 lb. or 14 English stones; sugar 9 cents to 10 cents per lb.; molasses 40 cents per gallon; window glass 1½ cents per foot; cast iron goods 5 cents per lb.<sup>67</sup>

These repetitive lists, that fill endless lines with seemingly trivial detail, have lost some of their potency for us now.<sup>68</sup> Yet, as Cameron et al. argue, it is these small but important facts that would have attracted the most attention from interested readers:

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<sup>66</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Collins, *Emigrant's Guide*, p. 135.

<sup>68</sup> This is demonstrated by the fact that Erickson decides to edit them out of most of her letters in her collection *Invisible Immigrants*. See p. 9: ‘In the rather unpleasant task of cutting, I have omitted references to letters, to health, and messages from other immigrants and to other persons, once the network of friends and acquaintances of the immigrant has been established in the early letters. I have also cut most accounts of ocean voyages, most lists of American prices and some rather shallow descriptions. This material is not without interest, but is not central to the themes of the book’. As Fitzpatrick notes, such editorial decisions mean that the affective quality of the letters is lost. See *Oceans*, pp. 20–21.

potential emigrants would have scoured these lists, anxious for any indications that they gave of what life in the colonies was like.<sup>69</sup> As Fender argues, the lists signify a particular political and moral code:

Taken as a whole, the itemized lists imply a whole political economy – and a morality as well: the material richness of ordinary commodities as against the vain expectations of luxury; trade as against hoarded wealth; the potential for improvement as against instant gratification [...] there is something persuasive in the very poverty of their construction – their lack of adjectives, or other qualifiers, their simple paratactic compounding of one substantive after another, their minute qualification down to the last half-penny.<sup>70</sup>

Fender's reading is persuasive and nuanced: in addition to providing interested readers with information on the price of everyday products, these lists evoke visions for a future life that is based on trade and focussed on an attainable level of wealth. But there is also an implicit comparison in these lists: rather than simply laying out the details of everyday colonial life, they also implicitly ask the reader to compare them to prices in England. These itemized lists encourage an oscillation between home and the colony, the colony and home, which allows potential emigrants to weigh up and measure where the more economic and efficient lifestyle can be.

The kinds of objects mentioned in the letters — lace, net, seeds — are all everyday, ordinary objects: the stress is on the *ordinariness* of everyday settler life. The information in the letters is meant to make the unfamiliar familiar, to stress the banality of the everyday and construct the image that life in the colonies is essentially the same as that in England, but the chances of attaining material success are greater. Asserting this positive difference has the effect of reducing the sense of distance between the colonies and England, as can be seen from the observations on one emigrant:

I would not have you think that there are none here but pauper lunatics, for when we first reached Guelph, we were agreeably surprised to see a number of gentlemen dressed in white trousers, flannel jackets, and

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<sup>69</sup> Cameron et al., p. xli.

<sup>70</sup> Fender, p. 50.



straw hats playing at cricket on the green, and they were quite adepts at the game; they meet to play every Saturday.<sup>71</sup>

The image of men in white, playing cricket on the village green constructs the colony — Canada — as the quintessential English village: by moving across the Atlantic and settling in Canada, one is not moving so far from home at all. Publishers were keen to establish that, far from being removed from the vicissitudes of life, the colony was another version of home, a place that is connected to England through its cultural practices, but also literally, a place of connections, where emigrants could bump into people they had known in England.

### **Migrant Letters, Authenticating Narratives**

Whether emigrants were travelling across the Atlantic to North America and Canada, or around the world to Australia and New Zealand, the geographical distance made it hard to comprehend what far off places were like. Lists of information stress the similarities between the colonies and England and the connections between them: this way of making familiar was one way to negotiate the distance between them. Fender argues, the lists of commodities emphasise the everydayness of emigrant life, and help situate the colony not as a mythological Eden, but as familiar, real terrain. They ‘ground the settler’s discourse in the solid materiality of everyday experience’, and in doing so, ‘convey an authentic sense of what was relatively unfamiliar to the writer, and absolutely unknown to the reader’. Focussing on the everyday ‘deflect[s] the suspicion of fanciful exaggeration so often attaching to travel accounts of faraway places’.<sup>72</sup> Fender’s argument that the platitudes of everyday life that these lists of commodities invoke are an authenticating strategy is persuasive: they evidence the fact of the migration *and* the facts of emigrant life. Emigrants were keen to assert that their letters were not the result of ‘fanciful invention’ or ‘travel lying’. In his letter, Dorking emigrant J. Tewsley, for example, ‘promise[s]’ to ‘give [the reader] the truest

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<sup>71</sup> *Copies and Extracts of Letters from Settlers in Upper Canada* (London: Marchant, 1833), p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Fender, pp. 50–51.

information of this country'.<sup>73</sup> Frederick Hasted assures his readers that his account of Canada is 'a true picture'.<sup>74</sup> Collins states that 'he has drawn his information from sources so authentic as not to be refuted by any arguments, however specious; and his principal object has been, to give every possible information in his power, and that information to be TRUTH'.<sup>75</sup> However, as we shall see below, emigrants and editors alike did not stop merely at stating that their letters contained true and original facts, but devised other strategies to overcome their reader's potential suspicion and assert the authenticity of the text.

The task of the printed letters was to make clear to the reader that the incentives to emigrate that they contained were not fabricated: hard facts of everyday life in the colonies were one way of ensuring this. But it is important to remember that letters were 'entangled'<sup>76</sup> in the transfer of information from the colonies to England: they did not simply *relay* information from emigrants to the colonies, but were imbricated in and constructed by this transfer of information. In *The Portable Bunyan*, Isabel Hofmeyr argues that, 'when books travel they change shape. They are excised, summarized, abridged, and bowdlerized by the new intellectual formations into which they migrate':<sup>77</sup> in other words, a text's geographical migration is simultaneously a migration of form. This is particularly apposite in the case of emigrants' letters as they are caught up by the print market when they arrive in England. Benjamin Smith, the editor of *Twenty-Four Letters* describes how he sends out 'two persons in opposite directions, with orders to call at all the cottages where they had reason to think that letters had been lately received from America' and prints the 'first 24' that are collected.<sup>78</sup> Printed emigrants' letters were therefore doubly migrant: they move both geographically, and in form. The migration of the letter from manuscript to print was a site of particular anxiety: how were readers to know whether editors had changed

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<sup>73</sup> *Dorking Emigrants*, p. 28.

<sup>74</sup> *Letters from Settlers in Upper Canada* (London: Marchant, 1834), p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Collins, *Emigrant's Guide*, 'Preface', [n.p].

<sup>76</sup> Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>77</sup> Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 2–3.

<sup>78</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters*, p. 2.

anything? Recognising this potential source of anxiety, editors offered viewings of the manuscript letters in their offices. Interested readers would be able to come in and compare the printed edition of letters to the manuscript originals. In his *Emigrant's Guide*, the radical William Cobbett republishes the letters that appear in *Twenty-Four Letters*. He writes that as he 'did not know' Benjamin Smith, he 'thought it necessary to go to the parties themselves, and obtain the originals':

The *originals* will be deposited at Fleet Street, for one week after the publication of this book; and, when that week is passed, I shall return them to the parties from whom I have received them. I shall lodge them at Fleet Street, for the purpose of being inspected by any gentleman who may have the curiosity to do it; and I do it also to the honour of the parties who have written the letters.<sup>79</sup>

Other editors also offered viewings of the manuscript letters. Sockett kept original letters in his office, and other newspaper editors also mentioned that the originals were available at their offices.<sup>80</sup> It is difficult to determine whether the opportunity to check the published letter would have been taken up, or how often, but the offers of viewings indicate, not so much that *seeing* is believing, but that the *possibility* of seeing is believing: this is an authenticating strategy where the veracity of the published letter is endorsed by the *possibility* of a sensory engagement with the text.

Such viewings were a means of reassuring readers that the letter's migration of form had not compromised its authenticity. This system of authenticating the printed letter does not take into account the fact that both emigrants and their families were hugely anxious that the manuscript letter's authenticity was compromised by its mobility, as it travelled through the postal system in England and abroad. In 1832 Mary Holden, a Petworth emigrant, added a postscript to her letter to inform her family that they 'have enquired about the letters, to know the fact and truth about their being

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<sup>79</sup> William Cobbett, *The Emigrant's Guide: In Ten Letters Addressed to the Tax-Payers of England Containing Information of Every Kind, Necessary to Persons who are About to Emigrate including Several Authentic and Most Interesting Letters from English Emigrants, Now in America to their Relations in England* (London: the author, 1829), p. 43; p. 44. Original emphasis. I have not focussed in this chapter on Cobbett's radical politics and his encouragement to people to emigrate to America. See Richard Ingrams, *The Life and Adventures of William Cobbett* (London: Harper, 2005), p. 145.

<sup>80</sup> Cameron et al., p. xxxi.

opened by the head gentlemen' and are 'sure now that they are not opened until you receives [*sic*] them'. The significance of this postscript may be understood with reference to a comment she had made earlier in her letter: 'you may understand that all the letters be all opened, before they go out of this Country, to see that there is not any falsehood sent; and if there is anything in them, against the country, they are kept back'.<sup>81</sup> It is unclear how well-grounded these fears were, but Holden is not alone in reassuring sceptical readers in England that her letters are not tampered with. John Watson, for example, asks his mother to '[t]ell William we are astonished at him doubting the truths of our letters: we can assure him the letters don't get altered before they reach him. America is as good as we have stated before; and he would find it so if he had heart enough to come'.<sup>82</sup>

The opening of letters addressed to another person was against the law, so it is unlikely that emigrants' letters would have been opened by either emigration agents, land company officials, or postmasters.<sup>83</sup> However, the anxiety seems to have been prevalent. In his introduction, Sockett details the precautions people took to 'guard against the possibility of imposition' and prove that their letters were not 'deceitful fabrications':

Reports having circulated by persons unfriendly to emigration, that the very favourable accounts which had been received from preceding emigrants, were deceitful fabrications: many curious devices were practised, by the friends of those who went from Sussex, to guard against the possibility of imposition. The paper on which letters from Canada were written, was prepared in England, either by a heading in the name of a friend, a name written across, certain mystical holes pricked with a pin, or, what was more general, a sort of tally, formed by a corner of the paper being scrawled upon, and then torn off, the piece torn away being carefully preserved at home. In one instance, a very small, and peculiarly shaped, crooked pin, placed under the seal, came back from the 'far west;' with especial directions, that this infallible proof should be again returned thither. These directions have

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<sup>81</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 44; p. 43.

<sup>82</sup> *Twenty-Four Letters*, p. 24.

<sup>83</sup> I am grateful to Abhijit Gupta for pointing this out to me in an earlier version of this chapter as a conference paper.

been complied with, and the crooked pin, is now once more on its voyage.<sup>84</sup>

To show that letters were originally marked, Sockett put introductory lines above the relevant letters. For example, above a couple of letters, he writes that ‘The two following letters were both written on a sheet of paper, from which a corner had been torn, and left with a relation in England’ (Fig. 1).<sup>85</sup>

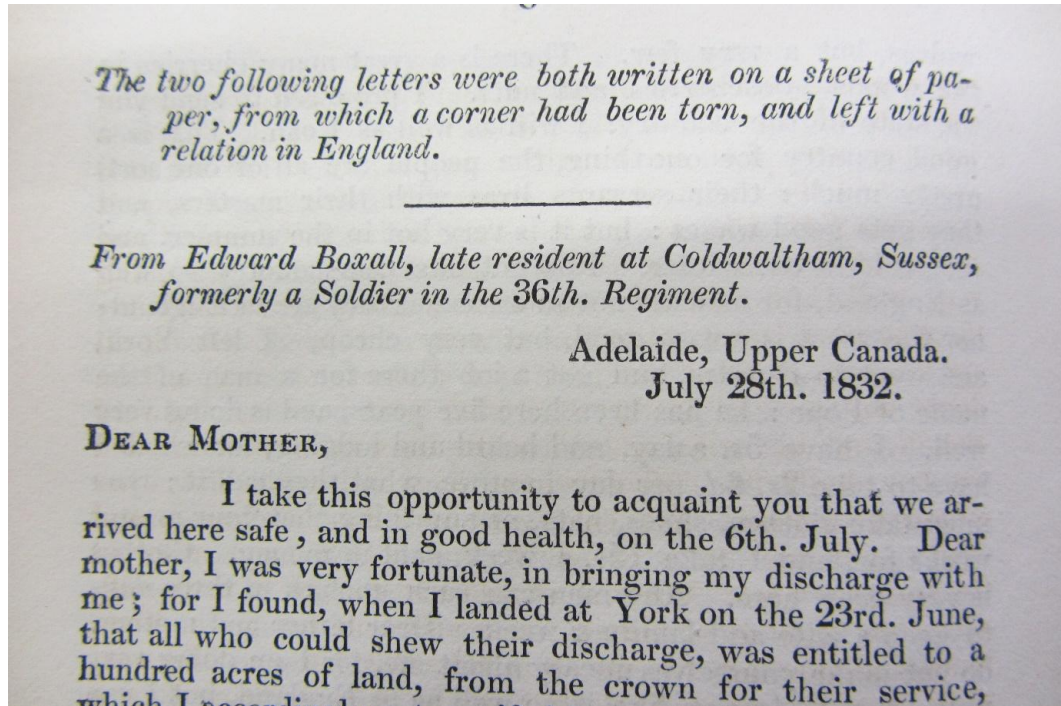


Figure 1: Sockett's Introductory Lines for Boxall's Letter

One of the letters is from Edward Boxall and the other from William Cooper, which indicates that the practice of marking letters was not particular to any one family. If the letter from America returned with it with a torn corner that fitted the piece left behind, readers at home would know that the letter was indeed genuine. Emigrants also marked the writing paper in different ways. Sarah Holden writes at the top of the letter with instructions to her brother: ‘When you are in Canada, fill this up, and send it to me; send all the news you can: say the truth and nothing but the truth’ (Fig. 2).<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. viii.

<sup>85</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 43.

*From Mary, the daughter of Thomas Holden, Widower, who went from Kirdford, Sussex, with 7 children. To Serjt. Holden, 2nd. Regt. Tower Hamlets Militia.*

The heading was written on the paper, before it left England.

DEAR BROTHER,—*When you are in Canada, fill this up, and send it to me; send all the news you can; say the truth, and nothing but the truth. Sarah Holden, Slinfold near Horsham, Sussex, England.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

This comes with our kind love to you all, hoping to find you all in good health, as, thank God, it leaves us alive, and well at present. We were all very sea sick, and had a very long and rough voyage. On the 2nd. of May, about half past 4 in the morning, the sea was very rough, and the ship was tossed, so that the berths, on our side, fell from one end of the ship to the other, but no one was hurt a great deal.

Figure 2: Sockett's Introductory Lines for Holden's Letter

Above another letter, Sockett writes, 'From Thomas Adsett, who went from North Chapel, Sussex, to the Rev. Robert Ridsdale, Rector of that parish. [Written on a sheet of paper, which Mr. Ridsdale had directed to himself, and given to the man when he went away]' (Fig. 3).<sup>87</sup>

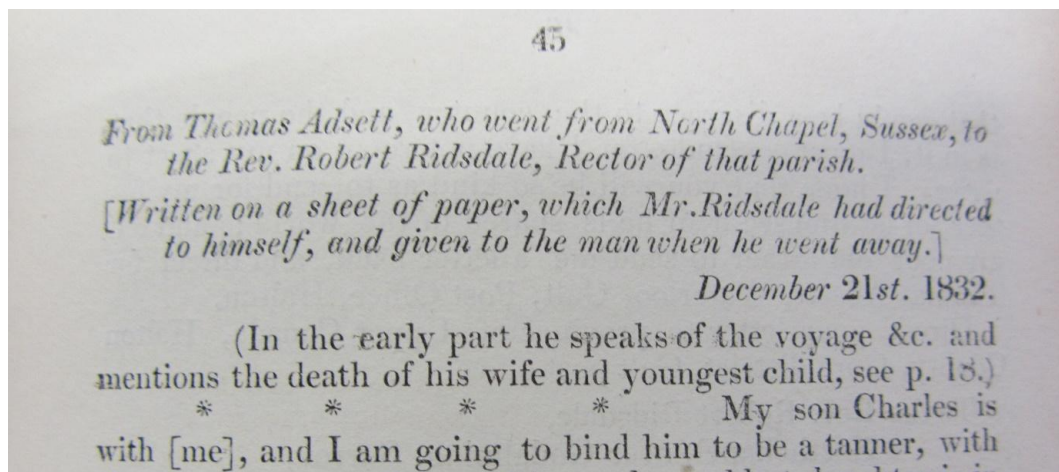


Figure 3: Sockett's Introductory Lines for Adsett's Letter

<sup>87</sup> *Sussex Emigrants*, p. 45.

The idea is the same in the last two examples: if the letter returns with the respective lines written across the top, the readers at home can be assured that it has not been tampered with.

Caroline Chisholm's pamphlets, *Comfort for the Poor!* (1847) and *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered* (1847) also sought to authenticate themselves in the eyes of the reader. As oral histories, these statements were not materially marked, but similar to Sockett's letters, Chisholm's statements mentioned accompanying objects. Sometimes these were intangible, in the form of memories, as in the case of the emigrant who cites '[a]s a token', a memory of him 'stood crying over my sleeping child, and thought I could not leave it; as a further token, a snow-storm came on'.<sup>88</sup> More often than not though, tokens were solid, material objects: 'as a token [that] he [the family friend in England] may know you [Chisholm] have seen my own self, he gave me at parting the half of his pledge ticket, the part that has the medal'.<sup>89</sup> Again, any friends or members of family reading these statements in England would know if the accounts were true if the memory or the object tallied with what they knew. As we shall see below, these tokens played an important part in the printed letter's performance of authenticity.

### The Authenticity Effect

In *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered*, Chisholm explains her motivations for having a small object or memory accompany the statements. Each statement is

attested [to] by the relators, by some little family token or incident known to their relatives at home, with the design that this should stand as a guarantee to those here that the statements in question are not fictitious, and that their friends might place confidence in my opinion or advice, should they wish to emigrate.<sup>90</sup>

Though Sockett does not explicitly mention this in his preface, nonetheless, the same motivations for encouraging people to emigrate underpin his collection of letters. As

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<sup>88</sup> Chisholm, *Comfort*, p. 10.

<sup>89</sup> Chisholm, *Comfort*, p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> Chisholm, *Emigration*, p. 18.

mentioned previously, editors needed to gain the public's trust if their collection of letters was to sell and to successfully promote emigration. The marking of letters, the accompanying object and the mention of shared histories, worked as a kind of code, a guarantee of authenticity amongst a closed group of people. But, while print replicates the text of the letter, it cannot replicate any accompanying token — and indeed, to do so would beat the objective. Instead, the letter retains the textual traces of the object under question to produce its own 'authenticity effect'. I am borrowing here from Roland Barthes's work in *The Rustle of Language* on the 'Reality Effect'. Barthes argues that all too often, we overlook the significance of concrete objects in novels and assume that they require no further interrogation beyond an acknowledgement of their presence within the text.<sup>91</sup> He argues, however, that rather than 'corresponding to a kind of narrative *luxury*', these textual objects help establish the 'effect' of being in the real world. At first, to make the connection between the reality effect and emigrants' tokens seems a little counter-intuitive. The 'reality effect', the illusion that we are in the real world when we read the story, is produced by the presence of such 'meaningless' detail. On the other hand, emigrant tokens are filled with meaning: they strive to fit into a connected world, or rather, to make apparent the connections in a world where people are moving further and further away from each other.

The seminal word in Barthes's argument, however, is not 'reality', but 'effect'. Mentioning in the printed text the ways in which the letter or statement was authenticated makes the reader aware of the once-present authenticating token. Though the reader of the printed letter may never experience a sensory engagement with the authenticating object, Sockett and Chisholm leave the textual traces in the letters because they show that the manuscript letter *was* once authenticated — and this thus validates the authority of the published letter. In the same way that for Barthes, the reality effect is something more than a gesture to the world outside the novel, the illusion of authenticity that emigrant tokens produce is constituted in successfully creating the sense of a history to the text, in the sense of a pin or the piece of coal

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<sup>91</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Reality Effect', in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 141–149 (p. 147).



originally *having-been-there*. In *Illuminations*, Walter Benjamin similarly argues, that the ‘authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony *to the history which it has experienced*’.<sup>92</sup> Just as textual objects help establish the effect of reality within the novel for Barthes, so too the presence of the material world in emigrants’ letters, whether they be in the form of lists of everyday commodities or emigrants’ objects, help establish the effect of its authenticity. Offering viewings of the original manuscript worked by asserting that a manuscript letter once existed; the authenticity effect produced by these tokens similarly works by asserting that the emigrant token once existed.

In effect, then, collections of emigrants’ letters sell a version of the authentic, just as much as they are selling information on how to emigrate, or curious tales of private lives. In *Consuming Traditions*, Elizabeth Outka argues that ‘[w]e usually perceive the selling of authenticity as fraud, as the inauthentic masquerading as the authentic’.<sup>93</sup> Part of the reason that emigrants’ letters escape this claim is because when they construct their own authenticity through the use of emigrants’ tokens, they gesture not only to the validity of their content, but also to the affective history encoded in these emigrants’ tokens. The affective work of emigrants’ tokens has already been looked at by Michele Field and Timothy Millett.<sup>94</sup> As emigrants moved away from their families, they feared that their kinship ties were being tampered with, that someone was interfering from outside of their personal networks of circulation. Sitting alongside these fears is the hope that despite being separated by time and distance — most likely for the rest of their lives — they would not lose contact with all whom they had once known. It is interesting to consider that these tokens became necessary because of the

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<sup>92</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), p. 215. Emphasis added.

<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Outka, *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 5. See also, Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 180: ‘intriguingly, advertisers set materialism within the context of pastoral romanticism, classical culture, and evangelical conversion’.

<sup>94</sup> Timothy Millett, ‘Leaden Hearts’, in Michele Field and Timothy Millett, *Convict Love Tokens: The Leaden Hearts the Convicts Left Behind* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1998), pp. 5–30.

dislocation from place — because people move away from each other and because letters circulate in different networks. As much as letters stressed the possibilities of new beginnings in the colonies, they simultaneously stressed that emigration did not necessarily entail a clean break from their old lives. One of the emigrants Chisholm interviewed, John H---- sends a piece of coal with his name ‘engraved’ on it back home. His brother’s reply is printed below his statement:

‘The person you mention, John H-----, is my father’s son, and brother to me. If you have any news to communicate from John, should feel very much obliged if you will do so. I am the brother you mention who engraved his name on a piece of coal; he emigrated from Liverpool about six years ago, and have had only two letters from him during that time’.<sup>95</sup>

The shared nature of the pin under the seal or the piece of paper with lines written on it that is passed back and forth opens up the opportunity for an affective discourse based on an imagined realm of touch. Similarly, given as a gift and returned as a token, the piece of coal is the material artefact through which these two brothers trace themselves back to each other after a period of six years. Though the printed letter or statement itself takes no part in the consolidation of affect between family members, the tokens in them show that the dislocation from their homes is not necessarily a shedding of history, or a shedding of relations and family ties. They act as a reassurance that not only are the places to which emigrants are going similar to England, but that the affective networks in which they are enmeshed *can* be extended across time and space. In effect, then, through their evocations of the material world, printed emigrants’ letters sell not just a version of authenticity, but also the affective histories which the tokens evoke.

Thus, printed emigrants’ letters are a particular subset of booster literature that engaged with the complexity of their own authenticity, even while they aimed to provide practical information on emigration. Carrying the traces of their manuscript origins, printed emigrants’ letters constantly oscillate between the personal and public networks that form the conditions of their circulation. In a curious act of doubling,

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<sup>95</sup> Chisholm, *Emigration*, p. 19.

they become implicated in these networks of circulation, so that wherever they arrive — be it in the hands of village members, or in the hands of the reader — they do so as contested texts, negotiating the facts of their authenticity. They do not fit into the model of a one-way backward glance to the ‘motherland’. Instead, by affirming the similarity between England and her colonies, and that kinship ties *can* be extended over time and space, the letters disrupt that sense of distance between emigrants and England. As the text brings news of the colony into readers’ homes in England, it simultaneously raises suspicions regarding its authenticity.

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to another genre of emigration literature that is formed by the conditions of being mobile: manuscript shipboard emigrant newspapers. In this chapter, I have considered how print is in thrall to its manuscript origins, constantly trying to evoke what was once there. In the next chapter, I explore what it means for this relationship between manuscript and print to be inverted: both the manuscript shipboard periodicals that I look at mimic print newspapers. The conditions of being mobile make printed emigrants’ letters suspect, but how do the conditions of being mobile affect newspapers that are actually produced on the move? What kinds of communities are they produced by, what kinds of communities do they reach and what kinds of communities do they produce? If printed emigrants’ letters disrupt the sense of distance between England and the colonies, how do shipboard periodicals engage with this sense of distance, given that they are produced in the supposedly liminal space of the sea?

## CHAPTER TWO

### Emigrant Shipboard Newspapers: Cultures of Settlement

Writing in her shipboard diary in 1839, the nineteenth-year-old Eliza Darvall notes the appearance of the first issue of a shipboard newspaper. ‘The first paper was published today’, she writes, ‘and received with great applause, Mr. Docker’s leading article being excellent’.<sup>1</sup> Her sister, Emily Darvall, who was older than her by two years and travelling out on the same voyage, makes a similar note in *her* diary: ‘This morning appeared at breakfast the first number of the “Alfred” edited by Mr. Docker, and it created much interest. Although we had only two days [*sic*] notice, everybody had contributed and indeed, many papers were omitted for want of room’.<sup>2</sup> The shipboard newspaper that the Darvall sisters write of, the *Alfred*, is named after the ship on which they and their family were travelling out to Sydney. It is now housed at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, along with the sisters’ diaries.<sup>3</sup> Emily’s comment on papers being

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<sup>1</sup> Eliza Charlotte Darvall, *Diary, 8 Sept.–29 Dec. 1839, with biographical note 1968*. Sydney, Mitchell Library, MLMSS 1547: Microfilm CY 2978, frames 93–149. Jeremy Long has transcribed Eliza Darvall’s diary in Jeremy Long, *Strugglers and Settlers: Darvall Family Letters 1839–1849* (Springwood, NSW: Butterfly Books, 1994), pp. 43–80. In the interests of accessibility, I have quoted from Long’s book throughout this chapter when using Eliza Darvall’s diary, unless otherwise stated. This quotation is from p. 47. All further references to Eliza Darvall’s *Diary* will take the form ‘Long’, followed by the page number.

<sup>2</sup> Emily Darvall, *Typescript Extract of Diary of Miss Emily Darvall, Kept During the Voyage of the ‘Alfred’ from England to Australia in 1839 in Thomas Lodge Murray-Prior papers, 1843–1889, Together with Miscellaneous Family Papers*, p. 13. Sydney, Mitchell Library, MLMSS 3117/Box 11/ Item 2: Microfilm CY 4336. All further references to this text will take the form ‘Darvall’, followed by the page number.

<sup>3</sup> The two Darvall sisters were travelling out with their father, Major Darvall, their mother, another sister, Rose, and two brothers, Fred and Horace. Another brother, John Bayley Darvall, had already set sail with his new wife for Australia a few months earlier on a different voyage. The presence of three texts all relating to the same voyage is an extremely rare occurrence and is most likely due to the social prominence of the Darvall family. Major Darvall had connections with the East India Company; John rose to the position of being a

omitted for want of room speaks of the enthusiasm that people on board the ship had for making the periodical. This would be sustained over the next twelve weeks, as emigrants produced an issue of the *Alfred* each Saturday during the voyage.

In 1868, another ship by the name of *True Briton* set sail from Kent for Melbourne. The journey lasted more than eleven weeks. Unlike the voyage of the *Alfred*, no supporting material in the form of diaries, passenger lists or other official documentation relating to the voyage survives. We can surmise its minimum length from the eleven weekly runs of the shipboard newspaper, the *Open Sea*, which *have* survived, and, like the *Alfred*, are now housed at the Mitchell Library, Sydney. As with the *Alfred*, the *Open Sea* was a collaborative endeavour, produced by emigrants during the lengthy voyage to the Antipodes.<sup>4</sup> Unusually, both these newspapers are handwritten; the vast majority of shipboard newspapers now survive in print, either because they were printed on board the ship (mainly from the 1870s onwards)<sup>5</sup> or because local printers in their destinations printed and sold them as souvenirs. Emigrant shipboard periodicals are an ephemeral genre: having neither the official weighting of surgeon superintendent diaries and captain log-books, nor the affective pull of emigrant diaries and letters, it is unsurprising that a significant proportion of them have not survived. We know this because although emigrants frequently refer to shipboard newspapers in their diaries, a search for them in library catalogues yields no

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very important barrister and politician; and Emily herself became a poet of some importance in her later years.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the three-decade gap between the voyages of the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea*, the length and possible routes of the two ships may not have been too dissimilar as both were clippers, a type of sailing ship. Travel technologies and government legislation steadily improved over the course of the century. While these impacted on the Australia run in terms of passenger health, it is unlikely they would have dramatically impacted upon the length of the voyage. By the 1860s, steamships were becoming more popular than sail, but only on shorter, transatlantic trips. The celebrated *SS Great Britain* made thirty-two trips to Australia between 1852 and 1876, but during the 1850s and 1860s sailing ships were the dominant mode of transport to Australia. See Adrian Ball and Diana Wright, *SS Great Britain* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1981), p. 39. It was only in the 1880s that steamship travel to the Antipodes began to take over sail. See Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 7. For details of the Australia run, see Jack Loney and Peter Stone, *The Australia Run*, Series: Australian Shipwrecks, VI (Benalla: Marine History Publications, 2000), pp. 5–48.

<sup>5</sup> Basil Lubbock, *The Colonial Clippers* (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1968), p. 81.

results.<sup>6</sup> Emigrant brothers, William and Laurence Kennaway, for example write in their diary that ‘A newspaper called the *Sea Pie* has been started to relieve [*sic*] the monotony of the voyage; it comes out every Saturday’.<sup>7</sup> John Clapham, an emigrant to Sydney in 1861, notes in his diary that ‘The *Tiptree Times* was sent for us to read & I read it out for the benefit of us all, it was full of fun. Sporting, Commercial, Domestic, Police Report, etc. etc’.<sup>8</sup> Neither the *Sea Pie* nor the *Tiptree Times* has survived.

Given the relatively small number of shipboard periodicals which have survived, such as the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea*, it is equally unsurprising that the genre as a whole has received little, if any, critical attention.<sup>9</sup> Attending to the cultural moment of emigrant shipboard periodicals’ production unsettles our expectations of genre and throws light on how emigrants articulated the condition of migrancy as a collective endeavour. Critics have previously understood the voyage out and the space of the ship as detached and distinct from the lands of departure and arrival. Janet C. Myers, for example, writes that the ship is a ‘liminal’<sup>10</sup> space, while Michel Foucault more famously describes the ship as ‘a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea’.<sup>11</sup> Attending to the textual activity of the voyage, however, allows a very different spatial politics to emerge. In *Atlas of the European Novel*, Franco Moretti proposes the idea of a ‘literary geography’: a form of reading novels that involves mapping the locations of a novel and seeking to understand what the resulting map

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<sup>6</sup> This is, of course, only an indication — it is feasible that these items simply may not have been catalogued.

<sup>7</sup> *Biscuit and Butter: A Colonist’s Shipboard Fare, the Journal Kept by William & Laurence Kennaway on the Emigrant Ship Canterbury, London to Lyttelton, 1851*, ed. by R. C. Lamb and R. S Gormack (Christchurch: Nag’s Head Press, 1973), p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> John Clapham, *Diary of his Voyage to Sydney, 1860–1861, with Transcription by Margaret Kentley, 1975*. Sydney, Mitchell Library, MLMSS 6944: Microfilm CY 4319, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> By contrast, scholars have focussed on shipboard periodicals of Arctic expeditions in the late-nineteenth century. Their work is important, but the fact that I have had to draw on them highlights the paucity of work on shipboard periodicals in the study of literary cultures of emigration.

<sup>10</sup> Janet C. Myers, *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, trans. by Jay Miskowicz, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22–27 (p. 27).

might tell us about spatial relations.<sup>12</sup> Moretti aims to bring together geography and literary studies. His modes of mapping are what Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker call “‘terra-centric’ narratives’”.<sup>13</sup> In the maps that Moretti draws for us, the ocean is merely distance to be crossed: his lines skim over its surface without pausing to consider the kinds of knotted entanglements that crossing the immense expanse of water poses.

Using the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* as case studies of manuscript periodicals produced during the voyage out, this chapter argues that the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* perform aspects of print periodical culture in order to invest themselves with some of the qualities of land-based periodicals. In doing so, they aspire to produce a provisional culture of settlement on board the ship, as a preparatory step to the real task of settlement in the colonies. As Katherine Foxhall argues, ‘[v]oyages did not just deliver emigrants and convicts, they made them into colonists’.<sup>14</sup> Foxhall is not making the nineteenth-century distinction here between a working-class ‘emigrant’ and a middle-class ‘colonist’. The transition that she argues occurs during the voyage shifts the emphasis from the sole fact of moving away (emigration) and instead places it on the fact of settlement in new lands (colonization). This chapter shows that, through their enactment of a provisional culture of settlement on board the ship, shipboard periodicals such as the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* participate in this transformation from emigrant to colonist. By producing a culture of settlement on board the ship, shipboard periodicals connect the metropole and colony in a continuum of geographical distance. In doing so, they expose how the ‘process of spatial construction occurs at sea as well as on land’,<sup>15</sup> and expose how the colonial ideology of settlement is at work in the supposedly liminal space of the sea.

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<sup>12</sup> Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker, ‘Introduction’, in *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migrations and the Making of the Modern World*, ed. by Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 1–19 (p. 1).

<sup>14</sup> Katherine Foxhall, *Health, Medicine, and the Sea: Australian Voyages, c.1815–1860* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 6.

## Performing Print

The *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* are produced nearly three decades apart: between them, they cover a span of time during which the idea of emigration to Australia consolidated itself as a valid and legitimate move. The opening up of free emigration to Australia, the gold rush of 1851 and the work of philanthropists, such as Caroline Chisholm, had all cumulatively helped to erode the negative image of the place as a penal colony and instead set in place a more positive way of thinking about it. The sheer number of stories set in the Australian bush that circulated in land-based periodicals reflected this: although a few portrayed the negative aspects of emigration,<sup>16</sup> by far the most were positive stories of settlement.<sup>17</sup> Mainstream periodicals, such as *Household Words*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Sharpe's London Journal* and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, teemed with news from the colonies, letters from emigrants, updates on emigration policy, as well as fictional and non-fictional accounts of emigration. Journals dedicated to providing information for intending emigrants, such as the *Colonist*, *Sidney's Emigrant Journal* and *Sidney's Emigrant's Journal and Traveller's Magazine* were also set up.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See for example Samuel Sidney, 'Two-Handed Dick the Stockman: An Adventure in the Bush', *Household Words*, 4 May 1850, 141–144, a story of how a settler camp is ambushed by violent 'Blacks'.

<sup>17</sup> The number of stories of emigration and the colonies in periodicals are so many that it would serve little purpose even to attempt to provide a selection here. E. M. Palmegiano's *The British Empire in the Victorian Press, 1832–1867: A Bibliography* (London: Garland Publishing Press, 1987) is a very good bibliography for stories relating to empire and the colonies as an initial starting point. See the introduction, pp. 1–57 for a general account of empire and periodicals and pp. 29–43 for an account of Australia, New Zealand and British North America in the periodicals. Palmegiano's bibliography is extensive and covers fifty major periodicals, such as *Ainsworth's Magazine*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Westminster Review*. For the entries on the empire in *Household Words*, see pp. 151–161.

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, although emigration was a popular feature in periodicals, periodicals that were dedicated specifically to emigration often fared poorly. *The Colonist*, edited by William Henry Giles Kingston, went through only two issues. Samuel Sidney (pseudonym of Samuel Solomon), and his brother John, set up *Sidney's Emigrant Journal* as a weekly periodical in 1848. It ran from 5 October 1848 to 12 July 1849. Samuel set up *Sidney's Emigrant's Journal and Traveller's Magazine* in 1849 by himself, but it went through only 6 issues. See Stanley Tick, 'Sidney, Samuel (1813–1883)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sidney-samuel-2662/text3599>> [accessed 16 June 2014].



Given the prominence of print periodical culture at the time, it is unsurprising that emigrants aboard the *Alfred* and the *True Briton* drew upon the visual characteristics of print periodicals in the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* respectively. The front page of each issue of the *Alfred* has a masthead, motto and the date and issue number (Figs. 4 and 5).



Figure 4: Close-Up of Mast of the *Alfred*

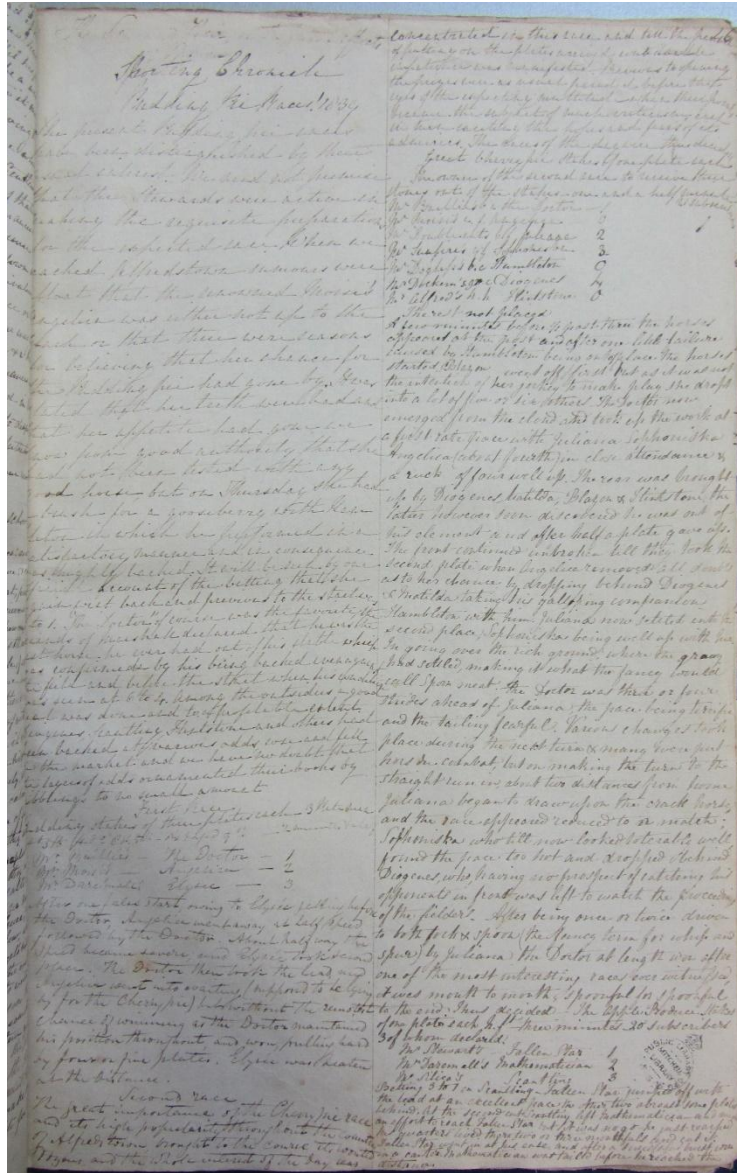


Figure 5: Sample Inside Page of the *Alfred*

Although the front page of each issue of the *Open Sea* has the title of the journal, the issue number and the date on it, the periodical does not have the same consistency of the *Alfred*. The layout of each issue varied (Figs. 6 and 7).

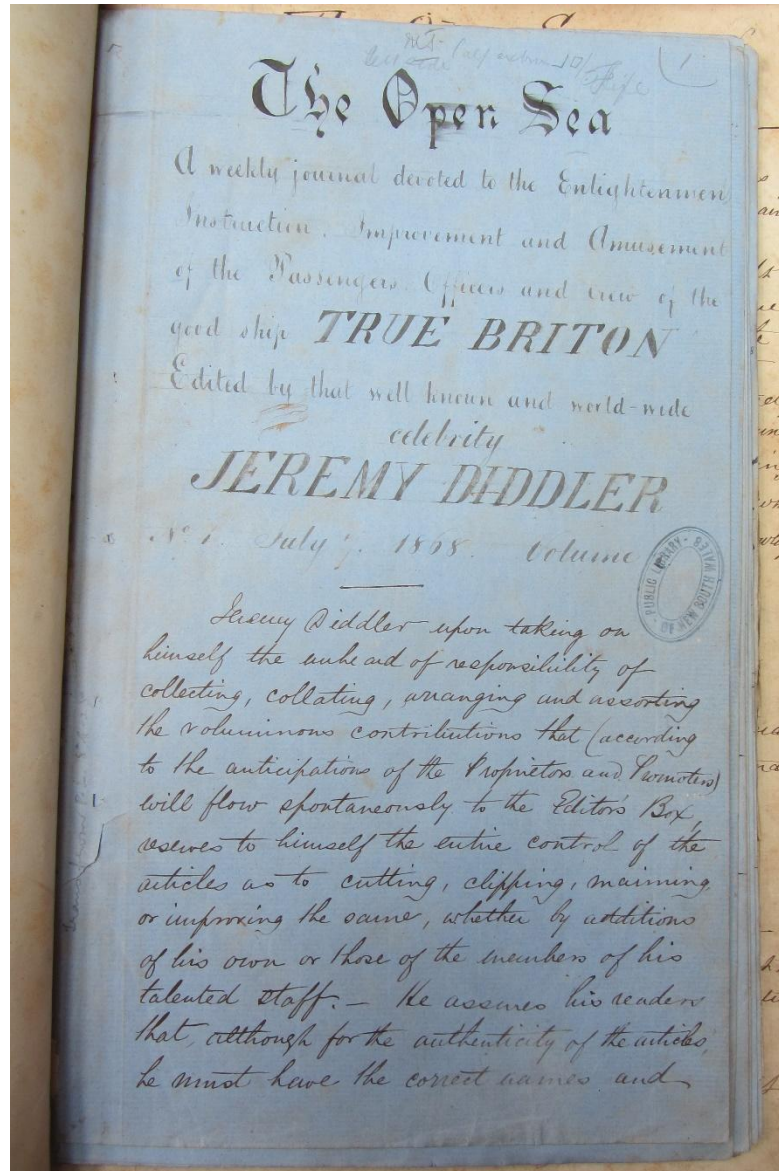
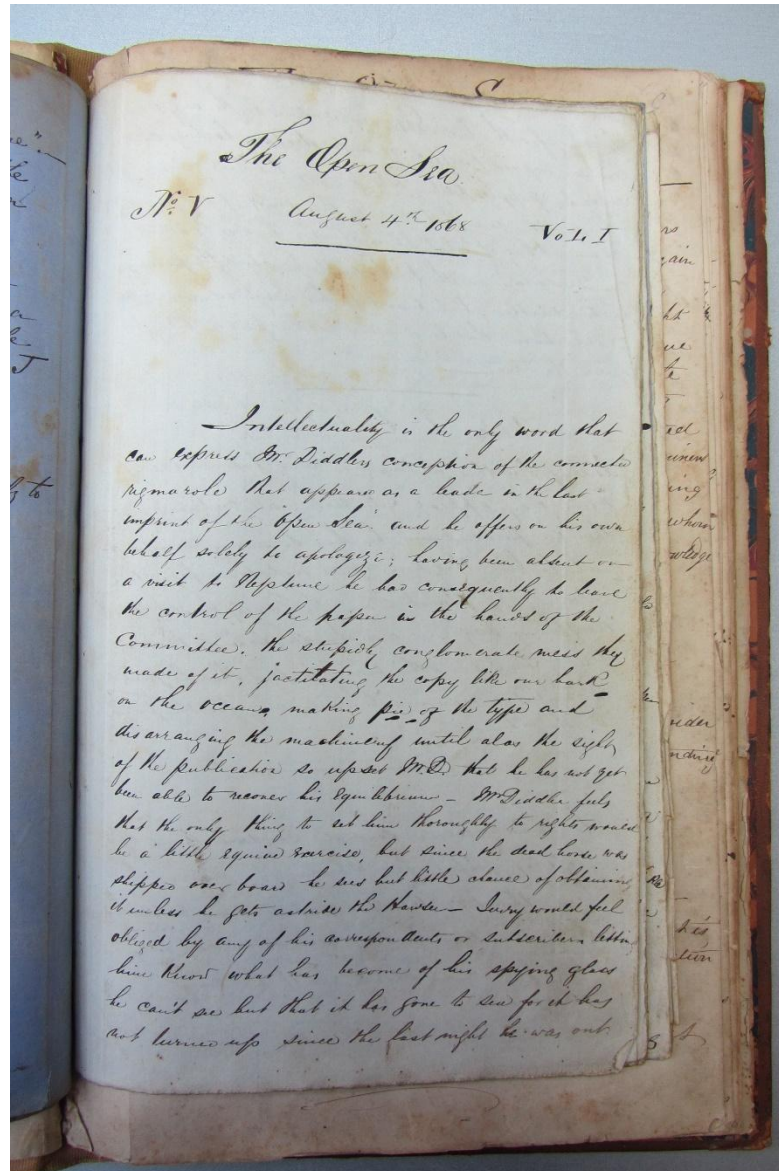


Figure 6: Front Page of First Issue of the Open Sea

Figure 7: Front Page of Fifth Issue of the *Open Sea*

Furthermore, whereas the *Alfred* divides the text into columns, the *Open Sea* follows the conventions of the more expensive periodicals that were appearing during the 1860s, by having a one-column spread.<sup>19</sup> Most critics have understood the production of shipboard newspapers as a response to ennui during the long voyage. David and Deirdre Stam, for example, argue that producing periodicals aboard ship ‘shortened periods of boredom, [and] gave rhythm to undifferentiated periods of [time]’.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> I am grateful to Mark Turner for this observation.

<sup>20</sup> David H. Stam and Deirdre C. Stam, ‘Bending Time: The Function of Periodicals in Nineteenth-Century Polar Naval Expeditions’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 41 (2008), 301–322 (p. 302).

Elizabeth Leane follows a similar line of reasoning when she writes, that shipboard periodicals were produced to ‘prevent boredom and restlessness’.<sup>21</sup> Erika Elce, however, argues that shipboard newspapers had a ‘richer value’ than alleviating boredom: those at sea used periodicals ‘to articulate not only their sense of physical distance from England but also, in spite of this distance, their emotional and cultural proximity’.<sup>22</sup> I argue that referencing print periodicals through the visual apparatus of their manuscript periodicals is one of the ways in which emigrants articulated their ‘cultural proximity’ to England.

The *Alfred* sets itself up as the newspaper of a town, which needs a team of correspondents steadily recounting the news as it develops. The entire ship is overlaid with the spatial imaginary of a town called ‘Alfredstown’. The periodical refers to the town’s ‘Cuddy Square’, ‘Poop Terrace’, ‘Poop Square’ and ‘Middlemast’ (3, 1).<sup>23</sup> As can be expected from a newspaper covering a small country town, the *Alfred* has a number of reporters. In an announcement on ‘Public Amusements’, it reports that although the ‘Theatres are closed’, the editors have ‘heard that a rehearsal took place [...] on Thursday evening’: ‘we have directed our reporter to attend’ (1, 5). The ‘Foreign Intelligence’ section is ‘from our own Correspondent’ (1, 2). To further play into this metaphor, it refers to itself as a printed newspaper. In one of the ‘Notices’, readers are informed that, ‘Owing to the quantity of matter *already printed*, we have been reluctantly obliged to defer the “Chapter on Hats” to our next number’ (1, 5, emphasis added).

The metaphor of the *Alfred* as a town is used throughout the entire run of the paper. The *Open Sea* similarly draws on the images and tropes of a land-based

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<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Leane, ‘The Adelie Blizzard: The Australasian Antarctic Expedition’s Neglected Newspaper’, *Polar Record*, 41 (2005), 11–20 (p. 11).

<sup>22</sup> Erika Behrisch Elce, “One of the Bright Objects that Solace Us in these Regions”: Labour, Leisure, and the Artic Shipboard Periodical, 1820–1852’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 46 (2013), 343–367 (p. 345).

<sup>23</sup> *Alfred: Weekly Magazine of the Emigrant Ship, Alfred, No. 1–2, 12 Oct.–28 Dec. 1839*. Sydney, Mitchell Library, A1680: Microfilm CY 2072, frames 1–70. All quotations from the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* are referenced in-text and refer to the issue number, followed by the page number. Thus here, ‘3, 1’ refers to the first page of the third issue (*not* the first issue of the third volume). Furthermore, as it is clear in the chapter which newspaper I am quoting from, I have omitted their titles in in-text references.

community to narrate itself, although it does not sustain this trope with the same level of consistency that the *Alfred* does. In the first issue of the *Open Sea*, for example, the item on 'Local News' includes the following report:

Village Sports. – On Thursday afternoon a grand athlete display took place on our village green. – The games were keenly contested by some of our most accomplished gymnasts. – By far the most elegant display was made in the perilous game of Spanish Fly<sup>24</sup> [...] There were many ladies on the ground and their wreathed smiles, gave zest and animation to the competitors. – The toilettes of the ladies were exceedingly handsome, and the whole presented a gay and animated spectacle (1, 5).<sup>25</sup>

The above passage could be mistaken as coming from a provincial newspaper, reporting perhaps on a weekend fête. It is only because we know its original context that it is apparent to us that the article is in fact writing of shipboard entertainment through the language of a village fête. In doing so, the newspaper nostalgically recalls a comfortable, happy village life that the emigrants may have left behind. As if to reinforce this metaphor, the newspaper often refers to the ship as a village: 'We think this [playing of games on deck] is a step in the right direction, as, in our village, too little attention has been paid to physical education' (1, 5). Land-based communities in the nineteenth-century were by no means fixed and stable. As Josephine McDonagh argues, the nineteenth-century was characterized by great internal migration as people moved from the countryside into the cities in search of employment, yet the periodical culture of land-based communities frequently fantasised about being stable.<sup>26</sup> Thus, when shipboard periodicals use land-based communities as metaphors to describe the ship, they share with land-based periodicals the fantasy of supposedly settled, contained communities such as the country town or village.

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<sup>24</sup> A game of leapfrog in which the first person to leap over becomes the leader and sets feats for the others to perform as they leap over. Any player who fails takes the place of the back.

<sup>25</sup> *Open Sea: Weekly Journal No. 111, 7 July–Sept. 1868, on the ship True Briton*. Sydney, Mitchell Library, A1645: Microfilm CY 2072 frames 177–249. As explained above, '1, 5' refers to the fifth page of the first issue.

<sup>26</sup> Josephine McDonagh, 'Urban Migration and Mobility', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 268–275 (pp. 268–269).

The mimicry of print periodicals helped to establish this fantasy of a settled community. The *Open Sea*'s most ostentatious gesture to the world of print is through the figure of its editor, 'Jeremy Diddler':

Jeremy Diddler upon taking on himself the [...] responsibility of collecting, collating, arranging and assorting the voluminous contributions that (according to the anticipations of the Proprietors and Promoters) will flow spontaneously to the Editor's Box reserves to himself the entire control of the articles as to the cutting, clipping, maiming or improving the same, whether by additions of his own or those of the members of his talented staff (1, 1).

'Jeremy Diddler' is the name of a character from an 1803 farce by James Kenney, *Raising the Wind*. In the 1860s, it was being performed in a number of prominent East London theatres, such as the Pavilion Theatre in Whitechapel.<sup>27</sup> The absence of any other contextual material means that we do not know whether the *Open Sea*'s 'Jeremy Diddler' is based on a real person or not, but the namesake is appropriate given the newspaper's often highly comical tone.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the case, the textual presence of an editor is reminiscent of Dickens as the 'Conductor' of *Household Words*, orchestrating the miscellaneous entries into a supposedly harmonious and unified piece. Dickens was notorious for exercising absolute supremacy over his publications. In a letter to his subeditor, William Wills, he asserts his complete authority as editor. 'I must consider whether it is worthwhile to alter the making up by putting it in again', he writes, 'but in future don't touch my articles without first consulting me'.<sup>29</sup> Similar to the *Alfred*, the *Open Sea* narrates itself through the language of print. In the fifth issue, for example, the editorial notes that, 'having been absent' during the production of the previous issue, Diddler 'had consequently to leave the control of the paper in the hands of the Committee'. The Committee made a 'stupidly conglomerate mess', 'making pie

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<sup>27</sup> See *Mixed Playbill for Gil Blas!; Mr. Eden Clarke; Willy Reilly and his own Dear Cooleen Bawn; The Vokes Family; Raising the Wind, Pavilion Theatre* ([n.p.], [n. pub], 26 July 1861).

<sup>28</sup> Had the passenger lists survived for this voyage, it would have been interesting to cross-reference names and see if any of the emigrants on *True Briton* had acted in the *Raising the Wind*.

<sup>29</sup> *Charles Dickens as Editor: Being Letters Written by Him to William Henry Wills His Sub-Editor*, ed. by R. C. Lehmann (London: Smith & Elder, 1912), pp. 29–30 [12 July 1850]. Dickens is expressing anger over an article which had already been published, Alexander Mackay's 'The Devil's Acre', *Household Words*, 22 June 1850, 297–301.

of the type and disarranging the machinery until alas the sight of the publication so upset Mr. D. that he has not been able to recover his full equilibrium' and writes a letter in the paper, 'on his own behalf [and] solely to apologise' to any distraught readers (5, 1).<sup>30</sup> Through their references to print periodical culture, the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* aim to invest themselves with print periodical culture's association with land-based, and supposedly settled, communities.

The periodical, whether land- or sea-based, was one of the main arenas in which the practice of settlement was performed. As the *Somersetshire News*, a periodical that emigrants made during their voyage from Plymouth to Melbourne in 1869 points out, one of the most important aspects of settlement was simply having a periodical itself:

Considering that now-a-days not only every principality and power, but almost every petty parish and municipality possesses its official gazette — and that the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, and almost every other artificer or tradesman has his own organ — it is matter for surprise that so important a community as that dwelling on board the *S. S. Somersetshire* should have remained so long without a representative journal.<sup>31</sup>

Here, the editors assert that producing a periodical is an inherent part of settlement. Not only do they draw on various categorizations of settlements — 'principalities', 'parishes' and 'municipalities' — they also draw on the trades that are necessary for any established settlement. In other words, it was simply inconceivable to the editors of this paper that a community, however small and however far removed from the vicissitudes of everyday life on land, would not have their own periodical providing entertainment and recounting the news as it developed.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> This is written in the spirit of harmless fun — there is nothing apparently wrong with the layout of the fourth issue.

<sup>31</sup> *Somersetshire News: A Ship Newspaper, Issued on board the S.S. Somersetshire, on her passage from Plymouth to Melbourne* (Melbourne: Sands and McDougall, 1869), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> D. H. Borchartd, 'Printing Comes to Australia', in *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History*, ed. by D. H. Borchartd and W. Kirsop (Melbourne: Australian Reference Publications in association with the Centre for Bibliographical and Textual Studies, Monash University, 1988), pp. 1–15 cites the example of the First Fleet carrying on board 'an old wooden screw press, a small selection of used type and some paper and ink' (p. 2). While it would be some time before a proper printing press was established in the country, the fact



Unlike land-based periodicals, however, shipboard periodicals are produced *on the move*: the fact of mobility underpins every aspect of their being, from their material production, to the kinds of ‘news’ they related. The availability of paper seems to have been a predominant anxiety. The very first item in the *Alfred* is an advertisement asking readers for ‘supplies of Stationary’ including ‘Foolscap Paper!’ (1, 1). The *Open Sea* advertises for paper in its second issue. To ensure ‘the publication of future numbers’, any emigrant possessing a ‘supply of Foolscap paper’ should ‘immediately’ present it to the ‘Proprietors of this Journal’ who will pay a ‘liberal’ sum for it (2, 16; Fig. 8).

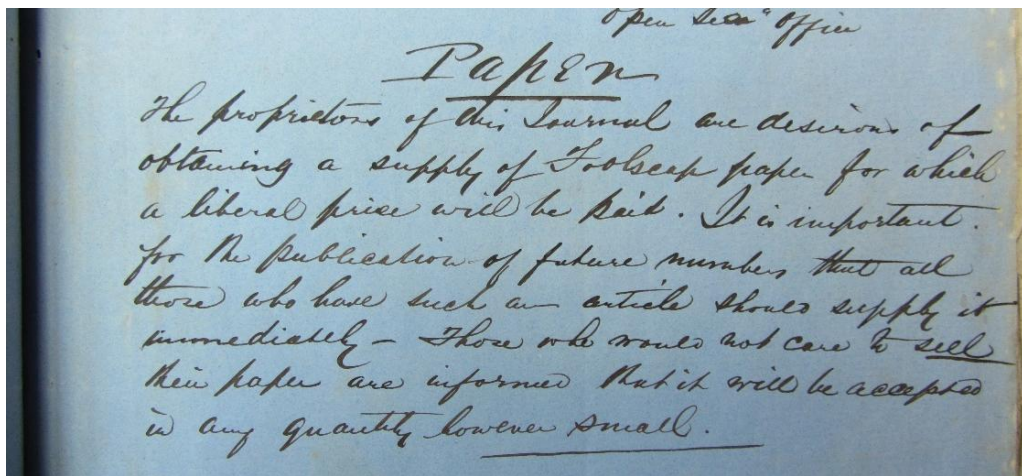


Figure 8: Advertisement for Paper in the *Open Sea*

Such advertisements suggest that the decision to produce shipboard periodicals was not a premeditated act, but was often spontaneous and made after the voyage was under way. The physicality of these periodicals and the constant sourcing of paper, ink and labour to ensure their full runs speaks of their potentially precarious existence. The *Open Sea* is made from various papers, all of different colours and sizes. The *Alfred* is made from paper all of a uniform size, but the tiny, cramped handwriting in it suggests an effort to be as economical with the space as possible.

Crucially, through their referencing of print culture, the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* do not attempt to dupe the reader into believing that they *are* print newspapers. Rather, the shipboard newspaper’s materiality constantly ruptures its performances of print in playful and subversive ways. The *Open Sea*, for example, sets out its terms of

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that the British government thought necessary to send the convicts away with a printing press on board points to the integral relationship between settlement and print.

subscription in the very first number, as any printed publication might. It requires ‘One article from all contributors’, and somewhat unorthodoxly, ‘Good nature’ from the ‘Ladies’, and ‘One glass of Punch’ from the ‘Gentlemen’. The last two will ‘be impartially divided amongst the contributors by the Editor in his good-natured manner’ (1, 2). The newspapers thus align themselves with print periodical culture as a means of remembering life in England, but at the same time, their partial mimicry of print opens up a space of subversive playfulness. More often than not, a printed paper takes for granted that it will have a team of editors, that it is covering a determined geographical area, that it has terms of subscription and that it is printed. In stark contrast, the manuscript periodicals playfully draw attention to these aspects of print, and in so doing, highlight and emphasise the fact of their manuscript production. In effect, withdrawing partly from an objective, factual mode of reportage allows the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* to live a fiction: it allows them to put on a performance of print and lay a different spatial imaginary over the ship, as they produce the fictions of Alfredstown and the village green.

Talking of the emigrant ship as a ‘home’ or ‘village’ was common rhetoric in the nineteenth century. In his emigrant guide, *Out at Sea* (1862), P. B. Chadfield, for example, asserts that an “emigrant ship at sea” is a floating home for the many families on board; partaking in a great measure of the character of a house’.<sup>33</sup> Throughout his shipboard diary, the emigrant James Hopkins, refers to the ship as his ‘wooden house’.<sup>34</sup> This chapter does not assert that just because the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* invoked a similar rhetoric, this immediately produced a feeling of settlement on board the ship.<sup>35</sup> It does, however, assert that through their production and consumption, the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* aspired to create a community of readers out of the body of

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<sup>33</sup> Philip B. Chadfield, *Out at Sea; or, the Emigrant Afloat, Being a Hand Book of Practical Information for the Use of Passengers on a Long Sea Voyage* (Derby: Chadfield & Son, 1862), p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> James Hopkins, *Journal of Passenger on the Schomberg on her Last Voyage from Liverpool bound to Melbourne, 6 Oct.—26 Dec. 1855*. London, National Maritime Museum, XJOD/1.

<sup>35</sup> The realities of shipboard life for labouring classes may not have been too dissimilar from life at home. Cf. Robin F. Haines, who asserts in *Life and Death in the Age of Sail: The Passage to Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), that ‘For many labouring families, life at sea was, perhaps, not so very different from the domestic situations that they had left behind’ (p. 36) and that the ‘ship, in reality, constituted a tenement block of two or five hundred people or more’ (p. 80).

emigrants on the ship. As the following section shows, however, the lines of inclusion for each periodical's network of readers were distinctly different.

### The Periodical and the Ship

Throughout the nineteenth-century, the voyage out remained a hot topic of debate in Parliament. How was it to be managed so that it remained economically profitable and took into consideration the health and safety of the emigrants?<sup>36</sup> In order to ensure its success, the voyage out had to be heavily regulated. Unsurprisingly, one of the worst fears of emigrants and crew alike was shipwrecking.<sup>37</sup> Although regulations were in place to prevent this, these were not always enforced. One emigrant, Edward Cornell, an emigrant on board the 1856 voyage of the *Red Jacket*, for example, writes in his diary that '[g]reat consternation was caused this afternoon by an alarm of Fire!!': 'It seams [sic] that a candle had been carelessly left burning in a lamp and melting the solder, the ignited tallow fell through in a blaze to the floor'.<sup>38</sup> Thankfully, the candle 'speedily went out', but regulations on board the *Red Jacket* seem to have been lax, for only two days later, Cornell records '[a]nother narrow escape from fire'.<sup>39</sup>

Emigrant guidebooks encouraged emigrants to take greater responsibility for the voyage themselves. Take, for example, the advice of Captain J. C. Hale, the Surgeon Superintendent hired by the Petworth Emigration Committee in the 1830s, in his pamphlet, 'Instructions to Persons Intending to Emigrate':

a round tin candle box, or a wooden salt box, is a very useful article, as, when hung up to the ship's side, it is not only out of the way, but will always be handy, to hold your knives and forks, spoons &c., which you should always put by, the moment they are done with, and not lay down, lest you should lose them [...] when cleaning them, take out one

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<sup>36</sup> See Oliver MacDonagh, *A Pattern of Government Growth, 1800 – 1860: The Passenger Acts and their Enforcement* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1961) for a detailed history to the changing regulations surrounding the voyage out.

<sup>37</sup> See Charles R. Clark, *Women and Children Last: The Burning of the Emigrant Ship Cospatrick* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006); Ina Habermann and Bernhard Klein, 'Death by Water: The Theory and Practice of Shipwrecking', in *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 104 – 120.

<sup>38</sup> Edward Cornell, *Journal kept on board the Royal Mail clipper Red Jacket from Liverpool to Melbourne, May to Aug. 1856*. London, National Maritime Museum, TRN/20 [29 May 1856].

<sup>39</sup> Cornell, [31 May 1856].

at a time, and return it to the box, the moment it is done; so you will not lose them, nor will they be stolen.<sup>40</sup>

Hale's advice emphasises the need for complete mastery over one's shipboard environment. Instead of being the invisible background through which they move, in Hale's advice space becomes something to be managed, mediated and mastered, if the emigrants are to succeed on the long voyage. While an event as small as a missing spoon was unlikely to cause catastrophe on board the ship, nonetheless, Hale's advice points to an ethos of carefulness which is necessary to prevent accidents from happening.

Those in government knew that tempers among passengers could run high in the confined space of the ship on a journey that could, at times, seem interminable. In an attempt to circumvent this, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission set out rules regarding everyday life on board the ship in careful detail in their *Instructions to Emigrants of Emigrant Ships Sailing Under Government Superintendence*. This document contained instructions that the surgeon superintendent, the medical doctor who was in charge of the health of all those on board the ship, were required to follow. At the back of the document was a list of rules that the superintendent had to enforce on emigrants. Various editions of these rules were printed throughout the century; while small changes were made, the core regulations remained the same. The *Instructions* stipulated the amount of food and water that could be allocated to adult men and women, and to children. It set out the number of clothes emigrants were allowed in their berths, and the amount of luggage they were allowed in stowage; what time emigrants were to get up in the morning and what time they were to go to bed. Emigrants were required to carry out daily duties, such as cleaning the deck before and after breakfast each morning, rolling the beds up, doing the washing and hanging them

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<sup>40</sup> J. C. Hale, 'Instructions to Persons Intending to Emigrate', in *Emigration: Letters From Sussex Emigrants: Who Sailed From Portsmouth, in April 1832, on Board the Ships, Lord Melville and Eveline, for Upper Canada: Extracts from Various Writers on Emigration to Canada, and from Canadian Newspapers, with Reference to the Letters: Capt. Hale's Instructions to Emigrants: and a Gazetteer of the Places Named in the Letters*, ed. by Thomas Sockett (London: John Phillips, 1833), pp. 72 – 80 (p.72). For more information on Hale, see Wendy Cameron and Mary McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada: The Petworth Project, 1832–1837* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 45; pp. 55 – 59.

out on dry days. The rules for emigrants at the back of the *Instructions* were to be ‘hung up in at least one conspicuous place between decks’, in clear view of the emigrants (Fig. 9).<sup>41</sup>

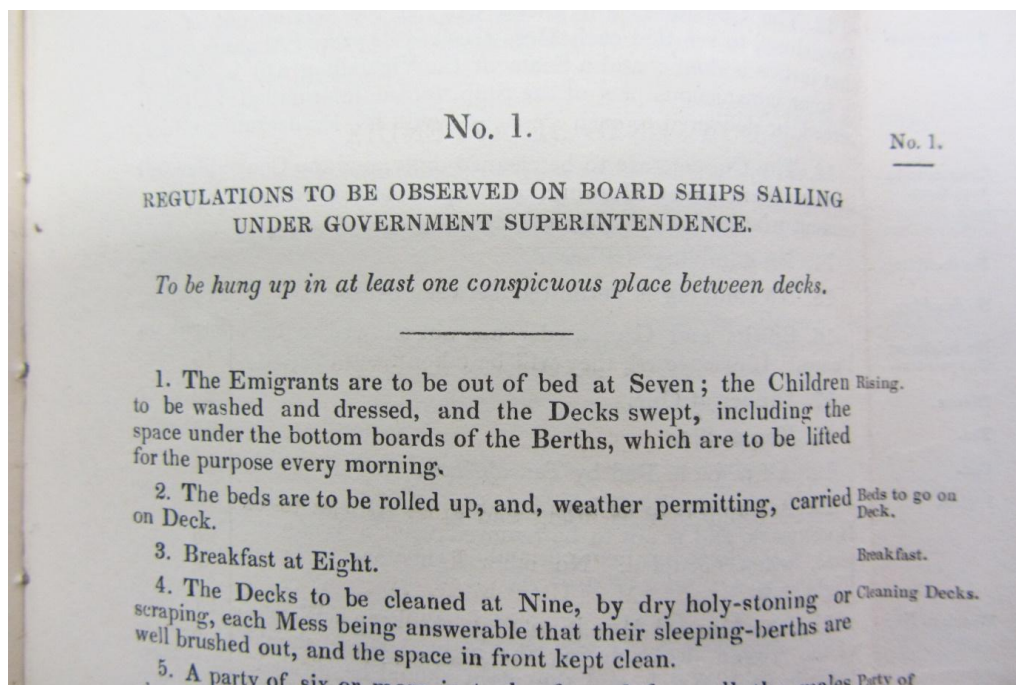


Figure 9: Regulations on Board the Ship

The regulations also set out a timetable to which emigrants were required to adhere. It is easy to read this public display of the timetable as a means of ‘disciplining’ emigrants,<sup>42</sup> but it is also true that the majority of emigrants were new to travel by ship. Such a timetable shaped their day and regulated their activities and thus provided them with a framework for habitation on board the ship.

In an attempt to minimise the disruption of being at sea, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission required the superintendent to keep emigrants in the same social groups that they were in when they were on land:

The people ought to be berthed according to their natural connections, and so as to place in the neighbourhood of one another those whose

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Walcott, *Instructions to Surgeons of Emigrant Ships Sailing Under Government Superintendence* (London: William Clowes, 1843), Appendix 1.

<sup>42</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p.149.

relative circumstances and habits render it most likely that they will agree.<sup>43</sup>

The *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* may not have been far off in their imagining of the ship as a version of home: the same desire to produce the ship as a miniature version of the communities that emigrants had left behind manifests itself in the Commission's instructions as well. The notion that placing emigrants from the same village next to each other would lessen the likelihood of fights breaking out is somewhat simplistic. Nonetheless, the desire to assign emigrants their berths in a manner that retains their 'natural connections' with those from their own 'neighbourhoods' is an attempt to place emigrants in familiar, recognisable social communities, in the hope that this would ease tensions during the voyage.

In much the same way as Hale's advice and the government's *Instructions*, shipboard periodicals such as the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* sought to regulate the voyage out by producing the ship as a legitimate environment for habitation. In his first address to the *Alfred's* audience, the editor, Mr. Docker writes:

Introducing the first number of our periodical to the people, we feel it necessary to comply with the custom of these occasions, and state [...] why we have presumed that a weekly publication of this nature will prove acceptable in the little community in which we dwell. Our peculiar local position, excluding us from all immediate intercourse with the great world and its stirring events, induces the mind to [serve?] with avidity on the minor occurrences which must daily present themselves in every society, however small or secluded; and perhaps to invest with undue importance the little evils and inconveniences of our position, and the mental [sensations?] arising therefrom (1, 1).

Shipboard life can result in two extremes of behaviour. There are those

who are accustomed to withdraw for a considerable portion of their time to the seclusion of their own cabins [and] allow their minds to dwell too intensely upon the remembrance of their friends and the homes they are leaving and thus gradually acquire a gloomy and discontented spirit, musing with melancholy regret upon the past and looking forward with anxious forebodings of the future (1, 1).

The other extreme are those who

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<sup>43</sup> Walcott, p. 9.

pass the chief part of their time in the society of their ‘compagnes du voyage’ [and] are too prone to forget the conventional forms which society in general has found necessary to establish; and the familiarity naturally arising from unrestrained intercourse too often lead some thoughtless spirits to indulge in flirtations which the customs of general society never sanctions (1, 1).<sup>44</sup>

As Mr. Docker points out:

It is with a view to prevent the occurrence of these evils [as stated above], that the present publication has been projected; to endeavour [...] to lead the minds of our “hermits” to take an interest in passing events, trivial as they are [that] the present publication has been projected (1, 2).

Mr. Docker’s deference to the ‘custom of these occasions’ shows that the *Alfred* draws on certain generic conventions of print periodicals. However, this sits in tension with the kind of community reading and producing the periodical. Over and again, Mr. Docker draws attention to the ‘little community’ of shipboard emigrants, their ‘peculiar local position’ and ‘small’ and ‘secluded’ nature. Both size and location increase the possibility of social tensions: without the influence of the ‘great stirring world’ as a distraction, emigrants aboard ship are prone to become absorbed in the ‘little evils and inconveniences’ of the voyage. Through their performances of print, shipboard periodicals such as the *Alfred* attempt to mitigate this. As Bill Bell argues, shipboard periodicals were put together by strangers, ‘for whom the preservation of a modest distance was important to the maintenance of a private life’. Their ‘mimicry of the public sphere, allowed for the tangible expression of sociability, while still creating a rhetorical distance between those involved in its production and circulation’.<sup>45</sup> Through the weekly reportage of events, the *Alfred* aimed to provide a rhetorical distance between emigrants that was conducive for convivial relations — but, at the same time, to produce a sense of community.

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<sup>44</sup> The irony of this is that Emily Darvall met her future husband, Robert Barton, on board the *Alfred* and married him a few weeks after their arrival in Sydney. They went on to have ten children.

<sup>45</sup> Bill Bell, ‘Bound for Australia: Shipboard Reading in the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 25 (2001), 5–18 (p. 17).

However, the *Alfred* aims to create this sense of community among a very circumscribed group of people. If we recall the spatial imaginary of Alfredstown — ‘Cuddy Square’, ‘Poop Terrace’, ‘Poop Square’ and ‘Middlemast’ (3, 1) — we realise that these are all the places of the ship that were reserved for first-class passengers. ‘Cuddy’ is another word for the cabins of first-class passengers, and the ‘poop’ is the uppermost deck of the ship, where only cabin-passengers and the captain were allowed. However, Alfredstown was not the only place in the newspaper. In an article entitled ‘Foreign Intelligence’, Alfredstown’s ‘Correspondent’ reports from the steerage quarters of the ship: ‘Steeragio, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> – The present state of affairs in the Kingdom of Muckiana continues to be highly satisfactory. Perfect content appears to reign over all the provinces, each family revelling in those enjoyments, so peculiarly gratifying to their habits’ (1, 2). In the second issue, however, the Foreign Intelligence Correspondent, reports a ‘dreadful affray’ between two ‘natives’ of Steeragio. One

of these Visages, conscious of the powers of endurance possessed by her olfactory nerves had been induced to undertake the cleansing out [...] the office of Scavenger for that beautiful town, a task far surpassing the immortal labours of the demigod Hercules, whose achievements in the Aegean Stables, it appears to have been her ambition to excel (2, 1).

The reporter’s distaste here for the stench of steerage berths may not have been unfounded. As Robin F. Haines notes, ‘[a]t sea the emigrants’ senses were assaulted on every front [...] one needs little imagination to conjure up the smells in the married quarters in steerage, where often one-third of emigrants were children, many of them untrained babies and toddlers’. The ‘horrendous smells created by a combination of vomit, faulty water closets and diarrhoea below decks’ turned the steerage accommodation into ‘a vile and stinking purgatory’.<sup>46</sup> Despite the possible historical accuracy of the *Alfred*’s reporter, the disparaging tones and the clear spatial demarcation between Alfredstown and Steeragio highlights the extent to which class politics influence the content and tone of the shipboard periodical.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Haines, *Life*, p. 75; p. 77.

<sup>47</sup> See Andrew Hassam, “‘Our floating home’: Social Space and Group Identity on Board the Emigrant Ship’ (London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1992), p. 1 for a description of how heavily demarcated by class the spatial organisation of the ship was.



It should come as little surprise, then, that steerage passengers had little to do with the production of the *Alfred*. The periodical was produced and consumed by a small group of cabin passengers. The Darvall sisters, for example, took great delight in it, and Emily and her mother regularly contributed. The feeling of class snobbery may have been heightened on this particular voyage as the *Alfred* was also carrying out a number of assisted emigrant passengers: reporting news from the steerage berths as though it were an entirely different kingdom is one way in which first-class passengers could distance themselves as much as possible from the poorer emigrants. Emily notes in her diary of one particular Saturday when ‘she has been ‘reading [the paper] aloud’ in the ‘Cuddy’ ‘ever since breakfast’ and ‘listening to the strange guesses made on all sides’.<sup>48</sup> Reading the paper aloud seems to have been a common practice: on another Saturday, Eliza writes that ‘Mr Docker has just read the whole paper aloud and it is better even than the last’.<sup>49</sup> The image of cabin passengers sitting in the small enclosed space of their cabins reading aloud stories from the ‘Steeragio’ and ‘Muckiana’ highlights that shipboard periodicals did not necessarily by any means, always aim to produce all-inclusive communities. Thus, although the *Alfred* frequently addresses its audience with ‘public announcements’ (1, 5), the sense of what constitutes this ‘public’ body is limited by class.

If the *Alfred* — both the ship and the paper — worked on the basis of an exclusionary spatial politics, the *Open Sea* uses its pages to establish and organise a more inclusive community. An article entitled, ‘Our Medical Review’ appeared in the first issue of the *Open Sea*. The author informs their reader that, while they take ‘much pleasure’ from the fact that ‘the health of the ship “True Briton” has been, on the whole, very good’, they also ‘desire to impress, *on all classes of passengers*, the necessity, which there is for them, to pass as much of their time upon deck, in the fresh air, as they conveniently can’ (1, 11; emphasis added). Taking a walk on the deck reduced the amount of time steerage emigrants spent in overcrowded berths, and thus reduced the

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Steerage passengers were not allowed in intermediate berths or first-class cabins, intermediate passengers were allowed in steerage but not in cabins, and first-class passengers were free to go anywhere — if they chose to do so.

<sup>48</sup> Darvall, p. 17. It is not clear from Emily’s diary what her fellow emigrants are guessing.

<sup>49</sup> Long, p. 59.

risk of contamination and spread of disease. While the desire in the *Open Sea* to maintain a healthy environment stems in part from the advances in maritime healthcare and medical understanding more generally by the 1860s,<sup>50</sup> the advice is in line with the paper's more inclusive attitude towards different classes.

Various other instances of this can be found in the *Open Sea*. For example, the paper reports on a meeting held by the editorial committee: the members' 'astonishment' at 'finding class feeling so predominant' is 'not to be expressed in words' (2, 4). Accordingly, the decision is taken at the end of the meeting that 'the perusal of the Cabin library be if possible extended to all on board' (2, 15). This gesture of good-will may have translated into reality in multiple ways. When Edward Cornell, the emigrant on board the *Red Jacket* mentioned earlier, goes down into the steerage berths to distribute a few religious tracts, he sees that although 'by far the greater number [of emigrants] were playing at cards or dominos', it 'was pleasing to see so many carefully reading their Bible, a matter of which is by no means easy below the Deck for want of good light'.<sup>51</sup> Francis Gosling, an emigrant to Australia in 1836, writes that he has been gifted a small 'library' by his father — the diary provides a useful insight into the young man's regular and steady reading.<sup>52</sup> Yet not all emigrants were this fortunate. Clapham, for example, writes in his diary that, 'you certainly have heaps of time' on board the ship, 'but take a book and the variety of noises around & first one & then another talking by & to you, so that after reading a sentence 6 or 8 times over you give it up'. To think that 'Shipboard is the place for reading', is a 'great mistake'.<sup>53</sup> His sentiment is echoed by the journalist Alexander Mackay, who warns prospective emigrants that the notion that the emigrant ship is 'the place for reading or study' is but a 'dream': 'It is either too cold, when there is the slightest breeze, or too hot when it is calm: it is too noisy at all times. Happy is he who, under such

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<sup>50</sup> See Foxhall (2012); Robin F. Haines, *Doctors at Sea: Emigrant Voyages to Colonial Australia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) for accounts of maritime healthcare, especially pp. 67–76.

<sup>51</sup> Cornell, p. 2 [24 May 1856].

<sup>52</sup> Alexander Gosling, Francis, *Journal of a Voyage from London to Sydney on Board the Alexander in 1836*. Sydney, Australian National Maritime Museum, 00001689.

<sup>53</sup> Clapham, p. 18.

circumstances, has a resource against ennui in his own reflections'.<sup>54</sup> Despite this, however, shipboard reading was encouraged as a means of self-improvement. The *Open Sea's* measure to encourage more reading is part of a larger phenomenon. From at least the 1850s, if not before, government-assisted emigrant ships had a library on board, with a large selection of religious and educational reading matter, as well as fictional material.<sup>55</sup> In his *Emigrant Voyager's Manual* (1850), William Henry Giles Kingston encourages his readers to 'make as much use' of the books provided by the ship,

remembering that you may never again have so excellent an opportunity of improving yourselves as you now enjoy. Those who can read the best should teach their companions who cannot. While some are occupied with manual works, others may read to them, and this is a very pleasant way of gaining knowledge.<sup>56</sup>

The decision of the 'Diddling Committee' of the *Open Sea* to open up the Cabin library for those in the lower accommodations would most likely have been made by cabin passengers, which suggests that the class politics on board the ship is more inclusive than that of the *Alfred*.<sup>57</sup>

This reading is supported by the fact that the periodical was kept on the deck, one of the few places on the ship where all passengers of all classes were able to mingle freely. A 'Lost, Stolen, or Strayed' notice in the second issue informs readers that the previous week, 'One of the Numbers of "the *Open Sea*" [...] disappeared from the deck, in an unaccountable manner, the person in whose possession it now is, will oblige by

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<sup>54</sup> Alexander Mackay, 'An Emigrant Afloat', *Household Words*, 31 August 1850, pp. 534–539 (p. 537).

<sup>55</sup> See *Instructions to Surgeon Superintendents of Government Emigrant Ships* (London: George Eyre and Andrew Spottiswode, 1858), pp. 70–72. Reproduced in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

<sup>56</sup> William Henry Giles Kingston, *The Emigrant Voyager's Manual* (London, 1850), p. 38.

<sup>57</sup> For an account of shipboard reading, see Bill Bell, 'Crusoe's Books: The Scottish Emigrant Reader in the Nineteenth Century', in *Across Boundaries: The Book in Culture and Commerce*, ed. by Bill Bell, Philip Bennett and Jonquil Bevan (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 2000), pp. 116–129. For an account of shipboard reading as a means of moral improvement in a slightly different context, see Rosalind Crone, 'Attempts to (Re)shape Common Reading Habits: Bible Reading on the Nineteenth-Century Convict Ship', in *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850–1900*, ed. by Beth Palmer and Adelene Buckland (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 103–120.

leaving where he found it' (2,16).<sup>58</sup> Given all of this, it seems safe to assert that the newspaper aspires to make itself available to all on board the ship.

In their different ways, then, the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* sought to regulate the space of the ship. As we have seen, however, the periodical's regulation of the space of the ship was also a regulation of class: through their modes of consumption and production, the shipboard periodicals either reinforced class segregation, or attempted to overcome it. In *Serials and their Readers*, Bill Bell argues that serials disrupt a 'linear' production of literature where 'the author [...] produces a text' which a 'mass readership [...] consumes [...] with a convenient passivity'. By contrast, serials 'disrupt' the 'linearity of the productive mode [...] by a kind of simultaneous production and consumption': 'readers [...] freely offered advice on the latest work-in-progress in letters and review articles which appeared at the same time as the works themselves were appearing'.<sup>59</sup> Shipboard periodicals are evidently produced out of this non-linear mode of production, but importantly, this mode of production is imbricated in a network of power relations. Steerage passengers, for example, presumably never read what was written about them in the *Alfred*. As a natural consequence, they were automatically excluded from writing in to the editor. The editors of both the *Alfred* and

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<sup>58</sup> I am assuming that, as the editors are asking for it to be returned to the deck, this is the usual place where the paper was kept. This request appears in the second issue of the periodical. It asks for the issue of the previous week to be returned – which means the first issue. The fact that 'one' of first issues has been taken from the deck suggests that more than one copy was made: the lack of available statistics make it difficult to say whether this was a common practice (and I have not been able to trace if another copy of the newspaper is extant) but there is evidence to suggest that it was not unheard of. In 1875, small numbers of manuscript copies of *The Sobraon Occasional* were produced and circulated between passengers during the voyage, and when the ship reached Melbourne, copies were printed by Mason, Firth & M'Cutcheon as souvenirs. See *The Sobraon Occasional published on board the Sobraon during her outward voyage to Melbourne, 7 October–26 December 1875*. Sydney, Mitchell Library, MLMSS 7715/Item 1 and the library catalogue records for details of the newspaper's transition from manuscript to print: <<http://www.acmssearch.sl.nsw.gov.au/search/itemDetailPaged.cgi?itemID=991987>> [accessed 28 February 2014].

<sup>59</sup> Bill Bell, 'Fiction in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial', in *Serials and Their Readers, 1620–1914*, ed. by Michael Harris and Robin Myers (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1993), pp. 125–144 (p. 129). For a very good discussion of how correspondence columns shaped a magazine's reading community, see Lynne Warren, "'Women in Conference": Reading the Correspondence Columns in *Woman* 1890–1910', in *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 122–134.

the *Open Sea* mention that they have not been able to publish all contributions on account of there being so many: whose voice was taken on board to shape the next issue? Whose was ignored?

Space was thus essential to the shipboard periodical in more ways than one. Through its production and consumption, it aimed to produce communities of readers on board the ship, but at the same time, the communities that it shaped affected the spatial politics of the periodical page.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the eager ladies travelling first class on the *Alfred* who submitted articles unsolicited, the women of *True Briton* seem to have been more reluctant to contribute pieces. A sense of relief is clearly evident when the editor writes in the third issue of the *Open Sea* that they have ‘at last enlisted the ladies’ to provide ‘two of the short pieces’: ‘We cannot adequately express how welcome their handwriting is. A little voluntary help and encouragement from them is like a little holiday to our hard worked staff’ (3, 11). That the majority of submissions were from men is clearly evident even in light-hearted sections, such as the regular column, ‘Little Things For Little Minds’, which was filled with puns that referenced typically male amusements: ‘Two Ruling Kings. – Jo-king and Smo-king’ (1, 12). ‘How to kill time – Shoot every day’ (2, 12). ‘Wanted to know – if two hogsheads make a pipe, how many will make a cigar’ (2, 13). The first submissions from women throw this androcentric bias into sharp relief. One of the pieces in question is a letter of complaint, placed under the section, ‘Local News’ and signed with the name ‘Rosina’:

Sir, Who shot the dog? The canine butchers who have been parading the deck and monopolizing the space which in my humble opinion ought to be devoted to the perambulations of the ladies are requested to cease their murderous intentions towards the dogs, and also to consider that the spars upon which we are obliged to sit and look on are not beds of roses. – The gentler sex deserve more consideration at the hands of those who display such pretentious bravery (3, 11).

Rosina’s mention of ‘canine butchery’ is most likely a metaphorical contextual reference to a shipboard event. Ships would have carried livestock on board as food which gave rise to unpleasant odours. In the medical review, the editors write that they

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<sup>60</sup> See Rebecca Steinitz, *Time, Space, and Gender in the Nineteenth-Century British Diary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 44 for a reading of textual space.

look forward to the time when ‘our livestock is diminished, and there are fewer dirty animals tainting the atmosphere with foul smells’ (1,11). What is much more interesting, however, is the fact that the first article to find space in the newspaper is simultaneously an article that demands the rights to equal access of space on deck.

The emigrants on board the *Alfred* and *True Briton* used their periodicals to either maintain class and gender structures and spatial segregation, or to break them down. If the periodical’s fantasy of print allows for the merging of the spatial imaginary of land-based communities and the ship, then the periodical’s regulation of space allows for the merging of its textual space and the spatial politics of the ship. The *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* thus use their textual space to influence the spatial politics of the ship.

### **Narrating the News**

The shipboard periodical sought to produce a culture of settlement on board the ship by regulating the space of the ship, but it aimed to do so by providing a discourse of feeling as well. Whether shipboard or land-based, periodicals were keen to assert themselves as building networks of affiliation. One of the aims of *Household Words*, for example, is to encourage ‘a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding’ between its readers.<sup>61</sup> The opening editorial of the *Open Sea* states that ‘no abuse or grievance will be aired’ in the paper (1, 2). The *Alfred* makes a similar assertion:

Enthroned in our editorial chair we therefore [...] invite all the members of our community to grace our tournament of pens [...] we venture to express a hope that we have secured the pens of many fair and lovely writers, who will lead our readers over the delightful fields of thought (1, 2).

It is difficult to determine the extent to which these editorial claims translated into reality. Evidence from emigrants’ diaries, and even other shipboard newspapers

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<sup>61</sup> Charles Dickens, ‘A Preliminary Word’, *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, p. 1. For an account of how emigration stories circulating in periodicals posited emigration as a ‘cohesive’ experience, see Jude Piesse, ‘British Settler Emigration in Print: Mainstream Models and Counter-Currents, 1832–1877’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2012), p. 10. See also Jude Piesse, ‘2012 VanArsdel Prize Essay. Dreaming across Oceans: Emigration and Nation in the Mid-Victorian Christmas Issue’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 46 (2013), 37–60.

suggests that day-to-day shipboard life involved fights, petty theft and illicit liaisons between men and women.<sup>62</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *Open Sea*, an emigrant on board the *True Briton* presents what appears to be an ideal version of life on board the ship:

Taking the plethora of daily newspapers in England as the standard of what you may mean by seriously-useful writing I find that their subjects are chiefly political, legal and criminal. – It would be idle to enter upon such discussions here as in our little community we have no politics. – No foreign telegrams and no boring letters from foreign correspondents cause your readers to turn impatiently from the well packed page. – We have no squabbles but what are decided easily and promptly; the laws' delay is utterly unknown to us, and we are without the luxury of contemplating the careful and deliberate way in which justice is administered in courts. – We are equally without crime, so that the usual topics of the journalist are all denied us. – This however, goes to show that life on shipboard has a social aspect so gratifying that many of its results would be desirable in large communities [*sic*] (3, 5).<sup>63</sup>

Again, it is unlikely that this is an accurate representation of life on board the ship. Far from being a safe haven from the legal and judicial world, the voyage out was a heavily regulated process. The passing and repeal of various Passenger Acts throughout the nineteenth-century are testament to the contested nature of the voyage out. As Helen Woolcock argues, by 'mid-century [...] the British vessel became a floating welfare state with reciprocal rights and privileges' for the emigrants.<sup>64</sup> The central assertion of this passage is that life on board the ship is organised differently to that on land — *and*

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<sup>62</sup> As many good historical accounts of nineteenth-century life at sea already exist, I have not gone into more depth here than is necessary. See for example, Don Charlwood, *Settlers under Sail*, 3rd edn. (Melbourne: Burgewood Books, 1999); Ann Giffard and Basil Greenhill, *Travelling by Sea in the Nineteenth Century: Interior Design in Victorian Passenger Ships* (London: A. and C. Black, 1972); Haines, *Life* (2006).

<sup>63</sup> Given the tongue-in-cheek humour in the *Open Sea*, there is no way of verifying whether this letter was actually authentic, or whether it is fictional.

<sup>64</sup> Helen R. Woolcock, *Rights of Passage: Emigration to Australia in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tavistock, 1986), p. 65. See pp. 64–65 of this book for information on the various Passenger Acts of the mid-century and Wendy Cameron and Mary McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration To Upper Canada: The Petworth Project, 1832–1837* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), pp. 60–61 for a brief history of Passenger Acts in the early 1830s.

therefore requires a different narration of news. ‘Denied’ the ‘usual topics of the journalist’ — ‘legal, political, criminal’ news — shipboard emigrants must turn to other topics of interest to narrate, or construct new modes of narration.

The first issue of the *Alfred* contains a poem on the death of an Irish emigrant girl in the section on ‘Original Poetry’:

She came from her mountain home  
    In that far isle of the west. —  
Bright dreams of hope were filling  
    Her simple – joyous breast.  
Lured by the voice of kindness  
    To leave her native shore [...]  
The bark still keeps her onward course  
    But she – is with the dead! [...]  
And the Irish girl with all her hopes  
    Sleeps in the deep – deep sea!

Poems on emigrants and their emotional upheavals as they left their homes were staple features in both land-based and shipboard periodicals at the time, and the poem in the *Alfred* reads like a generic poem lamenting the death of an unfortunate emigrant. In fact, it actually relates to a genuine incident on board the ship. On Thursday 10 October, Emily writes in her diary, ‘I fear poor Biddy Malone is dying. I saw her the other day and she looked very wretched, lying in a small berth in a very small hospital, close and dirty, but I hope she is well attended, as Mr. Docker visits her as well as the Doctor’.<sup>65</sup> Biddy died the following day. Eliza, Emily’s younger sister, writes, ‘[w]e have just buried poor Biddy Malone, who has been dying of consumption ever since she came on board [...] The ceremony was very melancholy, and when the splash was heard, her sisters and friends raised a mournful wailing which they continued for some time’.<sup>66</sup> Evidently, by the time that Biddy’s death appears in the *Alfred* on 12 October, it is no longer ‘news’: everyone knows of it. The case of the Biddy Malone poem illustrates the different form of narration effectively: as there seems to be little of any novelty to relate in shipboard communities, the point of interest lies not so much in *what* is reported as in *how*. Thus, while emigrants may already know of Biddy Malone’s

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<sup>65</sup> Darvall, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> Long, p. 47.



death, the poem itself provides the element of novelty and a moment of shared reflection. Bidy has no name in the poem and instead the figure of the ‘Irish girl’ who now forever ‘Sleeps in the deep – deep sea’ could be any of the working-class emigrants who died during any voyage out as a result of previous ill health or poor living conditions during the voyage. While the poem attempts to raise empathy for her through its sentimental tone, any sense of pathos is abstracted. In essence, then, the *Alfred* uses shipboard events as the source of its ‘news’, but it does not participate in a conventional mode of reportage. Rather, through its fictionalised (or, more accurately in this case, poeticised) re-telling of its events, it provides its readers with an affective field in which they can all participate.

The *Open Sea* similarly takes full advantage of the ‘continuum’<sup>67</sup> of fact and fiction and blurs the boundaries between them through the character of the editor, Jeremy Diddler. Earlier, I drew a parallel between Diddler and Dickens as ‘Conductor’ of *Household Words*, but whereas the Conductor of *Household Words* never features in the news and articles of the magazine, as the *Open Sea* continues to run, Diddler begins to feature more and more in the ‘news’ reported. Issue Three, for example, announces that a ‘portrait’ of Jeremy ‘painted for presentation to the Museum’ will be ‘engraved for publication in the ensuing weeks [*sic*] issue of our journal’ (3, 1). Accordingly, the fourth issue appears with an illustration of the presumed ‘painting’, along with an article reporting the ‘gymnastics, and the irrepressible desire’ of the committee members on the occasion of the unveiling of the painting: their frivolities were such that it ‘made the atmosphere so intensely hot that catalepsy set in’ (Fig. 10).

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<sup>67</sup> See Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 9. See also Chapter 3, ‘News/Novels: The Undifferentiated Matrix’, pp. 42–70.

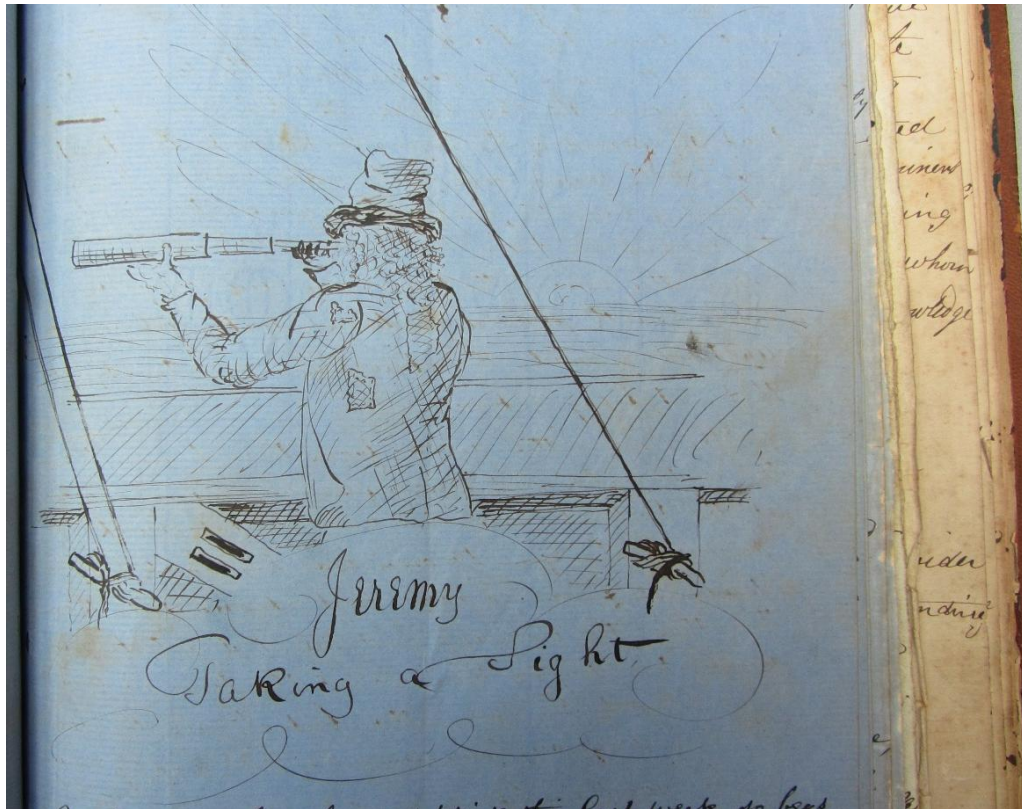


Figure 10: 'Engraving' of Jeremy Diddler in the *Open Sea*

When 'The Diddling Committee awoke from their trance' they saw the 'untamable [sic] and unconquerable Jeremy looking at the Portrait presented him midst such glorious festivity (4, 2). In an article in the fifth issue, 'Crossing the Line', Jeremy Diddler not only becomes an emigrant on the ship as she 'crosses the line' (the nautical phrase for crossing the equator) but actually a character in a fictional story where he visits 'the banquetting [sic] hall where was seated in submarine glory the venerable monarch of the main [Neptune] – rubicund and jolly he looked, his pleasant smile diffusing gladness and light to all around him' (4, 11). The modes of reportage in the *Open Sea* slide between various forms of fictionality: while Diddler himself may be a figment of imagination, the stories in which he appears that relate to shipboard life range from being 'just' a story, to being fantastical.

The size of the community necessitates this fictionalised form of reportage: in small communities, where the production of a weekly newspaper cannot keep up with oral circulation, it must create other forms of reportage in order to maintain that sense of novelty. In short, the shipboard periodical becomes its own source of news. Each of the instances that we have looked at so far — the Biddy Malone poem, the hanging of

the painting and the story of Neptune — are all related to shipboard events. While both the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* share some of the features of conventional reportage of print newspapers, the kinds of news they relate and the semi-fictionalised ways in which they relate them suggest that they aim to network their community of readers into the present moment, not by providing a weekly account of the events on board the ship, but by providing a space of shared reflection and entertainment. By providing this discourse of feeling, the shipboard periodical also hoped to regulate it: emphasising a light joviality would go some way towards preventing social tensions from arising.

### **Cultures of Settlement**

It is impossible to determine whether the *Alfred* and the *Open Sea* actually produced a culture of settlement on board the ship, but it is evident that, through the very production of a periodical and through the periodicals' vocabulary of print and land-based communities, this was one of their aspirations. The shipboard periodical thus regulated the voyage out by overlapping and merging different spatial imaginaries — the spaces of the town or village with that of the ship, the space of the ship with that of the periodical and vice versa. As we shall see, this imagined merging of different spaces is integral to how the periodical projects the provisional culture of settlement on board the ship onto life in the colonies.

Countless handbooks and manuals urged emigrants to see the voyage, not as an empty period of waiting until they reached the colonies, but as a chance to improve oneself and prepare for life in the colonies. Kingston's *Emigrant Voyager's Manual*, for example, is filled with advice that is centred around life in the colonies. He recommends that the emigrant spend time making models of 'wagons and carts, and Wheelbarrows' because 'up the country it will be important to know how to make a wheelbarrow [...] when, perhaps, no regular carpenter is to be found within twenty, or even fifty miles of you'.<sup>68</sup> He advises his readers that 'one should learn how to cobble shoes and mend clothes', 'for it is very probable that you will settle a long way

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<sup>68</sup> Kingston, *Voyager's*, p.30.

from either a tailor or a cobbler'.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, in the section on model-making, the reader is told that 'well-made models' of ships are 'very pretty ornaments or they may serve as toys for boys; but as they can be of no use to you, I do not recommend you to employ much of your time on them'.<sup>70</sup> Kingston urges upon his reader the importance of the voyage, as the emigrant 'will never again, probably, have so much leisure in the whole course of your lives; never such an opportunity in every respect of improving yourselves'.<sup>71</sup>

Shipboard periodicals also stressed this rhetoric of improvement that dominated emigrant guides such as Kingston's. In doing so, they also attempted to produce a transformation from emigrant to colonist during the voyage. In the fifth issue of the *Open Sea*, a chant appeared, which emigrants presumably marched to on deck for exercise. Consisting of four stanzas of four lines, each stanza with the same line:

March, march, ladies and gentlemen,  
March for the health and strength of our party  
Suppertime by and bye, soon will show reason why  
All the "True Britons" should take a long breath.

The emphasis on breathing well and staying strong and healthy is evidently a reference to maritime health: as mentioned previously, staying below the decks in the rank air and often in ships with poor ventilation was discouraged. Nonetheless, the military tone of the chant and the emphasis on strong, healthy bodies inevitably shade into a nationalistic discourse on settler emigration that views young, healthy single men and women as ideal colonists.

Tellingly, the last sermon of the *Open Sea* is on 'Earnestness': 'No! No! Young man', cries Diddler, 'it cannot last that you shall be out late night after night and at your business all right in the morning. You will be there, but you will not be there in earnest'. 'No! Ladies', he cries, 'it will not do, — you cannot gossip with your neighbours day after day, you cannot dawdle about shipping; you cannot lounge a

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<sup>69</sup> Kingston, *Voyager's*, p.40.

<sup>70</sup> Kingston, *Voyager's*, p.29.

<sup>71</sup> Kingston, *Voyager's*, p. 4.

forenoon over a novel, and trust your nimble fingers to make up for the lost time' (11, 2–3). A 'man in earnest is a grand study': 'without bragging, often without show he pursues his object, waits when Fortune frowns, and almost infallibly succeeds'. While such a man may not 'compare favourably' 'amongst the ladies' because he does not 'shine in drawing rooms [and] rarely in dining rooms', nevertheless, 'he shines eclipsing all else' 'in the pulpit, at the press, on the battlefield, amidst the raging storms, on the Exchange, at the fireside' (11, 3). While Diddler insists that women 'are more earnest than men', their 'task' is 'to fan the flame of earnestness where it is likely to flag in the bosom of husband, brother, son or lover' (11, 4).<sup>72</sup> The sermon makes no overt reference to settlement, but the stress on diligence, patience and, in the case of women, supporting their men, fits in with the colonial ideology of emigration. As we shall see in the next chapter, emigrant manuals and periodicals sometimes sought to disabuse potential emigrants of any notions of easy success in the colonies. They made it clear that hard work and patience and the ability to rise above sometimes multiple failures was an inevitable and integral part of settlement: success came to only those who worked and waited for it.

Fundamentally, however, the emphasis on settlement, first on board the ship and then in the colonies, was not a means of forgetting England and wholeheartedly embracing a new life in the Antipodes. The newspapers posit a more complicated relationship between Britain and Australia than the simple uni-directional flow of people, goods and cultural practices from England to the colonies. They recognise that the relationship may not be a simple binary, but in fact, may be a messier, entangled knottiness of spatial and textual relations. A poem looking back on the voyage appears in the last issue of the *Alfred*, in which the poet recalls the moments as the ship leaves the harbour, and 'Albion's receding cliffs are seen no more': 'My aching eyes now vainly seek the shore / The kind farewell no longer meets my ear'. A renewed sense of community mitigates this sense of loss: on board the ship, the poet finds a group of 'friends – let them not go – / They came like truth, they should not fade like dreams'

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<sup>72</sup> The role of women in the context of nineteenth-century settler emigration is a complex and fraught one. The next chapter will look at the relationships between gender, emigration and literature.

(12, 11). These concerns with loss, continuity and formations of new communities echo throughout the periodical. In the column 'Intercepted Despatches', there is a letter that purports to be from 'Alfred Thomas' to 'Mrs Sophie Blueyedbrown', resident of 'Rabbitburrow Park' in 'New South Wales'. As the previous chapter has shown, whether manuscript or print, whether circulating in personal or public networks, emigrants' letters acted as a point of connection between emigrants in their new settings, and the homes they had left behind. For this reason, the letter in the *Alfred* is particularly interesting. Both the names 'Blueyedbrown' and 'Rabbitburrow Park' indicate that the letter is fictional. As an imaginary letter, it quite evidently plays little part in actually maintaining a connection between beloved family members over time and space. Alfred Thomas appears to be a person who went out with Sophie Blueyedbrown and, having left Sophie to settle in New South Wales, is returning to England with his 'fellow passengers some of whom are well known to you'. The last comment suggests that Alfred Thomas's fellow passengers also travelled out with Sophie and are now travelling back to England. This spatial dynamic where would-be emigrants are returning home to England, but are writing to their friends in New South Wales complicates a one-way flow between metropole and colony. The figure of Alfred Thomas highlights the multi-faceted and complex ways in which emigrants are situated. Whereas emigrant guidebooks and manuals were written with an eye to homes in the future colonies, produced in the 'in-between' space of the voyage, between metropole and colony, shipboard periodicals offered a space in which emigrants could articulate that sense of being between places, of being both homed and unhomed at the same time. Displaced from home and travelling 'to a soil that is not mine' (12, 11) and yet constantly looking back home and producing new communities during the voyage, they write of themselves as placed in the messy, complex junctures of being between places.

In their diaries, emigrants frequently wrote of the huge expanse of the ocean and how the voyage often felt like a huge temporal and spatial expanse. Edward Charlwood, for example, writes in his diary,

We don't seem to have energy enough to talk to one another, we can't settle down to read, and one soon gets tired of walking about so we

lounge and eat and drink and smoke and sleep the day away somehow but I often think what a shocking waste of time it is.<sup>73</sup>

In his diary, the emigrant Henry Curr records his awe of the ship which 'is in an immense circle of water; the wide canopy of the sky is resting upon its outer edge in the far distant horizon'.<sup>74</sup> With their stress on their 'isolated' position, and on being a 'little' community marked by the 'passing' of 'trivial events', shipboard periodicals seem, in part, to share this sentiment of the ship as separated from the rest of the world by the vast immenseness of the ocean. At the same time, however, the emigrants who produced these shipboard periodicals recognise that they are imbricated in a wider network of social relations. It is by now widely acknowledged that print culture, through novels and newspapers, enabled people who had never seen each other before to imagine themselves as a community simultaneously moving forward through homogenous empty time: this is what makes it possible for the nation to imagine itself as a collective entity.<sup>75</sup> Evidently, as the discussion of the production and dissemination of the periodicals in this chapter shows, these little shipboard periodicals reproduce ideas of nationhood and colonization even though they do not make an 'imagined community' in the same way that a print periodical does. Instead, these shipboard periodicals produce a 'spatial synchronicity'. Through their factual fictions, they imagine the emigrant ship through a multiplicity of spatial configurations all overlaid onto that of the ship. This geographical hybridity is one of the fundamental points of the ideology of settler emigration: the ability to carry the affect of places elsewhere, and to encourage a flow between the metropolis and the colony is the task that, to a greater and lesser extent, all texts of emigration literature participate in.

Thus, produced during the liminal space of the voyage, shipboard periodicals place themselves at the interfaces of fact and fiction, manuscript and print and novelty

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<sup>73</sup> *The 1863 shipboard diary of Edward Charlwood: from England to Australia*, facsim. edn., (Warrandyte: Burgewood Books, 2003). [15 July 1863].

<sup>74</sup> Henry Curr, *Diary: Covering the First Six Weeks of his Voyage from England to Australia on the Full-Rigged Ship Morning Light in 1856*. Sydney, Vaughan Evans Library, 3 0001 00014741 5, p. 12 [12 July 1856].

<sup>75</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. (London: Verso, 2006), especially Chapter 3, 'The Origins of National Consciousness', pp. 37–46.

and the news, drawing upon and subverting generic expectations and conventions of print periodicals. They offer a fresh understanding of the cultural conditions of settler emigration: against emigration literature's preoccupations of loss, anxiety and despair, they exhibit a subversive playfulness, in both their form and content. In the previous chapter, I looked at how the public sphere of print untethered letters from their network of personal associations and that this circulation in the public sphere of print created a culture of suspicion. In this chapter, I have looked at how manuscript shipboard newspapers create a fantasy of print precisely because it allows them to participate in imagining themselves as operating within a wider geographical scope than the one in which they are currently located. While the manuscript newspaper draws on aspects of print periodicals in order to invest itself with some of its attributes, nonetheless, it does so in order to subvert some of the claims of print periodicals and to articulate for themselves what the experience of emigration might entail. In the next chapter, I look at another example of how emigrants write back to booster literature. Focussing on the work of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, I look at the ways in which they wrote back to the print culture of emigration to voice alternative gendered narratives of emigration that represent the female experience of emigration.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Fragmentary Aesthetics: Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill in the Canadian Bush

For sisters Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, marriage and emigration were two sides of the same coin. Emigration was Moodie's 'husband's call'.<sup>1</sup> When she cried for her life in England, she consoled herself with the fact that 'my children around me play, / My husband's smiles approve' (75). Parr Traill asks herself rhetorically, 'have I not a right to be cheerful and contented for the sake of my beloved partner? [...] if for his sake I have voluntarily left home, and friends, and country, shall I therefore sadden him by useless regrets?'<sup>2</sup> Before the sisters met their respective husbands, they had both resigned themselves to spinsterhood, hoping to use their literary ambitions to secure themselves financially. Their childhood had been filled with imaginative literary endeavours.<sup>3</sup> Later, Parr Traill would liken themselves to the other, more famous, literary sisterhood of the Brontë sisters: 'were I to write a history of the childhood of the Strickland family', she muses in her journal, 'how many things there would be that

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<sup>1</sup> Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush*, ed. by Michael A. Peterman (London: Norton, 2007; [1852]), p. 130. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, ed. by D. M. R. Bentley (Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1989; [1836]), p. 90. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Ballstadt, 'Editor's Introduction', in *Roughing It in the Bush, or Life in Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988; [1852]), pp. xvii–lx (p. xx): 'By 1830 she had published several books of entertainment and moral instruction, she had contributed numerous stories and poems to the popular annuals and gift books of the time, and she had been acknowledged as a writer of promise in literary circles such as those in which Thomas Pringle moved'. Subsequently referred to as 'Editor's'. See also Michael A. Peterman, 'Editor's Introduction', in Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, ed. by Michael A. Peterman (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997; [1836]), pp. xix–lxix (p. xx): 'From the time of her father's death in 1818 until she left for Upper Canada in 1832, not only did Catharine make numerous contributions to many literary annuals, but she also had at least a dozen books published'.

would remind the reader of the early days of the Brontës'.<sup>4</sup> As they grew older, these endeavours began to take on a professional form, as they sought out publishing opportunities in London.<sup>5</sup> It was in London, in the house of the abolitionist Thomas Pringle that Moodie first met her future husband, John Dunbar Moodie, and then through John, that Parr Traill met hers, Thomas Traill. John Moodie had recently returned to England, with the 'threefold intention' of (a) writing an account of his adventures in South Africa, where he had emigrated to in 1819, (b) finding a wife, and (c) returning to "Groote Valley", his South African farm.<sup>6</sup> Her fear of wild animals, coupled with her distaste for slavery, however, caused her to cut off an initial engagement to John. In a letter explaining to her friends, she declared, 'I have changed my mind. You may call me a jilt or a flirt or what you please...I will neither marry a soldier nor leave my country forever'.<sup>7</sup> Within a few weeks, however, she had changed her mind and they were married on 4 April 1831. Parr Traill married Traill a little over a year later, on 13 May 1832. Early into the Moodie's marriage, it became apparent that they could not maintain their social status on John's income of a half-pay officer.<sup>8</sup> John decided to emigrate to Canada, and Thomas Traill followed suit: their wives had little choice but to acquiesce.

In addition to the emigration propaganda, there were many other personal stories to persuade John and Thomas in favour of Canada. Moodie and Parr Traill's

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Charlotte Gray, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Lives of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill* (London: Viking, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Moodie published her poems, sketches and stories in leading journals such as the *Athenaeum* and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, but also in ladies' magazines such as *La Belle Assemblée* prior to her marriage. She also published a volume of poetry, *Enthusiasm; and Other Poems* in 1831 through Smith & Elder and in the same year, through her associations with Thomas Pringle, became the amanuensis for the slave narrative *The History of Mary Prince*. See Ballstadt, 'Editor's', p. xxii and Gray, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Ballstadt, 'Editor's', p. xvii. John Moodie's *Ten Years in South Africa: Including a Particular Description of the Wild Sports of that Country* (London: Bentley, 1835) is very much written from a male viewpoint and thus falls foul of the criticism that Moodie and Parr Traill level at accounts of emigration in print.

<sup>7</sup> *Susanna Moodie: Letters of a Lifetime*, ed. by Carl Ballstadt, Elizabeth Hopkins and Michael A. Peterman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 55 [late January 1831]. Volume subsequently referred to as 'Lifetime'.

<sup>8</sup> John had served in the Napoleonic wars as a subaltern in the 21<sup>st</sup> Royal North British Fusiliers. Ballstadt, 'Editor's', (pp. xvii–lx) p. xviii.

brother, Samuel Strickland, had been offered a job by John Galt, Secretary to the Canada Company in 1828.<sup>9</sup> The Company, a London-based organization, had bought vast areas of Crown Land in the Huron Tract to sell on to prospective emigrants. Samuel's father-in-law, Robert Reid, returned to England — and arrived unexpectedly on the Moodie's doorstep, with tales of his own, and of Samuel's, success.<sup>10</sup> One of Parr Traill's friends, James Black had emigrated to Canada in 1821 with his wife and children. Their letters were a mine of information which Parr Traill drew on to write a story about emigration, *The Young Emigrants; or, Pictures of Canada; Calculated to Amuse and Instruct the Minds of Youth* (1826), even before she had met Traill.<sup>11</sup> Marriage — and then emigration — seemed a viable escape from poverty for the sisters, although as Charlotte Gray notes, 'it was the genteel poverty of the marginal middle-class rather than the grinding poverty of industrial slums and rural hardship'.<sup>12</sup> A literary sensibility had drawn Moodie and John together when they first met, but Moodie feared that marriage and emigration would precipitate an abrupt end to her literary endeavours. In her letters, she writes that her 'blue stockings, since I have become a wife, have turned so pale that I think they will soon be quite white',<sup>13</sup> and Tom Wilson, her neighbour in England, warns her that there is no place in Canada for literary-minded people such as herself. As she was to find out, however, emigration opened a set of new literary opportunities and challenges across the Atlantic for herself and for Parr Traill.

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<sup>9</sup> Clara McCandless Thomas, 'Strickland, Samuel', Dictionary of Canadian Biography <[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/strickland\\_samuel\\_9E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/strickland_samuel_9E.html)> [30 May 2014]. For more information on Galt, see Chapter One, 'Histories, Places and Peoples'. Galt was another emigrant who turned to writing about his experiences as an emigrant in order to alleviate financial difficulty. Amongst other emigrant-inspired works, he wrote a semi-fictional account of emigration, *Bogle Corbet; or The Emigrants* (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831) and *The Autobiography of John Galt* (London: Cochrane and M'Crone, 1833). See *John Galt: Reappraisals*, ed. by Elizabeth Waterston (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1985) for a good introduction to Galt and Roger Hall and Nick Whistler, 'Galt, John', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* <[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/galt\\_john\\_7E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/galt_john_7E.html)> [accessed 30 May 2014] (para. 12).

<sup>10</sup> Gray, pp. 39–40.

<sup>11</sup> Peterman, 'Editor's', pp. xix–lxix (pp. xx–xxi).

<sup>12</sup> Gray, p. xi.

<sup>13</sup> *Lifetime*, p. 61.

In this chapter, I examine two of the most important texts in this rich corpus of trans-Atlantic literary publishing: Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) and Catharine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836). Both of these texts are now firmly regarded as Canadian classics, foundational texts that have simultaneously set in place a standard of Canadian literature and, particularly in the case of *Roughing It*, generated many other texts in the forms of editions and imaginative responses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup> However, to take them as solely Canadian texts risks overshadowing the fact that they were read and reviewed in Britain long before they were pirated in North America or published in Canada. Both *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* were initially published in their volume formats in London, for a British audience. Of the two, *Roughing It* by far enjoyed the most international acclaim. In the same year that it was published in Britain, the American publisher, George Putnam, produced an excised edition catering to a North American audience. It was only in 1871 that *Roughing It* was published in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Rather than considering the British editions of these texts as stable entities confidently acting as a record of pioneer life, I wish to reconsider them in this chapter in the light of their original claim: that of inventing distinctively different narratives of emigration to those circulating in booster literature for a readership in Britain. Convinced that the female experience of emigration was fundamentally different to that of the male experience, and frustrated that the difficulties encountered by women were not adequately represented in the narratives of success circulating in booster literature, Moodie and Parr Traill turned to writing *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* to narrate in semi-autobiographical form their own experiences of settlement.

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<sup>14</sup> Probably the only imaginative engagement with Parr Traill's work is *The Bush Ladies in Their Own Words: Susanna Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, Anne Langton, Anna Jameson* (Victoria: Scirocco Drama, 2000), a contemporary play by Molly Thom, where the two sisters and two other emigrant settlers meet and share their experiences of bush life. The most famous reworking of Moodie's *Roughing It* is Margaret Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), a collection of poems that explore Moodie's rage at and frustration with her new life.

<sup>15</sup> For an account of George Putnam's pirated edition, see Ballstadt, 'Introduction', pp. xxxii–xxxiv. For an account of the 1871 Canadian edition, see Ballstadt, 'Introduction', pp. xxxvi–xxxvii. The revised 1871 text was bought 'up-to-date' with a preface by Susanna Moodie aptly called 'Canada: A Contrast'.

Both sisters referred to their works as ‘sketches’. This chapter seeks to understand the critical work of the sketch in the context of narrating gendered experiences of emigration and settlement. The sketch, in both its visual and verbal forms, has traditionally been understood as a preliminary endeavour, a preparatory stage for the finished novel or painting. However, as Richard Sha argues, an emerging body of artists and novelists from the late eighteenth-century onwards began to celebrate the incompleteness of the sketch, and its roughness of finish, as part of its aesthetic appeal.<sup>16</sup> As Alison Byerly notes, the sketch conveyed a sense of immediacy through its supposedly ‘impromptu nature’, ‘apparent arbitrariness’ and ‘spontaneity’.<sup>17</sup> Amanpal Garcha argues that sketches capture these fleeting moments of time, but are simultaneously characterised by their ‘aesthetic stasis’: in focussing on a particular temporal moment, the sketch defies narrative progression. This sense of being held in a temporal limbo is a key response to modernity: through their apparent stability, sketches ‘offer readers an alternative to modernity’s rushed time’.<sup>18</sup> The sketch’s emphasis on a particular moment in time and place makes it particularly suitable for narrating what Sandra Zagarell calls ‘narrative of community’, that is, works that ‘take as their subject the life of a community’ and the ‘minute and quite ordinary processes through which a community maintains itself as an entity’.<sup>19</sup> Mary Russell Mitford made the sketch and its association with narrative of a community immensely popular through her long series of “Village Stories” published in *Lady’s Magazine* between 1822 and 1824.<sup>20</sup> Although there is no historical evidence for any

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Sha, *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 22–27.

<sup>17</sup> Alison Byerly, ‘Effortless Art: The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century Painting and Literature’, *Criticism*, 41 (1999), 349–364, (p. 351).

<sup>18</sup> Amanpal Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel: The Development of Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Sandra A. Zagarell, ‘Narrative of Community: The Identification of a Genre’, *Signs*, 13 (1988), 498–527 (p. 499).

<sup>20</sup> See Garcha, pp. 9–11; Zagarell, pp. 500–501; and Josephine McDonagh, ‘Rethinking Provincialism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Fiction: *Our Village* to *Villette*’, *Victorian Studies*, 55 (2013), 399–424 (p. 404). For an alternative reading of the sketch in the context of the city and urban culture, see Tanya Agathocleous, *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), especially ‘The Cosmopolitanism of the Victorian Urban Sketch’, pp. 73–87.

connection between Parr Traill and Mitford, four of Moodie's surviving letters to Mitford show that she corresponded with her (at least while Moodie was in England) and greatly admired her work.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the parallel between the two authors has been highlighted by Carl Ballstadt, who argues that Mitford's *Our Village* offered a narrative model for Moodie's *Roughing It*.<sup>22</sup>

This chapter draws on the current critical work on the sketch, but it situates Moodie's and Parr Traill's works firmly within the context of emigration literature. It argues that, at the same time as hoping to invest their work with the themes of tradition and stability that the sketch was immersed in, the sisters' use of the sketch reflects the disaggregated sense of community and the jumble of people and experiences that emigration necessarily entailed. The sisters reclaimed the fragmentary aesthetics of the sketch, pointing out that life in the bush as emigrant wives and mothers allowed for little time to write more than short pieces. Their narratives of emigration were firmly grounded in the domestic arts of home-making: the difficulties of making bread, making a house a home, raising children in foreign climes — and *not* on accounts of the soil or climate — thus spoke to the 'truth' of a woman's experience of emigration. Simultaneously, they asserted that the sketch involved observation of close detail, rather than a panoramic gaze — in short, a fundamentally different way of seeing — and that this allowed the sisters to write a different, gendered 'truth' of emigration to that circulating in booster literature.

### **Form, Gender and Authenticity**

Early on in *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie mentions that John is going to 'Yoxford' with their neighbour Tom Wilson to hear a certain 'Mr. Cattermole lecture upon emigration to Canada' (42).<sup>23</sup> Moodie has little positive to say about Cattermole. Unequivocal in her 'uncharitable dislike' for the man (47), she hopes that 'Mr.

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<sup>21</sup> *Lifetime*, p. 12. See Letters 15, 19, 21 and 24 in this volume for Moodie's letters to Mitford.

<sup>22</sup> Carl Ballstadt, 'Susanna Moodie and the English Sketch', *Canadian Literature*, 51 (1972), 32–38, repr. in Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush*, ed. by Michael Peterman (London: Norton, 2007), pp. 419–425.

<sup>23</sup> Yoxford is a village about ten miles from Reydon in Suffolk, where the Moodies lived.

Cattermole, with the unpronounceable name, will disgust [his audience] with his eloquence for [...] he is a coarse, vulgar fellow, and quite lacks the dignity of a bear' (43). It is difficult to point to the source of Moodie's vehemence against Cattermole even before she has emigrated. Cattermole was a speaker for the Canada Company and a part-time agent for the Crown Lands Department. He promoted emigration to Canada during a sixteenth-month tour that took him across Norfolk, Essex, Kent and Suffolk, where the Moodies and Parr Traills lived.<sup>24</sup> It was in Cattermole's interests to persuade as many people to emigrate as he could through his lectures and pamphlets: for each emigrant he recruited, he received a financial bonus.<sup>25</sup> Cattermole received £190 for his tour, an amount that he claimed to be less than what the tour had cost him. He claimed to have directly influenced the decision of over 6,000 people to emigrate.<sup>26</sup> Like the multitude of other pro-emigration narratives circulating in print, Cattermole's lectures and literature stressed the benefits of settler life. In his pamphlet, *Emigration: The Advantages of Emigration to Canada* (1831), he aimed to refute the notion held by 'many otherwise well-informed persons' that Canada is a 'country covered with eternal snows, and scarcely fit for the habitation of a civilized being'.<sup>27</sup> He asserts that with regard to 'climate, soil, and capability for an advantageous settlement, it is not exceeded, if equalled by any country in the world'. He continues, 'it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to find any other region of the globe, a tract of country of the same magnitude, with so many natural advantages, as that part which lies between lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, and the Ottawa river'. He describes Canada as a place where 'deer abounds in the woods', 'lakes teem with white fish', and the 'society in York is equal to any provincial town in Britain'.<sup>28</sup> These are not merely 'vague assertions' he assures his reader, for he can provide 'well authenticated

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<sup>24</sup> Wendy Cameron and Mary McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada: The Petworth Project, 1832–1837* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 48; p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Gray, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> Cameron and Maude, p. 306, n. 18.

<sup>27</sup> William Cattermole, *Emigration: The Advantages of Emigration to Canada* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1831), p. iii.

<sup>28</sup> Cattermole, p. 10; p. 11; p. 18.

proofs'.<sup>29</sup> He drew a careful veil over the gloom of the forests, the lack of an established social order, and the amount of hard labour needed to maintain an emigrant settlement.

Both sisters were familiar with Cattermole's pro-emigration stance: when John and Tom Wilson left to attend Cattermole's lecture at Yoxford, Parr Traill was present and she would have heard Moodie talk about it later. Crucially, however, in both their works, the sisters connect Cattermole to failed emigration. Enthused by Cattermole's speech, Moodie's neighbour Tom Wilson calculates that 'if the Canadian soil yields half only what Mr Cattermole says it does, I need not starve' and he emigrates (48). Four months later, he returns to England, weak with prolonged illness and 'with barely enough to pay for his passage home' (82). Similarly, the only mention of Cattermole in *Backwoods* is in connection with a young man on his way back to England, who 'had been induced, by reading Cattermole's pamphlet on the subject of Emigration, to quit a good farm, and gathering together what property he possessed, to embark for Canada', where he found that he 'had been vilely deceived' for the 'discomforts are unbearable' (43).

Beyond these singular brief instances, the sisters never mention Cattermole again, but the desire to correct exaggerated stories of success in the colonies shapes both their narratives. Interspersed throughout *Backwoods* are frequent references to how Parr Traill's experience of what she has read fails to live up to the reality that confronts her. She is 'greatly disappointed' by her first time in Montreal, 'a place of which travellers had said so much': it was comparable to 'the fruits of the Dead sea, which are said to be fair and tempting to look upon, but yield only ashes and bitterness when tasted by the thirsty traveller' (38). When she hears of 'a whole family having had no better supply of flour than what could be daily ground by a small sand-mill, and for weeks being destitute of every necessary, not even excepting bread', she 'could not help expressing some surprise, never having met with any account in the works I had read concerning emigration that at all prepared one for such evils' (85). The Indian

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<sup>29</sup> Cattermole, p. 3.



summer, of which she had read ‘such delightful descriptions’, falls ‘far below’ her expectations (108).

Moodie opens *Roughing It* with a direct attack on such booster literature. She writes critically that interest in emigration was

industriously kept alive by pamphlets, published by interested parties, which prominently set forth all the *good* to be derived from a settlement in the Backwoods of Canada; while they carefully concealed the toil and hardship to be endured in order to procure these advantages. They told of lands yielding forty bushels to the acre, but they said nothing of the years when these lands, with the most careful cultivation, would barely return fifteen [...] They talked of log houses to be raised in a single day [...] but they never ventured upon a picture of the disgusting scenes of riot and low debauchery exhibited during the raising (10).

Both *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* frame themselves as a corrective to booster literature’s silence on the difficulties of life in Canada. Parr Traill writes irritably of travellers who

generally make a hasty journey through the long settled and prosperous portions of the country; they see a tract of fertile, well-cultivated land, the result of many years of labour; they see comfortable dwellings, abounding with all the substantial necessities of life [...] He concludes, therefore, that Canada is a land of Canaan, and writes a book setting forth these advantages [...] He forgets that these advantages are the result of long years of unremitting and patient labour; that these things are the crown, not the first-fruits of the settler’s toil; and that during the interval many and great privations must be submitted to by almost every class of emigrants (85).

Writing that it is ‘cruel to write in flattering terms calculated to deceive emigrants into the belief that the land to which they are transferring their families, their capital, and their hopes, [is] a land flowing with milk and honey, where comforts and affluence may be obtained with little exertion’, Parr Traill insists that ‘[t]ruth has been conscientiously her object in the work’ (9). Moodie makes a similar claim to truth, in her epigraph to *Roughing It*, where she writes:

I sketch from Nature, and the picture’s true;  
Whatever the subject, whether grave or gay,  
Painful experience in a distant land,  
Made it my own. (n.p.)

In sharp distinction to the concerns of authenticity of printed emigrants' letters explored in the first chapter of this thesis, the two sisters' concerns with authenticity are not tied up with ensuring the commodity status of the text. Instead, both are tied up with correctly conveying a *gendered* experience of bush life. Parr Traill justified the production of *Backwoods* by pointing to the fact that men and women experienced emigration in diametrically opposing ways:

Young men soon become reconciled to this country which offers to them that chief attraction to youth, – great personal liberty. Their employments are of a cheerful and healthy nature and their amusements such as hunting, shooting, fishing and boating are peculiarly fascinating. But in none of these can their sisters share. The hardships and difficulties of the settler's life therefore are felt peculiarly by the female part of the family (5).

Reading booster literature that was currently in print would be of little use to women who were emigrating with their families, for 'a woman's pen alone can describe half that is requisite to be told of the internal management of a domicile in the backwoods' (9).<sup>30</sup> In order to convey correctly the gendered 'truths' of bush life, both sisters turn to the sketch form.

The sisters' use of the term 'sketch' to describe both *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* may initially appear surprising: while *Roughing It* readily lends itself to this description, *Backwoods* might be more appropriately and overtly understood through the lens of an epistolary collection. However, there is little attempt to present a fluent narrative in *Backwoods*: although each letter is headed by a date, any sense of temporal drive — the feeling that one is progressing through narrative time — is undercut by the presence of numerous lengthy descriptions of the flora and fauna she finds in the woods and near her home. The text opens with the ship's departure from England, but it ends abruptly: one could be forgiven for thinking that there is another letter yet to come after the last one. *Roughing It* has a more overt temporal framework: the text begins with the ship's arrival in Canada, and ends with their departure from the backwoods

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<sup>30</sup> Later, Parr Traill would write an emigrant guide completely dedicated to managing domestic life in the bush. See Catharine Parr Traill, *The Female Emigrant's Guide and Hints on Canadian Housekeeping* (Toronto: Maclear, 1854).

— a period of seven years. However, neither of the two texts has the narrative coherence of a novel or anything that can be called a ‘plot’ — there is no climactic moment, or narrative complication or resolution. Instead, both are characterised by a loose diachronic structure, a patchwork-like quality that Garcha identifies as one of the constituent features of the sketch genre. In his incisive book, *From Sketch to Novel*, Garcha argues that, with their emphasis on quickness, rapid change and incompleteness, sketches ‘acknowledged modernity through their fragmentary nature and offered respite from this changeability through their stasis’.<sup>31</sup> He continues:

as economic and social changes intensified and the reading public’s sense of those changes’ potentially disintegrating effects reached a peak, fiction responded by emphasizing aesthetic fragmentation and coherence, the two contradictory but interrelated principles sketches foreground.<sup>32</sup>

According to Garcha, on the one hand, the plotless description of sketches provides a comfortable sense of stasis and a respite from the fast-paced life of modernity; on the other, their fragmentary nature produces the sense of constant change which is characteristic of modernity. Emigration was a constituent feature of the ‘economic and social changes’ in the nineteenth century, and the two ‘contradictory but interrelated principles’ of fragmentation and coherence that Garcha identifies can be seen in Moodie’s and Parr Traill’s work. As the rest of the chapter will show, the sisters narrate the confusion of emigration through their sketches, but they simultaneously use their sketches to build a sense of community in their new environments.

In addition to this, however, the sketches in *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* are caught up in the task of relating one reality — that of economic hardships and social difficulties of settling in Canada — to another — the desires and expectations of eager emigrants in Britain. Fragmentation and stasis have always been constituent features of the genre of the sketch, from its late-Romantic beginnings through its development in the nineteenth-century, but, I argue, it gains a new currency within the context of emigration. Moodie’s and Parr Traill’s sketches produce the complementary aesthetics

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<sup>31</sup> Garcha, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Garcha, p. 26.

of fragmentation and coherence, but throughout, they harnesses these aesthetic formations to bolster their claims of authenticity.

Once in Canada, Moodie becomes extremely depressed. Lonely, without the company of friends, family, or a literary circle, she

would sit for hours at the window [of her house] as the shades of evening deepened round me, watching the massy foliage of the forests pictured in the waters, till fancy transported me back to England. It was long, very long, before I could discipline my mind to learn and practise all the menial employments which are necessary in a good settler's wife (205).

Yet, when she tries to be a 'good settler's wife', her efforts are hampered by her lack of experience: her genteel and literary upbringing had not equipped her to manage a household from scratch — and certainly not an emigrant household — and her failure to bake bread, fear of the woods and fear of milking cows make an already difficult life even more so. Additionally, her ignorance of social customs, coupled with her snobbery, make her an easy target for her neighbours. An example of this is the sketch 'Our First Settlement', a good part of which details the practice of 'borrowing', an episode which almost every nineteenth-century reviewer chose to quote. Moodie is forced into accepting an empty whisky decanter which she doesn't want by her neighbour. Upon returning to claim the decanter, the girl demands that it be filled with whisky as an expression of gratitude. Having 'borrowed' the decanter, Moodie proves herself easy prey: the sketch is filled with incident after incident of borrowing, and Moodie's constant inability to outwit her neighbours. Judging the correct mode of behaviour is confusing. She says, 'When we came to the Canadas, society was composed of elements which did not always amalgamate in the best possible manner' (134). Of course it is not the case that society has become more coherent, but that her grasp of Canadian 'etiquette' has developed with time. As the years go by, she acquires the skills necessary for bush life so much so that she assures her reader, 'you will soon learn to love Canada as I love it, who once viewed it with a hatred so intense that I longed to die' (26). To read *Roughing It* is to be confronted with a jumble of disaggregated experiences. The sketches reproduce for the reader Moodie's initial understanding of emigrant life, an understanding which is incomplete and fragmentary.

They mimic the continual setbacks and disappointments that a new emigrant must be prepared to encounter: these slow, incremental steps towards progress is the other face of the frenetic change and accelerated pace of modernity.

The fragmentary aesthetic of *Roughing It* is doubly inscribed: in addition to mimicking the uneven experiences of emigration, it also acts as an implicit comment on the economic difficulties of the bush. The origins of *Roughing It* lie in a series of eight sketches published in the late 1830s in two Montreal-based literary periodicals — the *Literary Garland* (1838-51), edited by James Lovell, and *Victoria Magazine* (1847-8), edited by the Moodies themselves.<sup>33</sup> When Lovell invites her to contribute a few sketches, she puts aside the fact that ‘the mind is in no condition for mental occupation’ when ‘the body is fatigued with labour, unwonted and beyond its strength’ and instead works hard into the late hours of the night:

I no longer retired to bed when the labours of the day were over. I sat up, and wrote by the light of a strange sort of candle, that Jenny called “sluts”, and which the old woman manufactured out of pieces of old rags, twisted together and dipped in pork lard, and stuck in a bottle. They did not give a bad light, but it took a great many of them to last me for a few hours (281).

*Roughing It* is produced in the snatched moments of time stolen from Moodie’s sleep. In the context of the bold claims of booster literature, the irony of this passage is doublefold: firstly that Moodie should have to turn to writing at all in order to supplement the meagre income from her farm, and secondly that her financial circumstances are so strained that she lacks even the most basic necessities to write her sketches. In her letters, Moodie writes a lot about the ‘spirit of Poesy’, the ‘first flight of [her] muse’<sup>34</sup> and the ‘spontaneous outpourings of [her] mind, vividly alive to the

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<sup>33</sup> As Carole Gerson points out, the Moodies were very concerned with establishing a literary culture within Canada. In addition to these two magazines, they also contributed to the *Anglo-American Magazine* (Toronto 1852–5), *The Maple Leaf* (Montreal 1852–4), the *Family Herald* (Montreal 1859–60) and the *British American Magazine* (Toronto 1863–4). For more information, and for an enlightening background to the literary culture of early-nineteenth-century Canada, see the first two chapters of her book, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 1–35 (p. 9).

<sup>34</sup> *Lifetime*, p. 90.

beauties of Nature’,<sup>35</sup> but this passage in *Roughing It* materialises her writing, placing it within a stringent economy where she has to make the best use of the tiniest fragment of small opportunities. Moodie’s tacit admission that she cannot afford to buy candles, and that even when she makes her own, she needs to keep a careful eye on their efficiency is a comment on the physical privations of bush life. In her article ‘Effortless Art’, Byerly notes that the narrators of Dickens and Thackeray’s sketches adopt a artful carelessness in their narration that ‘disguise[s] the economic necessity that engendered the production of these pieces’. She continues,

Beneath the smooth surface created by the casual style of Dickens’s sketches, we can sense an uneasy preoccupation with issues of money, work, and social class that reflects the financial burden that led to their creation.<sup>36</sup>

By contrast, Moodie *forges* a relationship between her sketches and the economic imperative that brings them into being. Unlike Parr Trill, who rarely writes of bush poverty in personal terms, Moodie makes it clear that literary ambition and accolade are secondary to the money that writing brings in. When she receives her first payment for her first sketch in the *Literary Garland*, she ‘actually shed tears of joy’: ‘It was my own. I had earned it with my own hand; and it seemed to my delighted fancy to form the nucleus out of which a future independence for my family might arise’ (281). Moodie redrafted the preliminary sketches in the *Literary Garland* and *Victoria Magazine* to bring *Roughing It* to the full form that we have today. She gathered them together, split some, supplemented others, and wrote eleven completely new ones. Though the book was published in two volumes in 1852 by the London publisher, Richard Bentley, Moodie maintains the initial roughness of composition: there are few, if any, narrative points fluidly connecting one event to the next.<sup>37</sup> Thus, Moodie authenticates her claim that life is indeed difficult in the bush through her choice of form. Short, fragmented pieces that can be fitted in at the end of a physically tiring day’s work better convey the realities of emigration than a long fluent essay, for example. In other words, in order

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<sup>35</sup> *Lifetime*, p. 93.

<sup>36</sup> Byerly, 349–364 (p. 356).

<sup>37</sup> Given Mitford’s literary influence on Moodie, it is interesting that they both published their works through Bentley.

to convince her audience that what she says about the hardships of life in Canada is really true, Moodie's form must match up to its content.

### **A Sense of Place: Where is Here?**

'Where is here?':<sup>38</sup> Northrop Frye famously asks of Canada in his seminal collection of critical essays *The Bush Garden*. This, he argues, is a much more pertinent question than 'Who am I?', as few other 'national consciousness[es] [have] had so large an amount of the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly digested, so built into it': 'To feel "Canadian" was to feel part of a no-man's-land with huge rivers, lakes, and islands that very few Canadians had ever seen'.<sup>39</sup> For Frye, the geographical scope of Canada complicates the question of belonging. For the nineteenth-century female emigrant, however, it was not the immensity of the land that posed problems, but the fact of its perceived novelty. Any sense of belonging was impeded by the lack of a powerful, mythical sense of history connected to Canada's landscape. According to an unnamed friend of Parr Traill's, Canada is

the most unpoetical of all lands; there is no scope for the imagination; here all is new – the very soil seems newly formed; there is no hoary ancient grandeur in these woods; no recollections of former deeds connected with the country (128).

Although geological discoveries were revealing Canada as an ancient place at the time that these women were writing,<sup>40</sup> scientific fact could not act as a substitute for the lived experience of the land. But if the lack of a cultural memory of Canada and its absence within a collective consciousness prevented any sense of ownership over or belonging to the land, for Moodie and Parr Traill writing about the landscape and the

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<sup>38</sup> Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Ontario: Anansi, 1995), p. 222. Gerson argues that this question is 'a central paradox of Canadian sensibility', in *Purer*, p. 50.

<sup>39</sup> Frye, p. 222.

<sup>40</sup> See Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). Despite the scientific discovery of Canada's age, Parr Traill still writes that the limestone in her area has 'fossil remains, evidently of very recent formation', pp. 37–40.

natural environment was one way in which to overcome the sense of the unknown and make familiar the unfamiliar.

Moodie was keenly aware of the power that a literary rendering of Canada could play in creating affective ties and transforming the 'country of [...] exile' (32) to a new home. She lamented the lack of an established literary circle to support and enable young writers in Canada and almost from the moment of her arrival in Canada, began to publish in Canadian and North American periodicals, such as the *Albion*, the *Emigrant and Old Countryman*, the *Cobourg Star*, the *Canadian Literary Magazine*, and of course, the *Literary Garland*. Her contributions included poems and sketches, which remembered life in England with nostalgia as well as pieces that displayed a more practical approach to settlement in Canada.<sup>41</sup>

Many critics have argued that new emigrants such as Moodie and Parr Traill were confronted with the difficulties of using old literary forms to narrate the particularities of the Canadian environment. Some critics have been more disparaging of the emigrant sisters' efforts than is warranted. Diane Bessai, for example, condemns the 'unthinking dependence of the emigré [sic]'<sup>42</sup> on older literary forms, whilst Sandra Djwa despairs at the supposed lack of originality of emigrant writers such as Moodie and Parr Traill.<sup>43</sup> As Susan Glickman archly points out, however, it is unreasonable to expect 'new ways of seeing and describing the world to have sprung magically from the foam as European ships sailed the St. Lawrence'.<sup>44</sup> Parr Traill's difficulty in trying to find 'forms and language to accommodate a distinctive environment of landscape, climate, flora and fauna',<sup>45</sup> can be seen in the passage below:

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<sup>41</sup> Michael A. Peterman, 'Introduction', in Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* (London: Norton, 2007; [1852]), pp. vii–xvii (p. xii–xiii); Gerson, pp. 41–43; Faye Hammill, *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada, 1760–2000* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), p. 45.

<sup>42</sup> Diane Bessai, 'Counterfeiting Hindsight', *World Literature Written in English*, 23 (1984), 353–366 (p. 363).

<sup>43</sup> Sandra Djwa, 'Canadian Poets and the Great Tradition', *Canadian Literature*, 65 (1975), 42–52 (p. 45).

<sup>44</sup> Susan Glickman, *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Norman Page, 'Introduction', in *The Literature of Place*, ed. by Norman Page and Peter Preston (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. xi–xii (p. xii).



A very beautiful plant of the lily tribe abounds both in our woods and clearings; for want of a better name, I call it the douri-lily, though it is widely spread over a great portion of the continent [...] The flower consists of three petals, the calix three; it belongs to the class and order Hexandria monogynia; style, three cleft; seed-vessel of three valves; soil, dry woods and cleared lands; leaves growing in three, springing from the joints, large round, but a little pointed at the extremities (203).

Parr Traill's ability to provide the botanical name of the flower — 'Hexandria monogynia' — stems from her amateur training in botany, an interest that she had taken up as a young woman when in Britain and which she continued for most of her life after she came to Canada. Michael Peterman argues that Parr Traill's work on botany — both in *Backwoods* and in her later guides — is marked by a 'splendid anachronism': she was a 'nineteenth-century woman given an eighteenth-century education to prepare her [...] for emigration and isolation'.<sup>46</sup> Parr Traill was fully aware that her approach to botany was unconventional. She writes, 'our scientific botanists in Britain would consider me very impertinent in bestowing names on the flowers and plants I meet with in these wild woods' (120). She feels the burden of a male audience weighing upon her: the body of 'scientific botanists' in Britain were predominantly men, not women. In *Studies of Plant Life in Canada*, her later guide that she produced with her niece Agnes FitzGibbon, she writes that 'modern botanists' have a tendency to fill their scientific manuals with 'harsh-sounding, unmeaning' names; she throws her lot in with the 'more gallant' 'florists and herbalists of older times' who gave 'pretty names' to flowers.<sup>47</sup> Parr Traill's decision to mix the Latinate name of the flower, with an amateurish description and her own name for it — 'douri-lily' — is more than just an outdated style and disregard for modern convention. Her vocabulary cuts across a number of different genres in an effort to narrate an unfamiliar landscape.

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<sup>46</sup> Michael A. Peterman, "Splendid Anachronism": The Record of Catharine Parr Traill's Struggles as an Amateur Botanist in Nineteenth-Century Canada', in *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers: Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Writers*, ed. by Lorraine McNullen (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1990), pp. 173–185 (p. 177). Peterman borrows the phrase 'splendid anachronism' from Berger, *Science*, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> Catharine Parr Traill, *Studies of Plant Life in Canada, or, Gleanings from Forest, Lake and Plain* (Ottawa: A.S. Woodburn, 1885), pp. 85–6.

As she moves from one mode of naming to another, we see her struggling to make her existing language fit an alien context.

In *The Idea of Landscape*, John Barrell writes of John Clare and Robert Bloomfield both finding themselves in places ‘out of their knowledge’ in their wanderings around their local parish.<sup>48</sup> Barrell writes that within the locality of Helpston, Clare recognises the area around him from the ‘simple habit of knowing’: ‘the names he knew for the flowers were the right names as long as the flowers were in Helpston. But once out of the parish, his knowledge ceased to be knowledge; what he knew as fact was only fact’.<sup>49</sup> Barrell is not alone in making this distinction between an affective and instinctual ‘knowledge’ of one’s surroundings and an objective, factual engagement with it. Wallace Stegner argues that an affective engagement with a ‘place’ is a ‘kind of knowing that involves the senses, the memory, the history of a family or a tribe’; a proper ‘knowledge of place’

comes from working in it in all weathers, making a living from it, suffering from its catastrophes, loving its mornings or evenings or hot noons, valuing it for the profound investment of labor [*sic*] and feeling that you, your parents and grandparents, your all-but-known ancestors have put into it.<sup>50</sup>

Taken out of her familiar environs of Suffolk, Parr Traill’s uneven language suggests that she is trying to move away from scientific fact — objective, rational knowledge — to create her own way of ‘knowing’ the Canadian landscape. Jovially, she refers to herself as a ‘floral godmother’ giving ‘names of my own choosing’ to flowers where the Indian or Canadian names are not known to her (120). The act of naming here is an assertion of dominance over her unfamiliar environment, but it is also a way of making the unfamiliar terrain familiar, referable and inhabitable. Even though she recognizes that the lily is in fact widespread, she names it ‘douri-lily’ after her town ‘Douro’, creating an area that is within her own, personal ‘knowledge’. In other words, it

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<sup>48</sup> John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 120–121.

<sup>49</sup> Barrell, p. 121–122.

<sup>50</sup> Wallace Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West* (New York: Random House, 1992), p. 205.

suggests that she is trying to re-create the comforting sense of 'place' that enveloped her when she was in England.

Although 'douri-lily' may not reach the heights of poetic fancy, it is nonetheless an act of imaginative engagement with her environment, which settler women viewed as integral to developing any sense of place. Parr Traill's naming of the flora around her is the beginning of this slow accrual of lived experience. In *Roughing It*, on her trip to Stony Lake, Moodie writes of another act of naming:

The Indians call this lake *Bessikáoon*, but I do not know the exact meaning of the word. Some say that it means "the Indian's grave," others "the lake of the one island." It is certain that an Indian girl is buried beneath that blighted tree; but I never could learn the particulars of her story, and perhaps there was no tale connected with it. She might have fallen a victim to disease during the wanderings of her tribe, and been buried on that spot; or she might have been drowned (221; original emphasis).

Moodie's awareness of the fictions associated with places is evident through her use of words such as 'story' and 'tale'. The fiction-making potential here arises out of temporal distance: the origin of the Indian name is lost in time. But it also arises out of the confusion of translation: presumably the language differences between the Chippewa tribes and the English settlers have prevented a clear direct translation of '*Bessikáoon*' and given rise to a multiplicity of stories surrounding the lake. Predictably, Moodie uses an English name, 'Stony Lake', rather than the Indian '*Bessikáoon*', to refer to the lake. The English name is a reference to 'the rocky pavement that forms the bank' of the lake and its 'pebbly bottom' (220). Similar to Parr Traill, Moodie fiercely claims a proud ownership over her surroundings: Stony Lake may be 'a mere pond [...] when compared with the [...] inland seas of Canada', '[b]ut it was *our* lake, and, consequently, it had ten thousand beauties in our eyes' (220; original emphasis). While Stony Lake describes the lake in accurate terms, in no way does it carry the historical charge of '*Bessikáoon*'. Although intrigued by the myths surrounding the lake, the actual story is of little consequence to Moodie: the sense of a proud ownership is a lot more important.

As well as being an act of colonial dominance, naming the environment is a means of producing an affective engagement with it. As Barrell points out through his

examples of Clare and Bloomfield, taking regular trips outside was also an important part of producing this knowledge. In his analysis, mobility can be threatening for Clare and Bloomfield: it takes them out of their familiar environs to the places with which they have no affective connection when their walks and trips supersede the boundaries of their known, familiar locale. But as Moodie and Parr Traill show, in an environment which is completely unfamiliar, mobility is necessary for — one might even say, essential to — *creating* that knowledge of a place. To ‘know’ a place completely in the context of emigration is to cease the constant comparisons to the landscape they have left behind and overcome their nostalgia by learning to inhabit Canada without the constant backward glance to the past. Upon arriving in Canada, Parr Traill finds that the ‘outline of the country reminded me of the hilly part of Gloucestershire’ and that she looks ‘in vain for the rich hedge-rows of my native country’ (55). Tellingly, it is when Parr Traill finds herself lost in the woods surrounded by a ‘profound stillness of that vast leafy wilderness’, that her ‘thoughts gradually wandered back across the Atlantic to my dear mother and to my old home’ (100): her physical sense of being lost is compounded by her psychological disconnection with her surroundings.

For both sisters, the key to overcoming this nostalgia for the past and generating a closer and more affective relationship with their environments lies in taking trips around the bush. It is here that their literary debt to Mitford’s *Our Village* can be most perceptibly felt. At various moments in *Our Village*, Mitford invites her readers to step outside and leads them through the village, noting the lay of the land and the people around her as she does so. As Josephine McDonagh argues, these country walks have a ‘locality-making function’: amongst other things, they produce a distinct and recognisable sense of place. It is not unsurprising, she argues, that for this reason, Mitford’s style is ‘appropriated by writers of [...] new settlements’.<sup>51</sup> In the same way that Mitford takes her readers on country walks through the village, so too Moodie and Parr Traill take their readers through the Canadian bush. These trips help their readers to imagine Canada as a place that is traversable and knowable through the bodily experience of moving through it. Parr Traill writes that the ‘sources of

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<sup>51</sup> McDonagh, ‘Re-Thinking’, 399–424 (p. 409).

enjoyment' she encounters when she 'walk[s] abroad' 'keeps [her] from being dull' and indeed, many of the static sketches of *Backwoods* are contextualised in walks that she takes in the woods (90). One feels on these that one zooms into the surroundings, when she goes walking with Thomas, her husband, on a frozen lake, she 'was struck by the appearance of some splendid berries on the leafless bushes that hung over the margin of the lake' (121); in the summer she can 'walk for some way along the flat shores' of the bank of the lake, and observe the 'different strata of limestone, full of fossil remains' (122); she wishes her friend were with her on her 'rambles among the woods and clearings' as she discovers various 'floral treasures' (180–190). When Moodie goes on this trip to Stony Lake, she stumbles across a 'tuft of blue harebells', which 'flooded' her 'soul with remembrances of the past', gathering them up, she 'placed them in [her] bosom, and kept them for many a day; they had become holy, when connected with sacred home recollections' (227). Although she seems to have wandered upon a place that might be within her 'knowledge', it is an emotionally jarring experience. Musing in the boat back from Stony Lake, as she 'floated past scenes so wild and lonely', Moodie feels that, 'filled with the love of Nature, my heart forgot for the time the love of home' (229). Forgetting her love for England makes space for her affections for the Canadian landscape to emerge. Writing about the landscape and the act of traversing through it is not just a 'record'<sup>52</sup> of pioneer experience. It is also an experiment in finding a language through which the alien environment can be narrated, and the unfamiliar made familiar and inhabitable.

### **A Sense of Place II: Knowable Communities**

So far, I have argued that the works of Moodie and Parr Traill help them to create a 'sense of place' and thus overcome the sense of alienation that the unfamiliar Canadian landscape poses. This sense of place, however, was also rooted in notions of community: the landscape described in their works is not vast and unpopulated, but peopled. Although Moodie and Parr Traill kept in touch through letters and these

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<sup>52</sup> D. M. R. Bentley, 'Afterword', in Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, ed. by D. M. R. Bentley (Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1989; [1836]), pp. 291–301 (p. 291).

literary exchanges after they emigrated, they never saw their family or their friends again. Both agreed that it was the loss of this society and the bonds of family and friendship that proved most difficult for the settler's wife. Moodie laments 'the loss of society in which I had moved, the want of congenial minds, of persons engaged in congenial pursuits' (130), while Parr Traill notices that of the emigrant middle-class women, '[f]ew enter their whole heart into a settler's life' as they 'miss the domestic comforts they had been used to enjoy; they regret the friends and relations they left in the old country; and they cannot endure the loneliness of the backwoods' (90). In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams coins and defines the phrase 'knowable community' in novels. He writes:

Neighbours in Jane Austen are not the people actually living nearby; they are the people living a little less nearby who, in social recognition, can be visited. What she sees across the land is a network of propertied houses and families, and through the holes of this tightly drawn mesh most actual people are simply not seen. To be face-to-face in this world is already to belong to a class. No other community, in physical presence or in social reality, is by any means knowable.<sup>53</sup>

Frye's argument that Moodie is 'a British army of occupation in herself, a one-woman garrison', 'surrounded by a half-comic, half-sinister rabble that she thinks of indifferently as Yankee, Irish, native, republican, and lower class',<sup>54</sup> has to a certain extent over-determined critics' readings of her attitudes to the settler community she finds herself in.<sup>55</sup> The image of the garrison suggests that Moodie exists in isolation

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<sup>53</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Hogarth, 1985), p. 166.

<sup>54</sup> Frye, p. 239. See also p. 227: 'Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological "frontier" separated from one another [...] are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality'.

<sup>55</sup> For an unquestioning use of Frye's phrase, 'one-woman garrison', see Shelley Boyd, "'Transplanted into Our Gardens": Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill', *Essays on Canadian Writing*, 84 (2009), 35–57 and Marian Fowler, 'Roughing It in the Bush: A Sentimental Novel', in *Beginnings*, ed. by John Moss, Series: *The Canadian Novel*, rev. edn., 4 vols. (Ontario: Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council), II, 80–96 (p. 93). Helen M. Buss, however, argues that an unquestioning acceptance of Frye's phrase has led to a blind spot in our understanding of pioneer women's relationship to their new environments. See Helen Buss, 'Women and the Garrison Mentality: Pioneer Women Autobiographers and their Relation to the Land', in *Re(Dis)covering Our Foremothers*, ed. by Lorraine McMullen, pp. 123–136.

from the ‘rabble’ surrounding her, but in actual fact, Moodie’s problem when she arrives in Canada is that she no longer has control over the selection of her ‘knowable community’. This is in the physical sense: she writes irritably about the fact that people just open the door and walk into her house without her leave. But it is also in the literary sense as well. W. H. New writes that, in the ‘hierarchy of taste’, ‘certain genres held higher status than others’, and so ‘[t]he novel, [...] was in turn deemed more significant than the short story and sketch’.<sup>56</sup> *Roughing It*’s autobiographical nature, coupled with the fact that it aims to provide an account of emigration through its narrative means that Moodie has to dispense with the novel’s cast of classed characters. The result is much richer for it. Much of the *Roughing It*’s vibrancy seems to come from the number of eccentric characters that she meets that spill into the pages — Brian, the still-hunter, Malcolm, the ‘little stumpy man’, and Old Woodruff with his three wives, for example. Nonetheless, Moodie cannot shy away from representing the working classes. She notices sarcastically that the ‘sight of the Canadian shores had changed [the steerage passengers] into persons of great consequence’ (27), and mocks their boasts that ‘we shall a’ be lairds here [...] and ye mun wait a muckle tiem before they wad think aucht of you at home’ (26). She notices with irritation that servants in the bush have little respect for their masters: ‘let them once emigrate, the clog which fettered them is suddenly removed; [...] they are free [...] to wreak upon their superiors the long-locked-up hatred of their hearts’ (132).<sup>57</sup> However, one senses a shift in her attitude in this, as she writes ‘[y]ou must become poor yourself before you can sympathise with them, and fully recognise them as your brethren in the flesh’ (285). Grappling with an uncertain social hierarchy means that it is initially difficult to be ‘selective’ in her representation of this knowable community in the bush. Her sense of ‘community’ is thus both shaken and enlarged.

It was not only people of a different class who entered her sphere, but people of a different colour too. Moodie’s abolitionist stance meant that she had sympathies

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<sup>56</sup> William Herbert New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> This seems to be a common complaint amongst middle-class emigrant gentlewomen. Parr Traill also wrote of this in her ‘Female Servants in the Bush’, *Sharpe’s London Journal*, 15 (1852), pp. 279–281.

with people of other races, although it is a sympathy of her time and, at times, unrecognisable to a modern audience.<sup>58</sup> Parr Traill shared Moodie's perspective. In 1826, she wrote a short story for children, *Prejudice Reproved, or The History of the Negro Toy-Seller*, in which a young boy is taught to overcome his fear and distaste for a black toy-seller. The aim, as Parr Traill makes clear, is to remind children that 'despised and neglected negroes are beings of the same order as ourselves, alike endowed with reason and immortality'.<sup>59</sup> Carole Gerson notes that in other travel and emigrant writings at this time, the 'Indian' is 'visible as a generalization but usually invisible as an individual human being',<sup>60</sup> but in the sisters' works, they are 'nam[ed] and describe[d]' as 'distinct individuals',<sup>61</sup> as detailed as the white settler population. In fact, Moodie oscillates between these two modes. Her sketch, 'The Wilderness, and Our Indian Friends', is filled with the names of First Nation people: Susan Moore, Peter and Tom Nogan, Peter's son John Nogan, John, of Rice Lake, Old Snow-storm, indicating that many of her anecdotes are about *real* people and *real* events. First Nation people are evidently also a part of Moodie's 'knowable community'. 'It was not long', she writes, 'before we received visits from the Indians, a people whose beauty, talents and good qualities have been somewhat overrated, and invested with a poetical interest which they scarcely deserve' (186). Her anecdotes reveal the extent to which First Nation people mingled with her and her family on a social level: 'Scarcely a week passed away without my being visited by the dark strangers'. John Moodie 'never allowed them to eat with the servants', but 'bought them to his own table' (187). She seems to have had mixed gatherings as well: she describes one incident when her brother comes round and calls the chief, [...] Nogan 'ugly' without realising that the latter is both present and understands English. 'Never shall I forget', she writes, 'the

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<sup>58</sup> See also Gillian Whitlock, 'Exiles from Tradition: Women's Life Writing', in *Re-Siting Queen's English: Text and Tradition in Post-Colonial Literature*, ed. by Gillian Whitlock and Helen Tiffin (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), pp. 11 – 24 for an interesting discussion comparing the construction of the self in *The History of Mary Prince* (1829) and *Roughing It*.

<sup>59</sup> Catharine Parr Strickland, *Prejudice Reproved; or, The History of the Negro Toy-Seller* (London: Harvey & Darton, 1826), p. iii.

<sup>60</sup> Carole Gerson, 'Nobler Savages: Representations of Native Women in the Writings of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 32 (1997), 5 – 21 (p. 7).

<sup>61</sup> Gerson, 'Nobler', p. 9.



red flash of that fierce dark eye as it glared upon my unconscious brother' (189). Gerson argues that the 'meeting in the "contact zone" [...] is as much a woman-to-woman connection as a European/Native contrast'<sup>62</sup> which 'underscores the importance of woman-to-woman engagement in European-First Nations interaction'.<sup>63</sup> This is to a certain extent true: Moodie comments on the 'affection of Indian parents to their children', and is extremely sympathetic to the Indian woman who comes to her with her child dying of consumption: 'Think what this woman's love must have been for that dying son, when she had carried a lad of his age six miles, through the deep snow, upon her back, on such a day, in the hope of my being able to do him some good. Poor heart-broken mother!'

Thus, there is no doubt that at times, Moodie is generous and sympathetic to First Nation peoples, but nonetheless, at the same time as extending her sympathies, there is very definitely a sense that she is writing in and of her own time. Her work is often filled with generalized statements such as 'They are a highly imaginative people'; 'They believe in supernatural appearances'; 'The Indians are often made a prey of and cheated by the unprincipled white settlers' (199–200). She writes of a young, adolescent girl being 'a beautiful child of nature' and her prelude to the chapter, 'Man of strange race! Stern dweller of the wild! / Nature's free-born, untamed, and daring child!' shows that she employs a late eighteenth-century rhetoric for talking about indigenous peoples 'by denying them a place in modernity'.<sup>64</sup> While it is true that the 'elegaic tone sometimes adopted by both sisters invests First Nation Canadians, as remnants of the past, with a romantic quality',<sup>65</sup> Moodie was keenly aware that this was not just a literary technique, but that the fact of white settlement was turning it into a reality. She writes, 'Often have I grieved that people with such generous

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<sup>62</sup> Gerson, 'Nobler', p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> Gerson, 'Nobler', p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 105; p.107. See also 'Time and Writing About the Other' in Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp.71–104. Saree Makdisi also explores the complex dynamics between race, temporality and modernity in defining 'the Other' in *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>65</sup> Gerson, 'Nobler', p. 13.

impulses should be degraded and corrupted by civilised men; that a mysterious destiny involves and hangs over them, pressing them back into the wilderness, and slowly and surely sweeping them from the earth' (200). The fact that Moodie often writes of the indigenous peoples as though she were presenting an unknown artefact to her readers, and the fact that her husband 'was anxious to *collect* some of their native Indian airs' (191; emphasis added), suggest that it is almost as though she were trying to forestall any sense of loss. The irony, of course, is that she does not see herself as playing an active role in the erosion of culture and people.

The sketch of the bush is thus peopled with all kinds of characters: Moodie must negotiate her everyday life across the criss-crossing networks of race, class and gender. In terms of settlement and of knowing a place, then, one needs both an affective engagement with the environment, and a means of knowing the people as well — a sense of community. For both of these women, the experience of the landscape, and of the people that they see is important in coming to terms with the facts of their emigration.

### **Trifling Matters**

The sketch form was integral to being able to narrate correctly the landscape and the people who inhabited it. It required a mode of narration that was suited to its form — an anecdotal, observant eye to narrate all the small goings-on. The ability to be able to construct this different way of viewing was also linked to being able to tell a certain kind of truth. As Moodie writes, the 'real character of a people can be more truly gathered from such seemingly trifling incidents than from any ideas we may form of them from the great facts in their history and this is my reason for detailing events which might otherwise appear insignificant and unimportant' (194). For both Moodie and Parr Trail, writing and publishing their experiences of settlement was both an economic imperative and a means of producing the feeling of being settled in a community. Renaming the landscape was an act of colonial dominance and ownership. But this was also a gendered inscription: the sisters were acutely aware of the fact that they saw the environment through female eyes, experienced it through the female body and wrote about it through the female pen. Though their choice of form — the

sketch — allowed them to explore and present their experiences of bush life authentically, at the same time, they were aware that, writing as women, it was also a choice that was open to much criticism.

Like so many other examples of nineteenth-century women's travel writing, their work is often 'contextualised in apology', as women writers 'confess throughout to "faults" such as scrappiness, unstructured narrative, the substitution of trivia or domestic gossip for "serious" or intellectual material'.<sup>66</sup> Whereas sketches by men were marked by an anticipatory quality that holds the promise of the 'full' form of the novel or painting,<sup>67</sup> sketches by women were, more often than not, considered *the* finished product: the ostensibly slight form was 'often attributed to female mental deficiencies'.<sup>68</sup> As Richard Sha argues, the 'purportedly limiting capacities of the female mind made the sketch's lack of completion uniquely suitable for women [...] [T]hese pronouncements marked women as [...] only capable of fragmentary works'.<sup>69</sup>

*Backwoods* is filled with apologetic remarks on the fragmentary, inconsequential nature of the content, suggesting that Parr Traill falls into the category of women writers who express unease with their form. She warns the reader to 'Prepare your patience [...] for a long and rambling epistle' (207), worries that she 'shall tire [them] with my ornithological sketches' (185) and fears that her 'only resources are domestic details and the natural history of the country' (240). However, she is also careful to overturn these apologies by accompanying them with assertions that what she narrates *is* interesting and *is* of consequence. Although she tells the reader, 'You must bear with me if I occasionally weary you with dwelling on trifles,' she immediately follows this up with the statement that 'To me nothing that bears the stamp of novelty is devoid of interest' (13). She asserts that 'we draw the greatest pleasure from the most trifling sources' (19): 'objects that are deemed by many unworthy of attention' present to her 'an inexhaustible fund of interest' (23). Although there is 'certainly a monotony in the

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<sup>66</sup> Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> See Byerly, p. 350. See also Sha, *Visual*, especially the third chapter, 'Perverting Female Propriety: Women's Verbal Sketches as Proper Displays of Perversion', pp. 104–144.

<sup>68</sup> Foster, p. 22.

<sup>69</sup> Sha, *Visual*, p. 82.

long and unbroken line of woods’, ‘there are objects to charm and delight the close observer of nature’ (63).

Thus, rather than subscribing to the view that women writers are *incapable* of writing a coherent piece larger than a sketch, Parr Traill argues that to observe the supposedly ‘inconsequential trifles’ that fill her ‘ramblings’ constitute a different way of perceiving the landscape. She argues that women writers *embrace* the small things, and that these constitute the majority of her work because they contain a wealth of interest and information. In this, she shares ‘[o]ne of the great gifts of poets in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’, which was ‘their courageous creation of works that drew unapologetically and sympathetically on the tiniest features of their immediate surroundings’.<sup>70</sup> This attention to detail ‘testified to the significance of the small and unassuming and, in the process, demonstrated the extraordinary potential of the apparently ordinary’ and ‘offered special inspiration to those who had been conditioned to think of themselves as ignorant and powerless’.<sup>71</sup> Parr Traill’s keen and observant eye to the Canadian environs creates a different Canada to those portrayed in emigrant guidebooks aimed at men. One such example is when she notices that there are ‘clay-built ovens stuck upon four legs at a little distance from the houses’:

When there is not the convenience of one of these ovens outside the dwellings, the bread is baked in large iron pots – “bake kettles” they are termed. I have already seen a loaf as big as a peck measure baking on the hearth in one of these kettles, and tasted of it too; but I think the confined steam rather imparts a peculiar taste to the bread, which you do not perceive in the loaves baked in brick or clay ovens. [...] Besides the oven every house has a draw-well near it, which differed in the contrivance for raising the water from those I had seen in the old country. The plan is very simple: – a long pole, supported by a post, acts as a lever to raise the bucket, and the water can be raised by a child with very trifling exertion (49).

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<sup>70</sup> Fiona Stafford, *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> Stafford, pp. 25–26. I’m not arguing that women had been conditioned to think of themselves as ignorant and powerless, but the apologetic tones of Parr Traill and Moodie suggest that they are aware that they are entering arenas — both in writing and in the experience of emigration — that were dominated by men at the time.

By asserting that this kind of information is worth recounting because of its ‘novelty’, Parr Traill asserts that holding a different kind of knowledge is just as valuable — and available to anyone who was able to see beyond the apparently mundane. Parr Traill’s observation of the ‘bake kettles’ and ‘draw-wells’ reinscribes the landscape so that it is shaped by the female labour of settlement and not just in terms of the masculine labour of clearing the forests, but also through the domestic labours of home-making. Thus, what might be perceived as ‘faults’ of ‘feminine writing’ — the seemingly inconsequential details, the loosely connected sketches — are in fact highly stylized and nuanced ways of observing the Canadian environment closely. This keen attention to detail allows the sisters to see beyond the ostensibly mundane veneer of everyday colonial life in ways that allows an affective engagement with the environment.

### **A Gendered Landscape**

This attention to the small, ostensibly ordinary and seemingly everyday details was well suited to the sketch form, itself a genre that is dedicated to narrating small, anecdotal events. Through their assertions that both the form and the content of the sketch entailed a valid means of narrating the realities of emigration, both sisters reclaimed the sketch as a legitimate form for female writers. They drew parallels between the size of the sketch — the small, loosely connected anecdotes — and the lives they were leading as emigrant mothers busy with their chores and children in the bush. And, by drawing on a late eighteenth-century poetic tradition which asserted that to be able to ‘see small’ was to be able to see reality, they invested their work with the quality of the ‘truth’.

Moodie and Parr Traill wrote to counter the sometimes wild tales of success that circulated in booster literature, but as they did so, they simultaneously asserted the centrality of the emigrant mother in the process of emigration. Emigrating within the presumed safe haven of the family structure, married women were almost always considered an accessory to their husband’s initiatives and schemes in the nineteenth-century. Although there was plenty of fear and anxiety over the numbers and mobility of single emigrant women in the nineteenth century, the mobility of married women was rendered safe by the family structure within which they emigrated. Whereas the

mobility of young single women was almost always aligned with the potential for sexual downfall and the upset of the moral order of the colony, the mobility of the married woman was made 'safe' by the fact of her marriage.<sup>72</sup> While they did not deny that they were 'long-suffering wives, loyally supportive of their husbands' undertakings',<sup>73</sup> they were also keen to assert that this supportiveness was not their *only* role in emigration: in the sisters' works, the emigrant mother emerges as integral to the success of settlement — and her children are equally essential for her to developing an attachment to place.<sup>74</sup>

Katie Trumpener argues in *Bardic Nationalism* that while England is the 'mother country that has inexplicably expelled [Moodie] from its bosom', 'Canada is apostrophized as an allegorical nurse, who nourishes its foundling immigrants and serves as Moodie's muse'.<sup>75</sup> Metaphors of the colonies as 'children' of the 'motherland' of England were commonplace both in the nineteenth century and now, although there seems to be little consensus on the exact nature of the relationships. Bina Freiwald, for example, argues that the language of Moodie and Parr Traill constructs Canada as 'the great fostering mother',<sup>76</sup> while Moodie herself refers to England as the 'illustrious parent from whom [Canada] sprang' (25). The play on the 'mother-land' is only too clear in *Backwoods*, where the emigrant 'child' writes back to not only her mother, but also her native 'motherland'. Trumpener is right to notice that Moodie is 'a female writer preoccupied with her own maternity',<sup>77</sup> but she does not pause to interrogate

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<sup>72</sup> See Rita S. Kranidis, *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Emigration: Contested subjects* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 20–21; pp. 66–67.

<sup>73</sup> Foster, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> Though clearly gendered, this notion of community is different from those that have previously been suggested by feminist critics, such as Nina Auerbach, who focusses on the power of all-female communities, Josephine Donovan, who focusses on women writers in New England, and Sandra Zagarell who argues that the writing of communities was primarily gendered. See Nina Auerbach, *Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); 'Sarah Orne Jewett and the World of Mothers', in Josephine Donovan, *New England Local Color Literature: A Women's Tradition* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983), pp. 99–118; and Zagarell, 'Narrative', 498–527.

<sup>75</sup> Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 233.

<sup>76</sup> Bina Freiwald, "'The Tongue of Woman": The Language of the Self in Moodie's *Roughing It*', in *Re(Dis)covering Our Foremothers*, ed. by Lorraine McMullen, pp. 155 – 172 (p. 166).

<sup>77</sup> Trumpener, p. 235.

the relationship between the metaphor of England as the mother country and the fact that Moodie is both an author and a mother.

In both Moodie's and Parr Traill's work, mothers have an important role to play in the process of emigration. Not only do they carry their children across the Atlantic to the new world,<sup>78</sup> they are also responsible for cultivating a correct colonial attitude in their children. Developing pride in the Canadian environment, and passing it on to their children was extremely important to both sisters. Moodie urges 'British mothers of Canadian sons!' to 'Make your children proud of the land of their birth, the land which has given them bread [...] do this, and you will soon cease to lament your separation from the mother country' (26). Parr Traill's short sketch 'Society in the Bush' echoes a similar sentiment. The short sketch, which appeared in *Sharpe's London Journal* in 1849, depicts a small gathering of established emigrants discussing the changes in how new emigrants were received into the community since they had arrived. When a young Canadian-born girl petulantly teases her elderly friend that he 'always praises the British ladies', the gentleman replies, 'Yes, my dear, I love Britain, her institutions, her people, and all that belongs to her; [...] I rejoice in your love for your native soil; but while you are proud of being a Canadian, do not forget that you are a *British Canadian*'.<sup>79</sup> In 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters', Caroline Chisholm writes of settlements:

from little communities thus established, other and larger communities will rise in time, bound together in a love of the old country still fondly spoken of as Home, in the remembrance of many old struggles shared together, of many new ties formed since.<sup>80</sup>

Parr Traill seems to be drawing upon this idea of the colony as a natural and organic community, at once bound together to England through patriotic pride and nostalgia, and at the same time, developing and establishing itself as it grows. While the sisters

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<sup>78</sup> Moodie emigrated with her first child, Catharine Mary Josephine, who was only five months old at the time. Catharine was born on 14 February 1832. Moodie sailed on 1 July 1832.

<sup>79</sup> Catharine Parr Traill, 'Society in the Bush', *Sharpe's London Journal*, July 1850, p. 129. Original Emphasis.

<sup>80</sup> Caroline Chisholm, 'A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters', *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, pp. 19–24 (p. 20).

evidently depict the older generation as having a responsibility in cultivating a correct colonial outlook in the younger generation, they also view the relationship as a reciprocal one. Children play an important part in helping mothers remember England and feeling at home in the colonies. Of her first child, Katie, Moodie writes in *Roughing It*:

She was a sweet, lovely flower herself, and her charming infant graces reconciled me, more than aught else, to a weary lot. Was she not purely British? Did not her soft blue eyes, and sunny curls, and bright rosy cheeks for ever remind me of her Saxon origin, and bring before me dear forms and faces I could never hope to behold again? (111).

At the end of *Roughing It*, when her children are awaiting the return of John from the Wars, Moodie says '[n]ever did eager British children look for the first violets and primroses of spring with more impatience than my baby boys and girls watched, day after day, for the first snow-flakes that were to form the road to convey them to their absent father' (323). The fact that Moodie distinguishes between British children who look for 'violets and primroses' and Canadian children who look for 'the first snow-flakes' shows that instead of being *reminded* of Britain when she looks at her children, Moodie draws a comparison between the two and feels a closer affinity with the Canadian landscape. Again, Parr Traill echoes the sentiment that a mother feels an affective attachment to where her children are born in her poem, 'The Canadian Emigrant's Farewell', which appeared in *Home Circle*. The poetic voice, an emigrant mother who has had her children in Canada, and is now leaving it bids it adieu:

I love thy dark and lonely woods,  
Thy waters gushing free  
Through forest glen, or rocky bed, —  
Oh, they are dear to me!

The final crux of the poem:

And dear the loved and lowly cot  
Where a mother's joy I felt.

Farewell — farewell my children's home,



The birth-place of the free!<sup>81</sup>

In the works of the two sisters, then, the emigrant mother plays an important part in the success of the colonies: both in producing the young, healthy children needed to populate it further, and in teaching them the correct colonial attitude and the correct way of remembering Britain. But this relationship is reciprocal, as the mothers give birth and have children, in turn, they develop an attachment to their new lands.

*Roughing It* and *Backwoods* grapple with the issue of how to cultivate an attachment to Canada, without entirely forgetting England. While the sisters sometimes depict the relationship between England and Canada through the metaphor of mother and the child, they also *literalise* this relationship and show instead the active part that mothers play in ensuring the sustainability of this colonial relationship.

Throughout this thesis so far, I have stressed that emigration literature did not participate in a one-way transfer from England to the colonies, or vice versa. This is also the case with Moodie and Parr Traill: while their works were published in Britain for most of the nineteenth century, they were circulated in various forms and editions in both Britain and Canada, as well as in North America. Such stories circulating in print delocalised places of settlement: as in the emigrants' letters, places became texts that travelled to different areas, and generated and gathered new meanings as they did so. Whether they circulated in Britain or in Canada, the nationalistic impetus of the stories would have been keenly felt, demonstrating the importance of text to cultivating a relationship across geographical boundaries. One reviewer in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* urged its female readers to recognise the differences between their material situation and that of their 'sisters' in the bush:

Ladies of Britain, deftly embroidering in carpeted saloon, gracefully bending over easel or harp, pressing, with nimble finger, your piano's ivory, or joyously tripping in Cellarian circles, suspend, for a moment, your silken pursuits, and look forth into the desert at a sister's sufferings!<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Catharine Parr Traill, 'The Canadian Emigrant's Farewell', *Home Circle*, 7 July 1849, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Frederick Hardman, 'Forest Life in Canada West', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1852, pp. 355–365.

Here, the reviewer refers to Moodie as the British female reader's 'sister', thus drawing on a metaphorical relationship of sisterhood to emphasise an affinity between female readers in Britain and Moodie in the colonies. However, as with the metaphorical mother-child relationship, which renders the colonial work of emigrant mothers invisible, this metaphorical relationship also renders invisible the actual bonds of sisterhood which produce *Roughing It* and *Backwoods*. Moodie and Parr Traill secured their London publishers for *Roughing It* and *Backwoods* through their eldest sister, Agnes Strickland, who had become famous through her *Lives of the Queens of England* (1850). As well as being a prolific contributor to major literary periodicals, she was also briefly the editor of the *Lady's Magazine*. She helped secure Richard Bentley as a publisher for *Roughing It* and for each of Moodie's subsequent publications. *Backwoods* was initially rejected by three publishers, before Agnes secured Charles Knight, the publisher for the Society of Diffusing Knowledge. Furthermore, tellingly, when Parr Traill's short stories and sketches appeared in London periodicals, such as *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, *Sharpe's London Journal* and *Home Circle*, for example, Agnes invariably had an item placed in the same issue. Editors were keen to point out the relationship between the two authors. The transatlantic exchange worked both ways: through Moodie's links to Lovell, both their sisters, Agnes and Jane Strickland, placed their work in the *Literary Garland*.<sup>83</sup>

The reviewer for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* constructs the British female reader as being from an upper-middle class background in order to highlight the stark differences between life in Britain and in the bush. However, most reviews stressed that *Roughing It* was an invaluable aid to emigration. While the reviewer for the *Rambler* said that the book provided 'light and entertaining literature for the general reader', he

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<sup>83</sup> The title of Agnes's poem, 'The Last Look', *Literary Garland*, June 1849, p. 263, suggests that it may be concerned with emigration. In fact, the poem is an exploration into the various different types of 'last looks', from those cast by pilgrims onto their homes, to those given by dying ones to those they love. Jane Strickland's contributions were similarly unrelated to emigration. One was a serialized story, 'The Buccaneers of Tortuga' from January to March 1850, and the other was a short story 'The Rustic Coquette', *Literary Garland*, May 1850, pp. 203–6.

also mentioned that it gave ‘useful hints to any of the upper classes of society who may be contemplating emigration to Canada’,<sup>84</sup> continuing:

her [Moodie’s] privations and sufferings were [...] so severe [...] that all educated persons accustomed to the refinements and luxuries of European society, and contemplating emigration to a foreign land, would do well to study this narrative before putting themselves in the way of encountering them.<sup>85</sup>

Another reviewer in the *Athenaeum* writes enthusiastically that the book should occupy ‘a natural, and almost a necessary, place on the table of every one who cares for the Literature of Emigration’.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps ironically, Moodie’s reviewers place *Roughing It* in the same category of texts that she so decried in the opening pages of the book — propaganda written for personal interest and purportedly aiding emigration. Moodie may have detested this propaganda, but despite her stark portrayal of bush life, she did not aim to dissuade people from emigrating. Cattermole’s leaflets, pamphlets and lectures and many others like them spurred Moodie on to cultivate her fragmentary aesthetic in *Roughing It* — and so to write a text that, by being ‘truthful’, had a greater chance in producing successful emigrants. Like Cattermole, Moodie holds out the promise of success, but in her book, the promise is an attenuated one. Success is not an immediate consequence of emigration, but comes with time. Perhaps surprisingly, neither sister sought to dissuade the female counterparts from emigrating. Instead, both seek to *better equip* them for emigration by raising awareness of the initial period of difficulty. As Parr Traill succinctly puts it in her introduction, ‘Forewarned, forearmed’ (9). Moodie begins the book with her claim to truth, and she ends it in a similar fashion, reminding the reader that she wishes to provide a ‘faithful picture of life in the backwoods of Canada’ (330). In her closing remarks, she writes:

To the poor, industrious working man it [Canada] presents many advantages; [because] he works hard; puts up with coarse scanty fare, and submits, with good grace, to hardships that would kill a domesticated animal at home. Thus he becomes independent, inasmuch

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<sup>84</sup> ‘A Blue-Stocking in the Bush’, *Rambler*, October 1852, p. 322.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Blue-Stocking’, *Rambler*, p. 333.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Roughing it in the Bush; or, Life in Canada’, *Athenaeum*, 28 February 1852, pp. 247–248 (p. 248).

as the land that he has cleared finds him in the common necessities of life; but it seldom, if ever, accomplishes more than this (330).

By disclosing what she calls ‘the secrets of the prison house’ and debunking the myth that Canada is the land of plenty and ease, Moodie avoids setting up unrealistic and false expectations that made it extremely difficult for her as a newly arrived emigrant to adjust (330). Alongside this economic promise is an affective one: that, like her, they too, can make Canada their own.

In their own ways, then, Moodie and Parr Traill shared many of the concerns of booster literature explored in the first chapter of this thesis. Though they do not share the culture of suspicion that marks the genre of printed emigrants’ letters, nonetheless, they participate in the circulation of positive stories of emigration. Their work is characterized by the drive to produce authentic narratives, but this desire for authenticity is not grounded in a fear of the loss of the personal connections that print entails in the context of printed emigrants’ letters. As the few preceding pages have shown, for Moodie and Parr Traill, the material production of their works is grounded in filial relations and bonds of sisterhood: print *maintains*, rather than devolves, personal connections. Instead, their drive to produce authentic narratives is embedded in an effort to sway the gendered bias of much of emigration literature: producing a narrative of emigration written from a female viewpoint highlights the gendered difficulties of settlement and thus better prepares emigrant women for life in the bush. This highlights the complex power dynamics often at work in emigration literature: as middle-class emigrants forced to emigrate as a result of their genteel poverty, the sisters, especially Moodie, feel their loss of status keenly in the colony which has little regard for it. They have to find their literary feet and establish a voice for themselves to counter the male-driven emigration propaganda, and yet at the same time, there is no denying that they are complicit in the act of colonization and settlement. The sisters appropriated the sketch to narrate their experiences, but they did so in ways that bolstered their claims to authenticity. While they drew on the sketch’s established association of stable communities to invest their own work with these qualities, at the same time, they also drew on the fragmentary aesthetics of the sketch to narrate the confusing, complex disaggregation of experiences that emigration entailed.

## **PART TWO**

### **CROSSING OVER**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Emigration Paintings: Visual Texts and Mobility

In a review of *The Highlanders*, a painting by Frances M'lan on show at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition in 1852, the *Spectator* marvelled at the depiction of 'one of the scenes of wholesale eviction in the North [...] where the millionaire's "improvements" compel the dispossessed cottier to seek, in bitterness of heart, the refuge of some distant colony'. It notes that, '[t]hroughout, the feeling is strong, but compressed and unexaggerated; and the recourse to a subject of serious interest of our own day is always to be applauded'.<sup>1</sup> That the nineteenth-century art world took a 'serious interest' in emigration, a 'subject [...] of our own day', is attested to by the prolific range and number of paintings that were produced throughout the course of the nineteenth century and the sheer quantity of their reviews in art periodicals. One critic has identified over 300 images of emigration which were produced between 1830 and 1870.<sup>2</sup> Emigration was a popular choice for many British artists: not only did it allow them to reflect on a contemporary phenomenon, it also naturally threw up themes of sorrow, parting, loss and despair and thus provided artists with a rich source of emotion that they could tap into and portray.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, by depicting

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<sup>1</sup> 'Fine Arts: The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Spectator*, 1 May 1852, p. 422. I have not included the painting in my discussion here because Highland Clearances have their own modes of representation, as Patricia Hardy notes in the second chapter of her thesis. See 'The Backward Gaze to the Highlands', pp. 93–140, in Patricia Hardy, 'Victorian Images of Emigration', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Hardy, 'Victorian', pp. 254–278.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Casteras, "'Oh, England! Thou art the Curse...': Victorian Images of Emigration", *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, 6 (1985), 1–24 (pp. 5–6). The 'sentimental' quality of Victorian genre painting has been a contested topic of academic debate. See Pamela Fletcher, "'To wipe a manly tear": The Aesthetics of Emotion in Victorian Narrative Painting', *Victorian Studies*, 51 (2009), 457–469 for a discussion on how the 'question of feeling' 'defined and complicated the limits between sincerity and vulgarity, interiority and performativity, morality and moralizing, representation and real life, and popular appeal and aesthetic success'

emigration, British artists could simultaneously participate in the national push for increasing the status of 'genre' paintings, while at the same time, critiquing and questioning how to depict the effect of emigration on family life.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter extends the range of this thesis, which has so far focussed on the textual output of emigration culture, into the realm of visual art. It takes as its focus five paintings, produced during the mid-century: Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855), Richard Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* (1858), Thomas Webster's *A Letter from the Colonies* (1852), James Collinson's *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* (1850) and Abraham Solomon's *Second Class — the Parting* (1854). With the exception of Brown's painting, which was first exhibited at Liverpool City Art Gallery, all the paintings here were first exhibited at the Royal Academy in London. This

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(p. 479). Miriam Bailin takes a similar view when she asserts that a discourse of 'sentimentality' in nineteenth-century painting allowed Victorians to explore issues surrounding 'the experience of social mobility', in "Dismal Pleasure": Victorian Sentimentality and the Pathos of the Parvenu', *ELH*, 66 (1999), 1015–1032 (p. 1016). See also Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) for a more general discussion on sentimentality and Victorian culture.

<sup>4</sup> In *An Introduction to 'Victorian' Genre Painting: From Wilkie to Frith* (London: HMSO, 1982), Lionel Lambourne writes that the term 'genre' seems 'calculated to make uninitiated people feel they could never hope to understand a subject with such a strange name'. This is 'particularly ironic', he argues, as the word is 'derived from the French collective noun for people, *les gens*, means, when added to "pictures" in the phrase "tableaux des genres", literally, pictures of people; the portrayal of scenes from ordinary life, often with a narrative or anecdotal element', (p. 5). The nineteenth-century art world was determined by a hierarchy of subject matter, which was built on the principles of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the founder of the Royal Academy. At the top of the hierarchy were history paintings, 'the depiction of scenes from history and mythology [...] At the bottom of this rigid system lay landscape painting, considered by many as the mere copying of nature [...] Somewhere rather more than halfway down the ladder was the rung of domestic genre, in which the unpretentiousness of landscape painting was mixed with the necessary human interest of the History Painting'. British painters were interested in establishing a national tradition of art that drew on, but did not mimic entirely, Dutch genre paintings which focussed on the everyday and the people. For a brief and concise introduction to the politics of subject matter in British art at this time, see the first two pages of 'The Cranbrook Colony' in Andrew Greg, *The Cranbrook Colony: F.D. Hardy, G. Hardy, J.C. Horsley, A.E. Mulready, G.B. O'Neil, T. Webster* (Wolverhampton: Central Art Gallery, 1977), from which the quotations above are taken. Curiously, this book has no page numbers; all subsequent references from this book refer to the section from which the quotations are taken. As Lynda Nead argues in *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 'Scenes of domestic ritual gained steadily in popularity but the conflict between history and genre was never fully resolved' and instead 'resurfaced throughout the nineteenth century in relation to different sets of issues and concerns' (pp. 18–19).

extended scope of enquiry from the textual to the visual demonstrates the pervasive cultural effects of settler emigration in Britain, but it also aligns itself with a nineteenth-century mode of observation that understood the visual and the textual as two sides of the same coin. This intertwined relationship between word and image in the Victorian era is one of the reasons for including a chapter on art in a study which is primarily concerned with the textual cultures of emigration. Martin Meisel, in his monumental *Realizations*, is one of the first critics to alert us to this mode of seeing. He argues that ‘in the nineteenth-century all three forms [novels, painting and drama] are narrative *and* pictorial; pictures are given to story telling and novels unfold through and with pictures. Each form and each work becomes a site of a complex interplay of narrative and picture’ and suggests that there may be ‘ways of organising and perceiving representational art that cut across medium and genre and constitute a *common style*’.<sup>5</sup> In other words, Meisel argues for a shift towards recognising the commonalities between novels and art, rather than stressing their generic differences.

Meisel’s reading opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary research, but it also raises a number of questions, which cannot all be resolved here. Evidently, not all genres are the same: the search for a common style needs to take into account class and gender differences in a work’s reception. Are all genres accessible to the same groups of people? Do all genres have the same arguments surrounding taste?<sup>6</sup> A collection of

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 3. Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> My understanding of the changing contexts of the art world has been informed by a number of works. Fiona Candlin, *Art, Museums and Touch* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), looks at how the history of touching museum objects is related to class. Frances Borzello, ‘Pictures for the People’, in *Victorian Artists and the City: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Ira Bruce Nadel and F. S. Schwarzbach (New York: Pergamon, 1980), pp. 30–40 is an interesting study on the drive to provide the urban poor with access to art. See also Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, ‘Introduction. Constituting the Public: Art and its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century London’, in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, ed. by Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 1–25; Colin Trodd, ‘Representing the Victorian Royal Academy: The Properties of Culture and the Promotion of Art’, in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, ed. by Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 56–68 and Nicholas Tromans, ‘Museum or Market?: The British Institution’, in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, ed. by Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 44–55 for good introductions to the growing art world in London at this time.



printed emigrants' letters, for example, is aimed at a significantly different audience from that of a painting of emigration in the Royal Academy, one of London's oldest and most renowned art institutions. The contexts in which they are read may be different: a collection of letters is easily transportable and can be read in most places, even while on the move. By contrast, the Royal Academy exhibitions were often busy and crowded. One critic in the *Art Union*, for example complains, on the first day of the exhibition, 'the crowd and the dust effectually kept us from the sight of all works on or under "the line", we were, as we have intimated, compelled to look only round the walls above'.<sup>7</sup> George Bernard O'Neill's painting of a viewing at the Royal Academy, *Public Opinion* (1863), shows that two decades later, little had changed (Fig. 11).



Figure 11: George Bernard O'Neill, *Public Opinion*, 1863, oil on canvas, 53.2 x 78.8 cm, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds.

Art and emigration literature had very different agendas: the purpose of one was to edify and instruct, the other was to encourage people to emigrate. Would those of limited means — the kind who were the most likely to emigrate — have been compelled or able to afford the time and expense of attending these exhibitions,

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<sup>7</sup> 'The Royal Academy', *Art Union*, 1 June 1845, p. 180.

especially if viewing was so difficult? Although painting is generally viewed as ‘high art’, there is evidence that the nineteenth-century art world was opening up to the lower classes and those of limited means through engraving and illustrations.<sup>8</sup> It has not been possible to track whether and where the paintings discussed in this chapter were reproduced, as such a task would have been beyond the scope of the project, but it is reasonable to suggest that the paintings discussed here may have been known to potential emigrants.

In spite of the complex questions that it raises, Meisel’s argument has been influential in bringing to the attention of critics the ways in which words and images ‘blended’ into each other.<sup>9</sup> Of particular relevance here is the work of Rachel Teukolsky in *The Literate Eye* and Gerard Curtis in *Visual Words*. In her study of the rise of the art press in the periodical culture of the time, Teukolsky argues that the ‘Victorian experience of art was shaped by a flurry of accompanying captions, poems, guidebooks, and other linguistic signs, producing a wholesale entwining of writing and seeing’. Looking at art was a ‘scripted, linguistic, culturally conditioned experience’.<sup>10</sup> Gerard Curtis further argues that we need to take into the account the increasing ‘literariness’ of Victorian images: ‘Longer descriptive titles for paintings, the development of catalogue descriptions, and the explosive growth in a whole genre of narrative and illustrative paintings from novels and poetry mean that artists used text as part of the painting’s “reading process” in a form of inverted ekphrasis’.<sup>11</sup> The paintings discussed in this chapter are each engaged with text in different ways. In their use of

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<sup>8</sup> Hilary Beck, *Victorian Engravings* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1973) and Celina Fox, ‘Wood Engravers and the City’, in *Victorian Artists and the City: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Ira Bruce Nadel and F. S. Schwarzbach (New York: Pergamon, 1980), pp. 1–13 both provide an important background to the production and consumption of engravings.

<sup>9</sup> See Rhoda L. Flaxman, *Victorian Word-Painting and Narrative: Toward the Blending of Genres* (Michigan: UMI Research, 1987), p. 1. I have focussed on the literary nature of the art world here, but the commonalities between genre painting and the novel have been interrogated by critics elsewhere. Ruth Bernard Yeazell in *Art of the Everyday: Dutch Painting and the Realist Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), for example, argues convincingly that the novel’s sense of realism is derived from the Dutch genre painting.

<sup>10</sup> Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book in Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 57.

text, these paintings position the viewer as reader and, thus emphasise that reading is an integral part of the experience of emigration. In the first section, I look at how the poetry accompanying *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* and *The Last of England* in the respective exhibition catalogues inflects the meanings of the paintings; I move on to look at the ways in which emigrant's letters and maps in *A Letter from the Colonies* and *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* bring disparate places into contact with each other and finally, I examine how the words of the emigration advertisements in *Second Class* help to frame the narrative.

Attending closely to the relationships between word and image set up in these paintings, this chapter seeks to uncover the ways in which representations of emigration shaped the aesthetics of British genre painting. Nineteenth-century paintings of emigration provide a counter-narrative to the pro-emigration stories circulating in booster literature and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the novel. Contrary to the popular stories of emigration as a successful move, genre paintings of emigration stressed a different aesthetic: they focussed on the pain of departure, the temporality of never seeing one's home again and the uncertainties of remaking one's home in foreign places. Even in paintings that depict settler life,<sup>12</sup> there is little reference to the wealth and success that booster literature claimed was to be found in the colonies. Crucially, however, these responses are *not* divergent from those circulating in print, but, rather ones that constitute themselves *with and against* those in print.<sup>13</sup> Like the texts of emigration culture, such as the letters, diaries and handbooks, for example, these paintings did not simply act as a historical record of human experience. 'Pictures', as Lynda Nead points out, 'are more than passive conveyors of visual evidence: they do not reflect other forms of historical experience, but actively

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of such images are: R. J. Hammerton, *Emigrants Receiving News from England*, exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists in 1843 and Harden S. Melville, *The Squatter's Hut, News from Home*, exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists in 1851. See also Hardy, 'Victorian', p. 238.

<sup>13</sup> See Julie F. Codell, 'Introduction: Imperial Co-Histories and the British and Colonial Press', in *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press*, ed. by Julie F. Codell (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), pp. 15–26 (p. 18).

work on and may alter those structures'.<sup>14</sup> Extending the parameters of my enquiry to include painting therefore allows me to track a different aesthetic response to settler emigration, and, in turn, one that set into play a different set of questions.

This chapter argues that across these paintings, the dynamic between text and image becomes a site of enquiry into the connections between the far-flung places of the colonies, the 'heart' of England in the countryside and the possibilities of recreating 'home' abroad. It argues that on the one hand, these pictures drew on the familiar markers of genre painting — of comfortable, if not lavish, family life and, in the case of Webster and Collinson, rural cottage scenes. Yet, despite the pictorial emphasis on home, these are not scenes of stability or settlement. Rather than reproducing the mythic image of an unchanging 'Merrie England', these genre paintings question and trouble the meaning of home in a time of increasing demographic mobility. Through the representations of emigrant's letters, maps and advertising bills, these paintings build up a particular visual vocabulary that reflects on the conditions of being mobile. They reinforce the idea that emigration is underpinned by textual mobility. In all four paintings, the texts are mobile: as well as being texts that move, they are also texts that initiate movement.

### **Forced Departures**

Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855; Fig. 12) is one of the most famous paintings of mid-century emigration. In this section, I compare it to Richard Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* (1858; Fig. 13) arguing that although the two painters did not know each other, their works share a critique of emigration. Rather than portraying it as an act of volition, with success ensured at the end of the voyage, both artists choose to portray emigration as a departure forced by circumstance, rather than choice.

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<sup>14</sup> Lynda Nead, 'The History in Pictures', *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), 485–492 (pp. 486–487).



Figure 12: Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*, 1855, oil on panel, 82.5 x 75 cm, Birmingham City Art Gallery, Birmingham

*The Last of England* took three years to complete. It was inspired by the emigration of Brown's friend, the sculptor Thomas Woolner, who emigrated out to Australia as part of the gold rush in 1852.<sup>15</sup> The painting was, as he put it, 'for the most part in the open air on dull days, and the flesh ... on cold days ... the minuteness of detail [...] I have though it necessary to imitate, as bringing the pathos of the subject

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<sup>15</sup> See Virginia Surtees, *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown* (London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 80 n. 25. Woolner in fact returned from Australia before the painting was completed. In December 1854, Brown records having dinner with Woolner the previous night and records his satisfaction that 'Woolner who ought to know likes [*The Last of England*] well', Surtees, p. 106 [2 December 1854].

more home to the beholder'.<sup>16</sup> Brown worked outside consistently, even in the winter months for three to four hours at a stretch, sometimes with '[b]lanket round feet, two coats shawl & gloves on, very cold in spite'.<sup>17</sup> His wife, Emma, and first child, Catherine, sat for the painting, and endured the weather with him: 'Emma coming to sit to me in the most inhuman weather from Highgate'.<sup>18</sup> The effect of the outdoor light can clearly be seen in the final painting. The faces of the couple looking out are tinged with red from the cold and the effect of the wind is emphasised by the circular design of the painting: the curve of the umbrella, sails and rope at the front of the picture follow the edges of the painting and mimic the stray hair as it whips across her face and her bonnet ribbons as it is lifted by the wind. The couple are on an emigrant ship, called *Eldorado*. The woman sits as the central figure in the painting: in one hand, she holds her husband's hand in a comforting grip, and in another, she holds the hand of her young baby, who lies on her lap, guarded from the wind by her grey shawl.<sup>19</sup> Nestled between them is a pile of books. It is unclear what kind they are, but their presence points to the interrelationship between text and the emigrant experience. Whereas she looks softly askance out to her left, her husband appears far more tense and withdrawn; a deep, fierce frown furrows across his forehead, scarcely hidden by his hat. Behind them, are a crowd of people. Few figures can be made out in full, but one of them is a labourer, shaking his fist at the receding white cliffs of Dover. The overall atmosphere of *The Last of England*, then, is not one of joy, anticipation and excitement, but of anxiety and frustration.

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<sup>16</sup> Ford Madox Brown, *The Exhibition of Work, and Other Paintings by Ford Madox Brown at The Gallery, 191 Piccadilly* (London: M'Corquodale, 1865), p. 9. Brown's diary provides an insight into the meticulous care he took over accurately capturing the details for this painting. See especially the entries for March 1854 in Surtees, pp.124–130.

<sup>17</sup> Surtees, p. 80 [7 December 1854].

<sup>18</sup> Surtees, p. 80 [1854].

<sup>19</sup> The figure of the mother as the central figure in the family together is a common trope in emigration paintings. Paul Falconer Poole also employs it in *The Emigrant's Departure* (1838), where an emigrant family are taking their leave. In the centre of the painting, the emigrant mother holds her child's hand in one and her sister's hand (who is not emigrating) in another, symbolically connecting the old world and the new. This also has implications for the trope of the mother in emigration discourse, which I have discussed in the third chapter, 'A Gendered Landscape'. See also Paul Falconer Poole's *The Emigrant's Departure* (1838), which repeats the motif of the emigrant mother as the focal of point of the picture. Appendix 2, Figure 23.



Figure 13: Richard Redgrave, *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home*, 1858, oil on canvas, 69.9 x 98.4 cm, Tate Britain, London

Visually, *The Last of England* could not be more different to Richard Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home*. Instead of a sea scene and an emigrant ship, the painting presents us with the rolling hills of an English village. The emigrants — again, a family — are placed in the foreground of the picture. The father stands facing the hills. His arms are outstretched, and with his hat in hand, he salutes his village goodbye. Around him are his family. One of his sons stands looking at the village hills and people, the attention of two other daughters has been caught by something far off in the distance. His wife sits on a little tuft, with another child near her and her baby in her lap, looking off into the far distance to where her daughter is excitedly pointing.<sup>20</sup> One nineteenth-century critic wrote enthusiastically that '[n]othing can be more excellent than the drawing of "The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home"'.<sup>21</sup> The *Art Journal* commented that in painting the landscape, Redgrave had 'thrown himself into a fervency of devotion

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<sup>20</sup> Susan Casteras, "'Social Wrongs': The Painted Sermons of Richard Redgrave', in *Richard Redgrave 1804–1888*, ed. by Susan P. Casteras and Ronald Parkinson (Yale: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 9–36 (p. 21).

<sup>21</sup> 'Royal Academy', *Saturday Review*, 28 May 1859, p. 652.

rarely witnessed'.<sup>22</sup> Another art critic wrote that, although 'the landscape, which should retire over some considerable distance, is impending over the figures, and in reality is made more important than they are', it is nonetheless, 'a genuine bit of English scenery'.<sup>23</sup> Redgrave's composition, however, is more than an exercise in faithfully depicting a rural scene. Rather than posing a dichotomy between the emigrants and the land, it questions the relationship between them.

Accompanying the entry for Redgrave's painting in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue are two couplets from Oliver Goldsmith's poem, *The Traveller* (1764):

Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,  
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?  
Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,  
To traverse climes beyond the western main.<sup>24</sup>

Goldsmith's poem, like his later poem *The Deserted Village* (1770), is a reflection on the effect of the Enclosure Acts of the eighteenth century, where common land was enclosed and villagers were consequently evicted from their homes. By choosing these lines to frame the narrative of his painting, Redgrave draws lines of similarities between eighteenth-century eviction and nineteenth-century emigration. While 'useless ore' in Goldsmith's poem refers to the money that landowners made from enclosure, the words take on a new meaning as they become framed by (and frame) Redgrave's painting. Given the context of the gold rush of the 1850s, could it be that the husband in the painting is in fact a potential gold-digger, moving with his family to dig for 'useless ore' in Australia? If this is the case, emigration is portrayed not as a move that strengthens the nation, but instead as one that weakens it: it is an unequal exchange between 'useful sons' who could profit England by continuing to labour

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<sup>22</sup> 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Art Journal*, June, 1859, p. 161.

<sup>23</sup> Council of Four, *A Guide to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1859: Containing Original, Critical, and Descriptive Notices of 250 Works of Art* (London: Kent, 1859), p. 24, 25.

<sup>24</sup> *The Exhibition Catalogue of The Royal Academy of Arts, the Ninety-First* (London, William Clowes, 1859), p. 12. In the catalogue, the two couplets are given as though one follows from the other, but in the original poem, they are separated by a few lines. For a critical reception of Goldsmith's poem, see A. Lytton Sells, *Oliver Goldsmith: His Life and Works* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), pp. 105–108 and pp. 288–295.



there and the ‘useless ore’ that cannot match their worth. The *Illustrated London News* severely criticised Redgrave’s choice of lines, writing that:

the time is gone by for such maudlin stuff as this, and artists, if they would minister to the requirements of the age in “Britain’s peopled shore”, and in new homes “beyond the Western main” would do wisely to adopt a more ennobling view of a great social and political movement.<sup>25</sup>

However ‘genuine’ Redgrave’s depiction of the English countryside may have been, to the reviewer of the *Illustrated London News*, by casting emigration as a forced expulsion, rather than a positive choice, Redgrave had not embraced the spirit of the age, or realised the status of emigration as a national endeavour.

Similar to Redgrave’s *The Emigrant’s Last Sight of Home*, Brown’s *The Last of England* posits the idea that emigration was a failure on the part of Britain to keep her men. The painting was first exhibited in Liverpool City Gallery in 1856, but it was the 1865 exhibition in London that continues to be the most important in the eyes of contemporary scholars, on account of the exhibition catalogue that Brown wrote himself. In this catalogue, Brown not only includes a lengthy description of the painting and how he painted it, but also a sonnet that provides a context for the painting:

“The last of England” o’er the sea, my dear,  
Our homes to seek amid Australian fields.  
Us, not the million-acred island yields  
The space to dwell in. Thrust out! Forced to hear  
Low ribaldry from sots, and share rough cheer  
With rudely nurtured men. [...] <sup>26</sup>

In the dynamic between word and image in Brown’s sonnet and painting, we see the same preoccupation that we saw in the case of Redgrave. Despite being ‘million-acred’, England ‘thrust[s]’ out her able-bodied men who are ‘forced’ to make their homes ‘amid Australian fields’. The discontent of the emigrants in Brown’s painting, however, arises from the fear that emigration upsets established class structures. In the catalogue, Brown writes that, ‘in order to present the parting scene in its fullest tragic

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Lionel Lambourne, *Victorian Painting* (London: Phaidon, 1999), p.359.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, p. 8.

development', he has 'singled out a couple from the middle classes, high enough through education and refinement, to appreciate all they are now giving up, and yet depressed enough in means to have to put up with the discomforts and humiliations to a vessel "all one class"'.<sup>27</sup> Brown's painting picks up on the complex interrelations between emigration and class — a theme which has already been explored in this thesis. Behind the middle-class couple, a working-class man shakes his fist at the receding cliffs of Dover. The middle class man shares this anger and frustration: not only is his forehead furrowed in a frown, his back is symbolically turned on England.

At the time that Redgrave and Brown produced their paintings, they were both going through a period of emotional lows. In his diary, Redgrave writes 'Alas! I feel I take less pleasure than I formerly did in life and its works'.<sup>28</sup> However, whereas with Redgrave this appears to be little more than a general tiredness, Brown toyed with the idea of moving to India. Anxious over his financial situation, and scared that he was not held in high regard by the public, he writes in his diary:

What chance is there for me out of all the Bodies, Institutions, Art unions & academies & Commissions of this country, Classes sects or cotteries, Nobles dealers patrons rich men or friends. Which one takes an interest in me or my works. Is it encouraging to go on? Is it not rather a clear affirmation of my not being required by the British Public [sic].<sup>29</sup>

Some days later, he wrote, 'Very absent & dejected no prospect but going to India',<sup>30</sup> but he seems to have been discouraged by his friends: 'I breakfasted with Lowes Dickinson to day & he says that there is a fortune to be made in India, but he does not think me the man to do it. I shall not go at present at any rate [sic]'.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the time that Brown painted *The Last of England*, he was plagued with money problems: he

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<sup>27</sup> Brown, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> F. M. Redgrave, *Richard Redgrave, C.B., R.A.: A Memoir, Compiled from his Diary with Portrait and Three Illustrations* (London: Cassell, 1891), p, 219.

<sup>29</sup> Surtees, p. 96 [3 October 1854].

<sup>30</sup> Surtees, p. 132 [11 April 1855].

<sup>31</sup> Surtees, p. 153 [9 September 1855].

pawned his belongings regularly, borrowed money off family members, and waited for two of his paintings destined for the Paris Universal Exhibition to be sold.<sup>32</sup>

The negative portrayal of emigration in their paintings may have stemmed from the artists' personal ennui and anxieties at the time, but it also shapes the larger discourse surrounding emigration. In the nineteenth century, to make the audience 'feel' — and feel correctly — was a measure of the quality of one's work. Both Redgrave and Brown focus on scenes of departure: leave-taking was possibly one of the most popular subject choices for paintings of emigration in the nineteenth-century because of the depth and complexity of emotion that it allowed. Much of the poignancy of these paintings is generated by the sense of finality that emigration brings. In their chosen titles for their works, Brown and Redgrave were keen to impress upon the viewer that this would be the 'last' time that the emigrants would be in their familiar environments. For these emigrants, emigration constitutes a clean break from Britain. Yet, rather than stressing solely pathos at this sense of finality, the paintings register a complex range of emotions at having to leave. Emigration is a choice that these emigrants have been forced to make: the paintings critique Britain for being unable to keep her able-bodied men on her shores. Nonetheless, the possibility of success remains open-ended and ambivalent. The motley of hands behind the couple in *The Last of England* can be read as a metonym of the hard work and labour that is needed in the colonies, while the name of the ship, *Eldorado*, can be read as either an indication of the success that is to come or as a reminder that the search for gold overseas is a mythic ideal.

### **The Emigrant's Letter**

Thomas Webster's *A Letter from the Colonies* (1852) and James Collinson's *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* (1850) are not scenes of departure, nor do they depict emigrants. Nonetheless, through the motif of the emigrant's letter, both these paintings explore the themes of loss and continuity that emigration paintings are commonly concerned

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<sup>32</sup> Teresa Newman and Raymond Watkinson, *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1991), p. 88.

with. It is unlikely that either of the artists knew each other, though these two paintings were both exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition within two years of each other. They also had extremely different career trajectories, which, as I will show throughout the course of this chapter, impacted upon the display and critical reception of their work.<sup>33</sup>

*A Letter from the Colonies* (Fig. 14) shows a postman having just delivered a letter at a rural cottage to an elderly couple and a young lady, perhaps their daughter. The young woman has left her needlework at the table, and come round to look at the letter the elderly man holds up to the light in his left hand. Opposite them, the elderly woman looks on anxiously at them both. Meanwhile, the postman leans in through the open window, smiling at the elderly woman, with his hand outstretched, waiting for his payment. A light breeze lifts the gingham curtains, and through the window, a clear blue sky can be seen; sunlight plays through the green boughs of a tree in the garden. Despite the seeming ordinariness of the scene, the mood is one of tense apprehension.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> By the time Webster exhibited *A Letter from the Colonies*, he had established a reputation for painting village scenes and school life. In 1850, however, Collinson was undergoing something of a mid-life crisis. See below, 'Troubled Gazes'.

<sup>34</sup> Susan P. Casteras, 'Painted Fictions: Commemorating the Everyday in Victorian Art', in *Pre-Raphaelite and Other Masters: The Andrew Lloyd Webber Collection* (London: The Royal Academy of Arts, 2003), pp. 204–227 (p. 205).



Figure 14: Thomas Webster, *A Letter from the Colonies*, 1852, oil on wood, 41.3 x 52.1 cm, Tate Britain, London

Webster acquired great acclaim during his life for his depictions of simple village and school life; this is his only painting to depict emigration.<sup>35</sup> As with most of his work, *A Letter from the Colonies* was well-received by the press. Webster plays to the audience's expectations in this painting by following many of the markers of genre painting:<sup>36</sup> the depiction of a family at home, the rural scene, the everyday items lying around the house. The topicality of emigration, and its constant presence in print culture of the time, as well as in the lived experience of people, meant that viewers would have recognised and identified with the subject matter of the delivery of an emigrant's letter. The critic for the *Athenaeum* wrote that the painting 'is another of Mr. Webster's telling pictures, which come home at once to every spectator, learned or unlearned'.<sup>37</sup> The reviewer's assertion that the painting is a 'telling' one suggests

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<sup>35</sup> Kathryn Moore Heliak, 'Thomas Webster', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28947?docPos=3>> [18 April 2004] (para. 1).

<sup>36</sup> See Nead, 'History', 485–492.

<sup>37</sup> 'Royal Academy', *The Athenaeum*, 15 May 1852, p. 551.

that the painting lets slip an occluded truth beyond the mundane subject matter of the delivery of an emigrant's letter. That this hidden meaning should 'come home at once' to all who view the painting suggests that the ambiguity and emotional complexity of this painting would have been recognised by the nineteenth-century audience.

In her chapter, 'Ramsgate Sands', Caroline Arscott argues that '[i]n narrative painting we are given that crucial second phase of narrative, upon which the resolution depends'. Narrative painting depicts a situation that 'is assumed to stand between the past and the future'; 'although a resolution will follow as a consequence of the second phase', it is 'not always [an] inevitable one'.<sup>38</sup> Arscott's comments are no less true of Webster's painting: the picture depicts a pause as the elderly man holds up the unopened letter to the young daughter and they gaze upon the handwriting in which the address is written. Given that the letter has been delivered, it is hardly likely that the writing has been blurred during its long voyage to the cottage. There is no reason that the elderly man and young lady should pause to linger over the address on the front, other than to enjoy the sight of a familiar hand. In the *Postal Age*, David Henkin writes that 'Letter-writers frequently focused on the impact and significance of handwriting, pulling a metonymic string that linked chirography to hand to bodily presence [...] Handwritten letters bore the trace of physical contact and not simply the recognizable imprimatur of individual identity'.<sup>39</sup> In Webster's painting, the address is the first sight of the emigrant's handwriting that the elderly man and young lady have: the slight smile at the corner of the woman's mouth shows the pleasure that the sight of a familiar hand brings her. Even before the letter is opened and its contents read, the materiality of its form marks the presence of its absent sender. The letter marks the absence of the emigrant, and as a physical object that has been touched by them, signifies their physical presence.

*A Letter from the Colonies* depicts two moments of delay. Running alongside the affective moment as the elderly man and young woman pause over the sight of the

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<sup>38</sup> Caroline Arscott, 'Ramsgate Sands, Modern Life, and the Shoring-up of Narrative', in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. by Brian Allen (London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 157–168 (p. 158).

<sup>39</sup> David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 55–56.

handwriting is another, quite different narrative as the postman waits to receive his payment from the elderly woman. One nineteenth-century critic wrote that she was in ‘an agony of anxiety to hear it [the letter] read’,<sup>40</sup> which suggests that the elderly lady is anxious because of the uncertainty of the situation: until the letter has been opened and read, there is no way of knowing whether it contains good or bad news. However, given that the elderly lady clutches at her money bag, and given the humble interior of the cottage, it could also be that she is worried about paying for the expenses of international postage. This second ‘sub-plot’ of the painting frames the emigrant’s letter, not as an object through which family members extend their kinship ties, but as a commodity in the moment of exchange. I have already looked at the ways in which emigrant’s letters enter the commodity market as they are published in this thesis, but importantly, this is a scene that the manuscript letter itself is marked by the commodity moment. Epistolary exchange and commodity exchange became one and the same thing here. The emigrant’s letter also forms the counter narrative of the painting that stresses not moments of pleasure and anxiety, but of transaction, money and exchange.

Although the elderly woman is tense and withdrawn, the way in which the letter reflects the light into the faces of the elderly man and the young lady suggests that it contains good, rather than bad, news. Julia Thomas suggests that ‘[b]y picturing these different reactions the painting refuses to commend or criticise emigration and offers instead the possibility of both readings’.<sup>41</sup> I suggest, however, that Webster is not so interested in passing judgement on emigration as a national endeavour as he is in keeping the audience guessing. The complexity of emotion registered in the scene means that until the letter is opened, the audience has no idea which way this narrative will swing.

Emigrants’ letters were often marked by delay and an empty expanse of waiting, for both emigrants and their families in England. Given that emigrants frequently wrote their letters over days and sometimes weeks, and given the length of

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<sup>40</sup> ‘The Exhibition of the Royal Academy’, *Art Journal*, 1 June 1852, pp. 165–176 (p. 168).

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, *Victorian*, p. 80.

time it took for letters to reach England, letters often contained news of events that had happened months before. If they were lost en route, they would be delayed even further. As well as being marked by delay, emigrants were also acutely conscious of the costs involved in sending letters. Frederick Hasted, an emigrant to Upper Canada in 1832, explains to his family that

I have wrote 3 letters before [...] Because the postage comes heavy to me, 2s. 2d. every letter I send from here home, therefore I did not intend writing any more yet; but as I had forgot something of material consequence to you, I thought I would spend 2s. 2d. more for your sake [*sic*].

He then ends his letter with ‘I intended to say more, but have neither time nor room. If you want to know more send a large sheet of paper and money to pay the postage, and I will fill it for you’.<sup>42</sup> Even before the letter entered the print market, emigrants were aware of the fact that their letters were commodities. In his painting, Webster draws upon the themes of delay and expense of the emigrant’s letter to frame the narrative: the concerns of emigration culture shape the aesthetics of his genre painting. Part of the pleasure of viewing *A Letter from the Colonies* is its refusal to offer only a single reading of the events it depicts. Like the unopened letter, the painting keeps the audience guessing as to what the real events are and how they will turn: the viewer becomes caught up into the moment of suspense, waiting for delayed revelation as the elderly man holds up the unopened letter to the light.

### Troubled Gazes

In *A Letter from the Colonies*, even though the emigrant is not present in the picture itself, the motif of the letter tracks many of the concerns that are central to the emigrant experience: anticipation, pleasure and loss, as well as the emphasis on everyday commodities. In James Collinson’s *Answering the Emigrant’s Letter*, the letter is opened, its contents revealed and become the subject of a family discussion (Figure 15).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Letters from Settlers in Upper Canada* (London: Marchant, Printer, 1834), p. 2; p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Collinson also produced a very similar painting to this in subject matter the previous year, which unfortunately has now been lost. In 1851, the *Art Journal* reviewed *The Reply*, in, which





Figure 15: James Collinson, *Answering the Emigrant's Letter*, 1850, oil on panel, 70.1 x 91.2 cm, Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester

As in *A Letter from the Colonies*, *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* is a family scene, although the family depicted is younger. The father sits at the table with his back to the window. He holds in his left hand the opened emigrant's letter: one can see the seal and postage marks and just make out the cross-written lines. He holds a quill loosely in his right hand, and rests it on a map of Australia on the table in front of him. His eldest son sits opposite him on the other end of the table, seeming to act as an amanuensis for the letter as he writes down what the family members around him say. The two middle children, a daughter and a son — crowd enthusiastically round him; the former looks at her eldest brother, while the latter looks on at the letter being written. Sitting slightly apart from the rest of the family, the mother holds the youngest child — a

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'appears to be a letter to Australia, written by a boy, the son of a cottager or a small farmer in answer to one received. The work exhibits everywhere the most minute manipulation, but as this does not appear without a microscopic examination, we submit that a better end had been answered by a more generous touch', 'The National Institution', *Art Journal*, 1 May 1851, p. 139. It is interesting that the comment concerning size is echoed in the reviewer's critic of *Answering the Emigrant's Letter*; see p. 169.

toddler of about two years — in her lap, putting a sock on its left foot. In an effort to mimic its mother, the toddler also holds a sock in its hands and tries to put on its right foot. A dog, a symbol of constancy and affection, lies at the feet of the mother, looking up at the family around the table. The fire glows in the grate, and sunlight streams in through the window. Across the heads of her three eager children, the mother gives her husband an anxious glance.

Collinson was a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood at the time that he painted *Answering the Emigrant's Letter*. He describes it in a letter to William Rossetti as “a smoky picturesque little interior” and ‘a capital Wilkie subject, sure to sell’.<sup>44</sup> Aligning himself with David Wilkie, the ‘father’ of British genre painting, indicates how proud Collinson was of the subject matter of the painting, and at the same time, indicates that he is positioning himself firmly within a national school of painting. Whatever their later differences, Rossetti certainly seems to have admired *Answering the Emigrant's Letter*, noting in the *P.R.B. Journal* that the painting ‘occupies him [Collinson] so much as that he is unable to go out to do anything in the way of distributing *Germes*’, and admiring the fact that Collinson is ‘finishing up the trees outside to a pitch of the extremest minuteness’.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, however, when the painting was exhibited at

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<sup>44</sup> *The P.R.B. Journal: William Michael Rossetti's Diary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood 1849–1853, Together with other Pre-Raphaelite Documents*, ed. by William E. Fredeman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 8 [Wednesday 30 May 1849]. Collinson's painting, in fact, remained unsold at the exhibition, along with William Holman Hunt's *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (1850).

<sup>45</sup> Fredeman, p. 50 [Saturday 2 Feb 1850]; p. 18 [Monday 8 Oct. 1849]. Soon after the Exhibition, Collinson resigned from the Academy due to religious differences. In his letter to Gabriel Rossetti, he wrote that ‘as a sincere Catholic, I can no longer allow myself to be called a P.R.B. in the brotherhood sense of the term, or to be connected in any way with the magazine [...] Whatever may be my thoughts with regards to their works, I am sure that all the P.R.B.s have both written and painted conscientiously; it was for me to have judged beforehand whether I could conscientiously, as a Catholic, assist in spreading the artistic opinions of those who are not’, Fredeman, p. 71 [July 1850]. Collinson's conversion also led him to break off his engagement to Christina Rossetti. Neither of the Rossetti brothers, nor Christina Rossetti comment on this in their diaries and letters. See Lindsay Errington, *Social and Religious Themes in English Art 1840–1860* (London: Garland, 1984), pp. 352–355 for more information on Collinson and his resignation from the Brotherhood; Jan Marsh, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Their Lives in Letters and Diaries* (London: Collins & Brown, 1996), p. 33; and Ronald Parkinson, ‘James Collinson’, in *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, ed. Leslie Parris (London: Tate Gallery/Allen Lane, 1984), pp. 61–75. William Holman Hunt's *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-*

the Academy, it was hung high above the line, 'at a height where all its merits are lost',<sup>46</sup> and this accounts for contemporary critics' complaints that not all the details could be clearly seen. One critic, for example, mentioned that although the 'question of correspondence is sufficiently evident', 'it is impossible to determine that the family council is held on the subject of a letter to an emigrant'.<sup>47</sup> A reviewer for the *Critic* wrote that the painting shows 'nothing short of what an opera glass will reveal'. Although a 'contemporary observes that there are no means of determining that the letter is being written to an emigrant', a 'microscopic investigation would have satisfied him that the principal figure holds a map of the district: and from this the inference is obvious'.<sup>48</sup>

Collinson's painting incorporates three texts — the emigrant's letter, the letter being written in reply and the map that lies open in front of the father. Whereas Webster's painting shows the letter in the moment of one kind of exchange, Collinson's painting shows it in the moment of epistolary exchange. The three children form their own little triad of gazes as the eldest child writes the letter. His sister helps him to steady the ink pot; she looks at him with what appears to be concern on her face, while he looks down in concentration at the letter. Meanwhile, their younger brother tries to squeeze in between them to take a look at the letter. While the concentration of gazes around the letter suggests that this is the main narrative of the painting, I argue instead that the climactic point in the narrative lies in the anxious look that the wife gives her husband. Caught up in their own enthusiasm of the letter, the

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*Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co, 1905), I, pp. 161–165 also provides insight into Collinson's time with the P.R.B.

<sup>46</sup> Fredeman, p. 70 [Sunday 21 July 1850]. Paintings that were exhibited at eye level were described as having been exhibited 'on the line'. 'Above' or 'below' 'the line' thus means above or below eye level. As pictures and reviews of the Royal Academy exhibitions show, space was extremely limited: being exhibited on the line was the one of the very few places where a painting could hope to get a good viewing. For more information, see Helene E. Roberts, 'Art Reviewing in the Early Nineteenth-Century Art Periodicals', in *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 19 (March 1973), 9–20 and Helene E. Roberts, 'Exhibition and Review: The Periodical Press and the Victorian Art Exhibition System', in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 79–107.

<sup>47</sup> 'The Royal Academy', *Art Journal*, 1 June 1850, p. 173.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Critic*, 1 August 1850, p. 381.

three children are oblivious to this, but, as in Webster's painting, Collinson's *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* depicts a moment of uncertain delay as the father stops his dictation of the letter to glance back at his wife.

A number of different readings are encoded into this brief pause: perhaps the wife is warning her husband against putting in a piece of news, perhaps the letter contains bad news, and the couple are wondering what the appropriate mode of consolation could be. However, through its composition, the painting encourages us towards another reading of this moment of delay. It is not merely coincidence that the nineteenth-century reviewer for the *Critic* understood that the letter was from an emigrant to Australia through the map: placed in close proximity to each other, the painting encourages us to read the emigrant's letter and the map of Australia in alignment with each other. Emigrant handbooks and manuals were often sold with maps: these gave prospective readers an idea of the lay of the land before they arrived, but emigrants also found new uses for them, as suited their circumstances. One emigrant to Canada in 1832, for example, wrote back to his father:

by a reference to the map attached to that book, you may trace my route from Quebec to Easthope, by Montreal, Prescott, York, &c. also in the map of the Huron Tract, which is at the foot of the other, you can see how beautifully intersected that part of the block where I live is, with rivers and streams, all of which abound with fish.<sup>49</sup>

Maps were thus useful tools of communication between emigrants and their families: they made the unfamiliar familiar not only in terms of navigation, but also in terms of an affective 'knowing' that I talked about in the third chapter. With his quill poised over the map, perhaps the father is tracking or marking out the route mentioned in the emigrant's letter.

The map, however, is not only a means of visual communication. As is by now well known, it is an important tool of colonial conquest. As G. Clarke argues, 'the map exists as a text of *possession*: a reconstruction of a culture's way with the world'.<sup>50</sup> They are 'not so much objective and scaled equivalents of the land as [...] cultural text

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<sup>49</sup> *Copies and Extracts of Letters from Settlers in Upper Canada* (London: Marchant, 1833), p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> G. N. G. Clarke, 'Taking Possession: The Cartouche as Cultural Text in Eighteenth-Century American Maps', *Word & Image*, 4 (1988), 455–74.

and ideological image — a political frame of space in which the map is offered as a scaled version of control and, by implication, of possession'.<sup>51</sup> The idea of possession and control is particularly significant here. The emigrant's letter is a text from someone who has already succeeded in possessing some land (or working towards this), and the map also signifies possession on a national scale. Both these texts are in effect, texts of colonial acquisition and they are both held by the father, a young able-bodied man, with a young, thriving family — in short, the ideal coloniser. As we have seen in the first chapter, emigrants' letters frequently contained encouragements of family members in England to follow: the painting may also depict a scene where the father is deciding whether or not to emigrate out. The fact that the settler experience is so heavily determined by text, and the fact that the father's quill is poised over the map ready to make its mark strongly suggests a textual inscription that he will then follow up with the act of migrating out.

This reading is supported by the glance that the wife gives her husband. Half fearful and uncertain, with her mouth an anxious line of worry, it is the most striking element in the picture. If her husband follows, she will have little choice but to acquiesce, like Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, who were both emigrant wives. It is a look that Collinson repeated in his *The Emigration Scheme* (Fig. 16), painted two years later as a pendant to *Answering the Emigrant's Letter* painting. Around the room in this painting are what appear to be two families.

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<sup>51</sup> Clarke, pp. 455–6.



Figure 16: James Collinson, *The Emigration Scheme*, 1852, oil on wood, 56.6 x 76.2 cm, Andrew Lloyd-Webber Collection

A young boy stands facing them, reading out news of an emigration scheme from the *Australian News*. While both the men are flushed with the excitement at the prospect of moving abroad (one has the opened emigrant's letter on his lap), the woman near the centre of the painting stares on with hard, questioning look of fear: will the men have their heads turned by the news of the gold rush? The troubled glances in each of these paintings tinge the comfortable setting of the home with irony: this is a home that may soon be home no more.

### The Country and the Colony

In *Epistolarity*, Janet Altman writes that the letter can 'function as a connector between two distant points, as bridge between sender and receiver': 'the epistolary author can choose to emphasise either the distance or the bridge'.<sup>52</sup> As we have seen in Webster's and Collinson's paintings, the emigrant's letter brings the far-flung places of the

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<sup>52</sup> Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), p. 13.

colonies into the familiar home. In doing so, it disrupts the ostensible rootedness and located nature of home. As a mobile object and carrying the written inscriptions of its migrant author, the letter is shown to induce new formations of mobility into settled family scenes. More is at stake in these paintings, however, than a simple contrast between the distant colonies and the proximal home. As I will show below, the connection made between the home and the colony also has colonial ramifications.

The cottage interiors, the rustic dress of the figures, and the greenery that can be seen through the windows of Webster's and Collinson's paintings all indicate that the paintings are set in the countryside. As can be seen from Redgrave's *The Emigrant's Last Sight of Home* (and other paintings),<sup>53</sup> the countryside was a popular setting for artists depicting emigration. The prevalence of the countryside setting for emigration pictures could be partly a result of historical fact: many agricultural labourers were forced to migrate as a result of industrialisation and the agricultural depression, and Redgrave and Webster were both well aware of this. Casteras points out that 'Redgrave used his place of summertime residence as the location for this farewell scene' and that the hills depicted 'seem to be Leith Hill, one of the several steep slopes in the area and the highest summit in the south-east of England'.<sup>54</sup> Leith Hill is in Abinger, which is between the parishes of Dorking and Petworth: in short, in an area that saw the emigration of agricultural labourers. Although Webster was living in London when he was painting *A Letter from the Colonies*, he was at this time travelling down to Cranbrook regularly to visit his distant cousin and artist, F. D. Hardy. Webster was familiar with the area and evidently attracted to it: in 1856, he decided to settle in Cranbrook as well in order to be nearer to the subject matter of his paintings of village scenes and rural life.<sup>55</sup>

However, as various critics have noted, the peaceful representation of the countryside is more of an aesthetic veneer, than it is a historical fact. Casteras argues

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<sup>53</sup> In Paul Falconer Poole's *The Emigrant's Departure* (1838) for example, we can see the open fields through the open door and window. See Appendix 2, Figure 23.

<sup>54</sup> Susan Casteras, "Green Lanes and Chequered Shade": The Landscapes of Richard Redgrave', in *Richard Redgrave, 1804–1888*, ed. by Susan P. Casteras and Ronald Parkinson (London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 71–85 (p. 80).

<sup>55</sup> Greg, 'The Cranbrook Colony'.

that 'Abinger was among those agricultural parishes in the South that had been desperately poor in the 1830s and '40s, subject to the anguish of the Swing Riots, machine-breaking, rick-burning, unemployment, near starvation, and of course emigration'. Similarly, the introduction of a railway line in Cranbrook in 1842 meant that the population 'substantially declined', as people moved 'to the larger centres of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells'. In addition, 'foreign food imports and the emigration of labourers to Canada and Australia was causing an agricultural depression'.<sup>56</sup> Yet Collinson's and Webster's paintings register little, if any, of this agricultural distress.

This aesthetic cleanliness is driven by an understanding that genre painting should reproduce the same atmosphere of calm and peace that it depicted in the spaces where it was hung. David Wilkie was of the opinion that a 'fine picture is one of our household gods, and kept for private worship: it is an everyday companion'.<sup>57</sup> Richard Redgrave similarly argued that the 'subjects' of British genre paintings, 'are undoubtedly of a less elevated, and of a lower and more familiar character in England, but they are works which a man can live with, and love to look on, obtruding no terrors on his sleeping or waking fancies'.<sup>58</sup> Almost two decades later, the reviewer for *The Times* echoed this sentiment when he asserted that 'if pictures are things to be lived with', the subject must be 'happily chosen'.

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<sup>56</sup> Greg, 'The Cranbrook Colony'.

<sup>57</sup> David Wilkie, 'Critical Remarks on Works of Art', in *The Life of Sir David Wilkie*, ed. by Allan Cunningham, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1843), III, pp. 128–215 (p. 139).

<sup>58</sup> Redgrave, p. 131.





Figure 17: Luke Fildes, *The Widower*, 1876, oil on canvas, 168.9 x 248.3 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

In a review of Luke Fildes's *The Widower* (1876; Fig. 17), the reviewer complains that the painter

is under a mistake who brings his dirty boots, squalling and scrambling children, parental and sisterly love, and the pathos of an innocent's death-struggle, into such close contact [...] It is a great pity that painters do not bear more in mind the fact that their pictures are meant to adorn English living-rooms, and that intense painfulness, overstrained expression, and great vehemence of momentary action or short-lived attitude are all qualities that make pictures unpleasant to live with.<sup>59</sup>

'Abstinence' from such depressing scenes does not necessarily 'condemn the painter to insipidity', for there is an 'abundance of interest, including pathos, to be found in subjects of the present and the past'.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the fact that so many emigration paintings do not depict the distress which motivated emigration is due to an understanding in the

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<sup>59</sup> 'Royal Academy', *The Times*, 8 May 1876, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> 'Royal Academy', *The Times*, 8 May 1876, p. 9. I do not have the space to compare and contrast the idyllic representations of emigration with more morbid ones, but for an interesting example of this contrast, see John Absolon's *We Are Out on the Ocean Sailing to our Home Beyond the Deep* (1850) to Hubert von Herkomer's *Passage to the West* (1884) (Appendix 2; Figures 24 and 25).

art world that saw genre paintings as fulfilling a particular purpose: they both depict a comfortable idyllic home, and, through such depictions, work to produce this interior within the space in which they are situated.

Critics have read the drive for this aesthetic cleanliness of genre paintings as a reaction against the changes of modernity. Lionel Lambourne, for example, argues that they were a result of ‘nostalgia’ in the face of dramatic change.<sup>61</sup> In *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, John Barrell argues that categorising the aesthetic and stylized representations in nineteenth-century paintings as sentimental idealism does little to enhance our understanding. In his view, the reluctance to depict agricultural distress is a ‘myth’ to be explored, rather than dismissed: we cannot ‘strip away the nostalgia and mythologizing about Merry England or the organic community’, because these myths ‘really happened as well’. The real question is not what the ‘harmonious surface of the painting’ hides, but what it tells us.<sup>62</sup>

So what, if anything, does the narrative painting’s refusal to depict the social ills at home as a primary force for motivating emigration tell us? In *Rural Scenes and National Representations*, Elizabeth Helsinger argues, ‘rural place[s]’ acquire symbolic force in paintings as they are also

made to stand for the whole nation, against the competing claims of other contemporary images such as the city or the machine [...] The rural as national metaphor carries over the new national context [...] This transfer of meaning often brings with it a certain stylization: images and narratives are simplified and codified as they are staged, performed, and quoted for a national audience.<sup>63</sup>

But if the countryside could be read metaphorically as the space of the nation, then so too could the family unit. As Nead argues, ‘the family was seen as a “natural” and stable unit which should ideally be located in a natural, rural setting’ and the ‘specific focus for this construct was around the notion of a village community’ because the village was ‘rooted in nature and tradition, it was smaller than the industrial cities and towns,

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<sup>61</sup> Lambourne, *Introduction*, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 164.

<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Rural Scenes and National Representation, Britain: 1815–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 13.

and people were familiar and readily identified.<sup>64</sup> With their emphases on the family and the countryside, the paintings of Redgrave, Collinson and Webster evidently play into the idea of painting embodying national values.

Letter scenes mesh texts of emigration culture into the family and village homes and thus encourage us to see the national characteristics of emigration itself. Furthermore, they pull the country into a binary with the colony. Traditionally, the country is pulled into a binary with the city, where, as Raymond Williams points out, the country ‘has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, of innocence, and simple virtue’. On the other hand, the city ‘has gathered the idea of an achieved centre’, but with plenty of ‘[p]owerful hostile associations’, such as ‘noise, worldliness and ambition’.<sup>65</sup> This same dynamic was reproduced in emigration literature, where manuals urged emigrants not to stop for long in the ports where their ships docked, for fear of being drawn into a drunken and debauched lifestyle, but to press on into the bush where they could expect to find work and settle quickly. However, letter scenes such as Webster and Collinson’s circumvent depictions of the city entirely, and instead stress a periphery-periphery connection between the country and the colony. Pulling the two into a binary with each other suggests that, rather than seeing a contrast, we are supposed to see a similarity, and maybe even a continuity between the two. As the families make the decisions to migrate, or set sail on the ship, the message seems to be that they will carry the values of the country and all that it stands for with them, to reproduce them in the colonies. Webster and Collinson thus use the conventions of domestic genre painting to explore the impact of emigration on family life back home. In their paintings, the arrival of the emigrant’s letter complicates the settled nature of the cottage interiors. The artists thus probe how the textual cultures of emigration connect different spaces — and through encouraging the viewer to see a connection between colony and country, point to the ability of home to be made elsewhere.

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<sup>64</sup> Nead, *Myths*, p. 40.

<sup>65</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011), p. 1.

### Advertising Emigration

In both *A Letter from the Colonies* and *Answering the Emigrant's Letter*, the letters themselves cannot be read. Instead, they become part of the visual vocabulary of the paintings, a motif of mobility. By contrast, in Abraham Solomon's painting, *Second Class — the Parting* (Fig. 18) words become part of the fabric of the painting: one can clearly see the wording of the bills advertising emigration at the back of the painting.



Figure 18: Abraham Solomon, *Second Class – The Parting*, 1854, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 54.5 cm, Southampton Art Gallery, Southampton

In the words of the Gerard Curtis, the advertisements in the background of the painting are truly 'visual words', that is, words that are painted into the fabric of the picture. The scene shows the inside of a train carriage, where a widow has her arm around her young son. Opposite them sits her daughter. She looks at her son with concern, but her son looks at his elder sister, who looks back anxiously, a handkerchief in hand to wipe away her tears. His belongings are in a carpet bag with a tag on it and tied up in a bundle next to him. Next to it is his bedding. The three are caught in a triangle of gazes, oblivious to the man and woman, presumably a couple, who sit in the carriage behind them. The husband rests his arm on the back of his seat as he turns around to cast a sympathetic glance to the young boy. One critic suggested that

‘behind, in the next compartment, a sailor, seeing the thing with a practised glance, regards him with sympathy and kindness’.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, his wife, blushes slightly perhaps at the embarrassment with what she feels is her husband’s intrusion into a private, emotional family scene, and gracefully averts her eyes to look out of the carriage window. Outside, one can make out the ships in the harbour, a portent of what is to come.

It is, however, the advertising bills covering the back of the carriage that provide the painting with its context and give the spectator indications of where the young boy is headed. Over the top of the carriage is the sign ‘Australian Emigrants Should Be Provided With All Gouilding and Comp[any]. Implements For The Gold Diggings’. Below this is an advertisement of the same size for clothing: ‘Try The Monarch Cheap Clothing Mart For All Kinds Of Outfits For Emigrants At Messers Cuttwells and Comp[any]’. On the left of this advertisement is a smaller one advertising ‘Cutwells & Co Paletots &c Best In The World’,<sup>67</sup> and on the right, another advertising ‘Mens And Youths Garments Of Every Description’. One advertises ‘Hill Brothers Co’s Line Of Packets Established In 1845 For Sydney The Finest First Class Ship *Cleopatra* of 522 Tons Register’ and with a certain ‘William Shaw’ as the ‘Commander’ which is setting sail from ‘London Docks’. Another calls the attention of those who wish ‘To Sail Early In May For Port Philip Direct’ on the ‘The Splendid East Sailor Mediana’. The rest of the details on the ship and the captain are obscured by the woman’s head.

In *Advertising, Subjectivity and the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, Sara Thornton argues that advertising dramatically changed the cityscape and, by extension, the experience of walking on the streets. The amount of ‘printed matter that an average citizen might see on the streets of London and Paris grew vertiginously in the mid-nineteenth century, helped by improved printing technologies, cheaper paper and the thrust given to the advertising of commodities by the Great Exhibition of 1851’.<sup>68</sup> It was not just

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<sup>66</sup> ‘Royal Academy’, *Athenaeum*, 13 May 1854, p. 593.

<sup>67</sup> Paletots are a type of coat common in the nineteenth century.

<sup>68</sup> Sara Thornton, *Advertising, Subjectivity and the Nineteenth-Century Novel: Dickens, Balzac and the Language of the Walls* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 4.

walls that became covered in advertising: text was, ‘literally on the move’,<sup>69</sup> pasted on hoardings, on sandwich boards, on the sides of horse carriages and the inside of buses and along the tracks of railway platforms.<sup>70</sup> As John Orlando Parry’s *A London Street Scene* (Fig. 19) shows, the streets became crowded with bills and advertisements. When the space on any given surface filled up, new bills were posted over old ones which generated new readings and meanings.



Figure 19: John Orlando Parry, *A London Street Scene*, 1835, oil on canvas, private collection

Solomon’s *Second Class* demonstrates little of this over-pasting, but it picks up on the cacophony of messages that advertising necessarily set into play. Juxtaposed in between and next to the emigration advertisements, ordinary, everyday life goes on. The very first advertisement on the left of the spectator is for a product that advertises ‘No More Grey Hair’. Below the slogan, one can just about make out the figure of a woman

<sup>69</sup> Thornton, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> For visual examples of advertising in the city, see Diana Hindley, and Geoffrey Hindley, *Advertising in Victorian England, 1837–1901* (London: Wayland, 1972), Plates 1.1, 1.2, 1.5–1.8 and 1.10, [n.p.].

admiring her black locks.<sup>71</sup> Another advertises ‘New Year’s Gifts’ and ‘Presents for Children’, which indicate to the spectator the time of year that this scene takes place. The rest of the advertisement is obscured by the mother’s head. Through these advertisements, the discourse of emigration is shown to be, not distinct and apart from everyday life, but very much enmeshed in it. As Thornton argues, through the palimpsest that these advertisements created, a ‘story was being written on the walls which no one had begun and no one could end and which delivered up its message intermittently to those who wished to see it and were able to decipher it’.<sup>72</sup> The juxtaposition of these advertisements creates another layer of meaning: ‘No More Grey Hair’ promises youth, while the timing of ‘New Year’ speaks of new beginnings. Placed right above the heads of the young boy, these advertisements seem to reassure the spectator of the young boy’s success in the gold diggings. This promise of success, secreted away in the details of the painting mimics that of the emigrant’s letter in *A Letter from the Colonies*, which seems to emit light, and the idea of control and power through the map in *Answering the Emigrant’s Letter*. Furthermore, the advertisement for ‘Cowell’s Manufactory Watches & Clocks. Chronometer Makes To Her Majesty’ picks up on temporality: a theme that we have already seen is of particular concern in emigration painting. Most interesting, however, is the ‘Wanted’ advertisement for ‘A Few Fine Young Men To Enter The Honourable East India Service’ placed right above the young boy’s head<sup>73</sup> — the idea of men fulfilling the vision of colonial Britain. Thornton suggests that the streets, filled with advertising bills, become ‘a new space in which to dream, a space of fantasy’.<sup>74</sup> The advertising bills in Solomon’s painting bring

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<sup>71</sup> There is another person facing her in the painting, but it is not clear whether this is a gentleman who has also used the product, or whether the salesperson showing the lady in question how to use the product.

<sup>72</sup> Thornton, p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> The placement of the East India advert could suggest that the boy is in fact going to join the Company, but the fact that there are more emigration advertisements that take central place in the painting combined with the fact that the painting is dated 1854, so close after the gold discovery of 1851 supports my reading of the young boy as gold-digger.

<sup>74</sup> Thornton, p. 7. See also Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 58 for a reading of advertising as a visual consumption of place.

visions of the colonies into the enclosed space of the railway carriage and transform its space by projecting a fantasy of colonial success.

None of the artists studied in this chapter emigrated, nor is there any evidence that they were interested in promoting emigration as a solution to problems at home, as Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens were, which I explore in the next chapter. Nonetheless, their interest in painting emigration demonstrates the extent to which they were keen to engage with their social milieu. All the artists discussed in this chapter were working in the mid-century, when emigration was at one of its highest points in the century. While Brown's *The Last of England* is the only painting in this study to be inspired by an actual act of emigration, Webster and Redgrave were both working in and familiar with agricultural areas from which large numbers of people were emigrating. It is possible that Collinson may have known Brown through the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but regardless of whether or not he did, emigration remained a hugely important subject to him. Given how much the experience of emigration was mediated by and through text, it is unsurprising that text should become a central part of emigration painting's iconography. Collectively, these paintings absorbed how texts negotiated, crossed and collapsed distance, bringing distant places into contact with the known and familiar places at home. Simultaneously, however, they seem to display an unease with the ability of text to generate mobility: rather than emphatically stressing the inevitability of success in the colonies, the possibility of home at a distance is always hidden in the details under the apparent meaning of the arrival of an emigrant's letter, or a scene of departure. In the next chapter, I examine the ways in which the textual culture of emigration shaped the aesthetics of certain significant nineteenth-century novels. I focus on the works of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens. Whereas nineteenth-century painting produced an ambivalent aesthetic of mobility, Gaskell and Dickens's novels picked up on the stock images of successful emigration to the colonies that circulated in emigration literature.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Emigration Aesthetics:

#### *Martin Chuzzlewit, Mary Barton and David Copperfield*

‘Have you been in England?’ asked Martin.

‘In print I have, sir,’ said the General, ‘not otherwise. We air a reading people here, sir. You will meet with much information among us that will surprise you’.<sup>1</sup>

This brief exchange in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) between Martin and General Choke encapsulates many of the central concerns of emigration literature. The General’s answer to Martin, that he has been to England ‘in print’, points to the ability of places to travel through text and the ability of texts to mediate a sense of place. It highlights the ways in which places travel through texts as texts become caught up in intersecting and overlapping networks of circulation. The General knows too well that as places circulate through print, they open up a contested space as things shift and change. It does not occur to the unsuspecting Martin, however, that the information he comes across in emigration literature might ‘surprise’ him because it is in fact dubious *misinformation*.

As we have seen in this thesis so far, emigration literature is rife with concerns over its authenticity as editors and emigrants alike sought to prove to a suspicious public that their texts had not been tampered with. Negotiating the distance between Britain and her colonies is a key preoccupation of emigration literature. On the one hand, for readers who had yet to experience life in the bush first-hand, the geographical mobility of emigration literature enabled a means of knowing places through text and at a distance. Yet, on the other hand, this circulation of places through text is imbricated in an attempt to convince the audience that the text’s

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. by Margaret Cardwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; [1844]), p. 299. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

geographical mobility has not compromised its authenticity. In this chapter, I argue that this preoccupation with how to narrate distance shaped the aesthetics of certain significant mid-century novels. I focus on Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) and *David Copperfield* (1850) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848). In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley emigrate to the fictitious Eden in the United States; in *Mary Barton*, Mary and Jem Wilson emigrate to Toronto, Canada; and in *David Copperfield*, the Micawbers and Peggottys emigrate to Australia. It may seem odd to read the emigration in *Martin Chuzzlewit* alongside that in *Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield*. Not only is Martin's emigration framed within a critique of the States and her institutions, his emigration is neither permanent nor a success. Nonetheless, I have chosen to position these three texts alongside each other because in all three novels, emigration acquires a particular representational force: the places of settlement are more than a mere passing reference to somewhere that exists in the shadows of the novel, and instead are shown to impact upon the lives of the central characters in formative ways. All these novels were written at the time when both their authors were heavily interested in emigration as a means of social improvement: it is not surprising, therefore, that their works produced around this time should feature emigration in important ways.

In asserting the importance of emigration in the mid-century novel, this chapter seeks to revise contemporary scholarship that asserts emigration in the mid-century novel is a 'fiction of resolution', a quick solution for the 'problems of pervasive social uneasiness with which they [Gaskell and Dickens] engage'.<sup>2</sup> It argues against the notion that the novel provides a solution to the problems that it raises by having characters neatly disappear into the vast anonymous expanse of 'Empire' or other lands overseas.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, neither does this chapter seek to recuperate moments of emigration within the narrative fold by arguing that the 'liminality of emigration in the

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<sup>2</sup> Deirdre David, *Fictions of Resolution in Three Victorian Novels: North and South, Our Mutual Friend, Daniel Deronda* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. x.

<sup>3</sup> See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p. 102; pp. 106–114.

Victorian novel belies [its] centrality'.<sup>4</sup> It contends that the point of interest lies not so much in how 'central' or how 'marginalized' emigration is to the plot, but in the aesthetic force that emigration literature acquires in these novels. Emigration literature offered Gaskell and Dickens a profound way of imagining the circulation of people and print between Britain and the colonies. In their novels, characters circulate: they move to settlements elsewhere, sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently, and sometimes they come back to England to visit. In the novels discussed here, this demographic mobility is always accompanied by the textual culture of emigration, be they maps, letters, or periodicals. The fact that the novel should represent emigration through its textual culture points to the deep intertwined relationship between emigration and the written word. In their interrogation of the distance that separates emigrant characters from their friends in Britain, the novels discussed here draw on the motifs of emigration literature, such as the successful labourer, the lying text, and homesickness. But, in a curious act of doubling, as the novels interrogate how emigration literature mediates a sense of place, the texts of emigration literature themselves become a motif in the novel. The colonial periodical, the emigrant's letter and the map for example become motifs that are used again and again in the novels discussed here to probe how emigration literature projects a sense of place and maintains relationships across time and space. Thus, the novels both draw on the motifs of emigration literature *and* use emigration literature as a motif to shape its inquiry into how people become connected into a global network of migrations.

### **Emigration as Philanthropy**

In 1842, Dickens returned from his first trip to America, a tour that had lasted about five months. As Claire Tomalin argues, he had thought that a trip to America would relieve him from 'the pressure of constant writing', 'give himself a mental shake' and provide him with the opportunity to 'gather enough material from his travels to make a

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<sup>4</sup> Janet C. Myers, *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 3.

book'.<sup>5</sup> While the trip provided him with material enough for two books, his travelogue *American Notes* (1842) which he published four months after his return to England, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the trip had nonetheless fallen far short of Dickens's expectations. The pressure of being a celebrity, coupled with the refusal of the Americans to take the issue of international copyright law seriously, quickly led to soured relations between Dickens and the American public. By the end of the five-month tour, Dickens was looking forward to coming home. The voyage back opened his eyes to what the working classes endured when they emigrated across the Atlantic. In *American Notes* (1842), he notices the steerage passengers, about a hundred people, living in 'a little world of poverty':

as we came to know individuals among them by sight [...] we became curious to know their histories, and with what expectations they had gone out to America, and on what errands they were going home, and what their circumstances were.<sup>6</sup>

Upon inquiring, he finds that

Some of them had been in America but three days, some but three months, and some had gone out in the last voyage of that very ship in which they were now returning home. Others had sold their clothes to raise the passage-money, and had hardly rags to cover them; others had no food, and lived upon the charity of the rest [...] After hoarding, and borrowing, and begging, and selling everything to pay the passage, they had gone out to New York, expecting to find its streets paved with gold; and had found them paved with very hard and real stones. Enterprise was dull; labourers were not wanted; jobs of work were to be got, but the payment was not. They were coming back, even poorer than they went (244-5).

This passage strongly resonates with scenes in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where Martin is obliged to pawn his clothes and 'reduce his wardrobe to the narrowest limits consistent

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<sup>5</sup> Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking, 2011), p. 127. The resulting works were *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. To cover the expenses of the trip to America, Dickens was paid in advance for 'the American book and the Monthly Work'. See *The Letters of Charles Dickens: 1842–1843*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols (Clarendon: Oxford, 1965–2002), III (1974), p. 1 [1 January 1842].

<sup>6</sup> Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (London: Penguin, 2000; [1842]), p. 244. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

with decent respectability' (193) in order to pay for his passage out, and returns poorer than he was when he went away. Given the tenor of the rest of *American Notes*, it is interesting that his comments on the voyage out in it are not embedded in a critique of America or the myth of the American dream, but on the 'whole system of shipping and conveying these unfortunate persons', which 'stands in need of thorough revision' (244–245). In short, he lays the blame for the mismanagement of steerage passengers at the door of the British government:

If any class deserve to be protected and assisted by the Government, it is that class who are banished from their native land in search of the bare means of subsistence [...] The law is bound, at least among the English side, to see that too many of them are not put on board any ship: and that their accommodations are decent: not demoralising and profligate. It is bound, too, in common humanity, to declare that no man shall be taken on board without his stock of provisions being previously inspected by some proper officer, and pronounced moderately sufficient for his support upon the voyage (244-5).

This last concern is, no doubt, driven by the story of a man who 'was discovered nearly at the end of the voyage, not before' who 'had had no sustenance whatever but the bones and scraps of fat he took from the plates used in the after-cabin dinner, when they were put out to be washed' (244). Dickens had no hand to play in the various reforms of the Passenger Acts through the 1840s that saw steerage conditions gradually improve.<sup>7</sup> However, the humanitarian concern in the passages above indicates not only that by the early 1840s he was forming an interest in the fates of those who emigrated, but that he also recognised the need for appropriate legal measures to be in place in order to provide those less well off with a safe and healthy passage out.

By 1846, Dickens would solidify these concerns into a grand master plan of emigration that paid as much attention to the voyage out as it did to ensuring the success of emigrants once they were in the colonies. In 1847, with the financial support of Angela Burdett-Coutts, he set up his emigration scheme in Shepherd's Bush, at

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<sup>7</sup> Oliver MacDonagh has three chapters charting the changes made to legislation of the Passenger Acts during the 1840s in *A Pattern of Government Growth, 1800–1860: The Passenger Acts and their Enforcement* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1961), pp. 138–221.

Urania Cottage, a 'Home for Homeless Women'.<sup>8</sup> The Home took in young, fallen women who desired to better themselves and had good characters, kept them for a year and then organised their emigration to Australia. However, as Jenny Hartley argues, 'it is not the fallen women themselves who furnish the fuel for Dickens's first bright vision. He starts, not with the woman [...] nor even with what the home will be like, but with the end-point of emigration'.<sup>9</sup> In his letter to Burdett-Coutts he explained that he found the 'question of sending out women to different settlements [...] one of very great importance'.<sup>10</sup> His idea was that women could be sent away to 'distant parts of the World' 'for marriage, with the greatest hope for their future families, and with the greatest service to the existing male population, whether expatriated from England or born there'.<sup>11</sup> In an advertisement for Urania Cottage in *Household Words* in 1853, Dickens reiterated that his hope was to 'replace young women who had already lost their character and lapsed into guilt, in a situation of hope', and to 'give them an opportunity of flying from crime when they and it stood face to face'.<sup>12</sup> Australia was an apt end-destination for two reasons. Firstly, Dickens's fear was that if he sent them to Canada, the women would be able to travel down the land and settle in America. Although this was a familiar route that many British emigrants took without necessarily considering it to be a political statement, Dickens was loathe to populate a country which he so vehemently disliked. Secondly, the distance between Britain and Australia also provided these women with the perfect opportunity to begin life again. One of his own criticisms of the current system of imprisoning fallen women, as he explained to Burdett-Coutts, was that a 'kind of penitence is bred in our prisons and purgatories just now, which is a pretty penitence inside the walls, but fades into nothing when it comes into contact with worldly realities'.<sup>13</sup> His emigration scheme would give the girls the 'power of beginning life

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Dickens, 'Home for Homeless Women', *Household Words*, 23 April 1850, p. 169.

<sup>9</sup> Jenny Hartley, *Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women* (London: Methuen, 2008), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> *The Letters of Charles Dickens: 1844–1846*, ed. by Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols (Clarendon: Oxford, 1965–2002), IV (1977), p. 556 [26 May 1846.]

<sup>11</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, IV p. 552 [26 May 1846].

<sup>12</sup> Dickens, 'Homes', p. 169.

<sup>13</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, IV p. 588 [25 July 1846].

anew, in a world perfectly untried by them'. It would constitute 'an effectual detaching [...] from old associates, and from the chances of recognition and challenge', which 'is most desirable to be, somehow or other, attained'.<sup>14</sup> Dickens 'attains' this 'detaching' by relocating the girls overseas. In his plan, emigration is synonymous with the idea of new beginnings: Australia provides these girls with the anonymity that they need in order to begin their lives again.

In 1850, Dickens's efforts in helping young girls emigrate caught the attentions of Elizabeth Gaskell. In January of that year, she had come across a young sixteen-year-old girl by the name of Pasley in the New Bailey Prisons in Manchester. Pasley's history as Gaskell paints it to Dickens is bleak, but probably one that he was familiar with:

She is the daughter of an Irish clergyman who died when she was two years old; but even before that her mother had shown most complete indifference to her; and soon after the husband's death, she married again, keeping her child out at nurse. The girl's uncle had her placed at 6 years old in the Dublin school for orphan daughters of the clergy; and when she was about 14, she was apprenticed to an Irish dress-maker here, of very great reputation for fashion. Last September but one this dress-maker failed, and had to dismiss all her apprentices; she placed this girl with a woman who occasionally worked for her, and who has since succeeded to her business; this woman was very profligate and connived at the girl's seduction by a surgeon in the neighbourhood who was called in when the poor creature was ill.<sup>15</sup>

Pasley writes to her mother, and, 'while awaiting the answer went into the penitentiary', where

in desperation she listened to a woman, who had obtained admittance \to the penitentiary/ solely as it turned out to decoy girls into her mode of life, and left with her; & for four months she has led the most miserable life! in the hopes, as she tells me, of killing herself, for 'no one had ever cared for her in this world,' – she drank, 'wishing it might be poison', pawned every article of her clothing – and at last stole.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, IV p. 555 [26 May 1846].

<sup>15</sup> *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. by J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 98 [8 January 1850].

<sup>16</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, pp. 98–99 [8 January 1850].

Assuring Dickens that Pasley ‘pines to redeem herself’, Gaskell paints the image of a ‘young child [...] with a wild wistful look in her eyes, as if searching for the kindness she has never known’: rhetoric that was clearly designed to ensure that Dickens will look kindly upon Pasley’s situation. Gaskell’s letter to Dickens is in the nick of time: a few days after writing this letter, Pasley will be released, and lying in wait are ‘two of the worst women in the town who have been in prison with her, intending to way-lay her’ and lead her back to walking the streets.<sup>17</sup> Dickens’s comments on the necessity of placing fallen women away from temptation once they are released from prison are strong evidence that he would have recognised and sympathised with Gaskell’s concerns.

Gaskell’s hope is that Dickens will be able to provide her with the practical information that she needs. She assures him that Pasley ‘agrees to emigrate to Australia’, and asks him how he sends out his girls from Urania Cottage, for ‘the account of common emigration ships is so bad one would not like to expose her to such chances of corruption’. She plies him with questions: Are the girls from Urania Cottage sent out ‘[u]nder the charge of a matron? And might she [Pasley] be included among them? [...] how am I to manage the voyage? And how soon will a *creditable* ship sail?’<sup>18</sup> Dickens wrote back the next day, with the news that he feared Burdett-Coutts ‘would not like to take the responsibility of sending out this girl, or allowing her to accompany any of our people; nor could I urge it upon her if I saw her inclined to object, because we have, within our knowledge, some very strange and sad experiences’. Nonetheless, he offered to ‘communicate with her [Burdett-Coutts] today, and write to you again, tomorrow’ with any advice that Burdett-Coutts offered.<sup>19</sup> A few days later, Gaskell acts upon ‘a very wise suggestion [...] from Miss Coutts’, and finds ‘a man and his wife

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<sup>17</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, p. 99 [8 January 1850].

<sup>18</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, p. 99 [8 January 1850].

<sup>19</sup> *The Letters of Charles Dickens: 1850–1852*, ed. by Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson and Nina Burgis, 12 vols. (Clarendon: Oxford, 1965–2002), VI (1988), pp. 6–7 [9 January 1850]. Gaskell had told Dickens in her letter that Pasley had a £30 inheritance from her father; Dickens also cited this as a reason for his ‘doubt’ that Burdett-Coutts would ‘admit [Pasley], as she is not altogether a helpless outcast, but may get abroad without her [Burdett-Coutts’s] help’, p. 7.



going to the Cape, who will take loving charge of her; and sail in February'.<sup>20</sup> There is no more mention of Pasley in Gaskell's letters. We have no idea how her life pans out in South Africa, or even whether she made the trip there. Her emigration, if it ever took place, may have been the route to further depression and misery, or it may well have been the escape that Gaskell and Dickens envisaged in their letters. There is no way of telling.

Pasley is the only instance of emigration in Gaskell's letters where we can glean something of a life story, but Gaskell's letters are scattered with references to other instances of emigration. She writes of her delight at having found a 'whole *nest* of good ladies in London, who say they will at any time help me in similar cases' to Pasley's,<sup>21</sup> and of having received 'the kind offices from Mrs Chisholm in helping out a family of emigrants', and of writing to the 'Plymouth Ladies', a group of women in Plymouth who ran an emigration scheme.<sup>22</sup> The repeated reference to people who were directly involved in emigration suggests that, although she may not have been involved in setting up an entire scheme in the way that Dickens was, Gaskell regularly sought out opportunities to help members of the working-class move to the colonies.<sup>23</sup>

It is clear from Gaskell and Dickens's philanthropy that they saw emigration as a viable option for those who ostensibly had little future in England.<sup>24</sup> They share a rhetoric of new beginnings and renewed hope in the colonies when they talk about the prospects of the emigrant women they help. For both authors, the concerns with getting the conditions of the voyage right, and providing the right kinds of support once the women were in the colonies were vital for the success of the girls'

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<sup>20</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, p. 101 [24 January 1850].

<sup>21</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, p. 101 [24 January 1850].

<sup>22</sup> Gaskell, *Letters*, p. 100 [12 January 1850].

<sup>23</sup> Interestingly enough, Esther, Mary's fallen aunt in *Mary Barton*, dies before she can emigrate to the colonies with Mary and Jem to share in their new life. Whatever Gaskell's philanthropic work might have endorsed, in her fiction, all her fallen women either die, like Esther and Ruth, or live half-lives secluded away from society, like Lizzie Leigh. The representation of fallen women and emigration in the nineteenth-century novel is an important topic in its own right and constitutes an entirely separate study.

<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, as Judith Walkowitz points out, for most prostitutes, selling sex 'represented only a temporary stage in their life' and the possibility to move out of prostitution was open to some. See *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 196.

emigration. Gaskell and Dickens's efforts were part of a wider effort at the time which encouraged single female women to emigrate, both in order to solve the perceived gender imbalance between Britain and her colonies, and also in order to alleviate the unemployment of women at home. Their philanthropy conceived of emigration as a solution to social problems facing Britain. It took what they perceived to be vulnerable women away from a life of prostitution, alcoholism and theft, and offered a new and better one overseas in its stead.

For critics such as Raymond Williams, the novel's use of emigration as a solution to the problems it raises constitutes an act of imaginative failure. In *The Country and the City*, he argues that 'in the industrial novels of the mid-nineteenth century [...] the idea of emigration to the colonies was seized as a solution to the poverty and overcrowding of the cities'. He points to *Wuthering Heights*, *Great Expectations*, *Alton Locke* and 'many other novels of the period', where emigration is

a way out from the struggle within English society to [...] distant lands; a way out that is not only the escape to a new land but, as in some of the real history, an acquisition of fortune to return and re-enter the struggle at a higher point [...] The lands of the Empire were an idyllic retreat, an escape from debt or shame, or an opportunity for making a fortune.<sup>25</sup>

In his view, *Mary Barton* is one of these novels: it 'ends in Canada, in a mood of rural idyll and escape as powerful as any of the earlier English images'.<sup>26</sup> In the case of *Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield*, Williams's words seem to ring true: Mary and Jem, the Micawbers and the Peggottys all emigrate to the colonies to build happy and successful lives. The reading of emigration in novels as an 'escape' has gained currency since Williams initially proposed it. Lynette Felber, for example, echoes Williams's language when she argues that the ending of *Mary Barton*, where the narrator looks out to Jem and Mary's settlement in Canada is 'underdeveloped and lacks continuity with the primary narrative' and is an 'equivocal' 'solution to the industrial problem' of the

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<sup>25</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011), p. 281.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, p. 281.

novel.<sup>27</sup> Grace Moore similarly argues that Gaskell ‘neatly evaded the problem’ of ‘how to end *Mary Barton*’ by ‘despatching [Jem] and his new wife to the colonies’.<sup>28</sup> Emigration in Dickens’s early works is, for her, ‘little more than a useful repository to contain a number of social problems’. Sending his problematic characters off to the colonies is a plot which ‘does not differ significantly from the official government policy of “shovelling out paupers”’. In other words, in the novel, emigration is no more than ‘a device to facilitate narrative closure’.<sup>29</sup> The common thread in the body of such criticism seems to be that the ‘escape’ of the novels lies not so much in the *character’s* escape to new lands, but in the *author’s* escape in not providing a more local solution to the problems that their novels raise.

It is accurate that Gaskell and Dickens saw emigration as a legitimate means of improving the lives of people who ostensibly had little future if they remained in England, and that in their novels, emigration is frequently posed as a solution to the problems the characters face in their personal lives. However, far from being an authorial escape, emigration in Gaskell and Dickens’s novels is a means of engaging with a broader set of questions regarding the cultural work of emigration literature. In their novels, the authors both use emigration literature to interrogate the ability of texts to mediate a sense of place. They probe how the global circulation of emigration literature maintains the connections between people who have moved away from each other. And, in drawing on emigration literature, they demonstrate the pervasive and deep-rooted hold that it had in shaping the cultural imagination.

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<sup>27</sup> Lynette Felber, ‘Gaskell’s Industrial Idylls: Ideology and Formal Incongruence in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*’, *Clio*, 18 (1988), 55–72 (p. 60).

<sup>28</sup> Grace Moore, *Dickens and Empire: Discourses of Class, Race and Colonialism in the Works of Charles Dickens* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 11. In Moore’s view, by 1850, ‘the time of David Copperfield, Dickens’s novels had become increasingly uncomfortable with contrived, conventional narrative closure’, p. 10. Moore notes that ‘after the would-be bank robber Tom Gradgrind’s flight to the United States at the end of *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens never used emigration to resolve a plot again’ (p. 11).

<sup>29</sup> Moore, p. 7.

### ***Martin Chuzzlewit: A Culture of Suspicion***

Written and published in 1844 after his return from America, *Martin Chuzzlewit* is one of the few novels in which Dickens follows his protagonist overseas. Upon learning that he has fallen out of favour with Mr. Pecksniff, the younger Martin Chuzzlewit decides to emigrate to America, in the hope of returning with enough money and marrying his grandfather's ward, Mary. As he makes his preparations for the voyage, Mark Tapley arrives at his lodgings, offering to accompany him on his adventures. Their stay in America is miserable: falling foul of the country's newspapers and print system, which Dickens paints as corrupt, they travel up the country to Eden, a place sold to them as a thriving town, but which is in fact, a malaria-ridden swamp. First Martin falls ill, then Mark. Eventually both recover sufficiently to come back to England.

The American chapters of the novel have generated much interest, but perhaps the most unusual reading of them comes from Nancy Metz, who suggests that through the emigration scenes, Dickens 'hoped to draw public attention to the most common "preventable" mistakes made by emigrants'.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the novel acts as a pseudo-emigration guide for its readers:

it is clear that Dickens composed the Eden subplot, at least in part, as an elaborate study in the "How Not to Do It" of trans-Atlantic emigration. Martin and Mark systematically illustrate through their decisions, or observe in the choices made by others the consequences of all that the handbooks typically warn against. In the process and by implication, the American chapters give dramatic structure to a wide range of useful information and advice: how much the passage cost and how long it took, which provisions were needed, what dangers and contingencies were involved in the journey, where to seek employment on arrival, when to travel and where to settle, which skills were necessary for clearing the land and subduing an unclaimed frontier.<sup>31</sup>

In Metz's reading, the novel itself participates in the truth economy of emigration literature by acting as a kind of emigration guide, providing instruction and information for readers intending to emigrate. While this is a compelling reading, it in no way takes into account the context of *Martin Chuzzlewit*'s publication and Dickens's

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<sup>30</sup> Nancy Aycock Metz, "FEVERED with Anxiety for Home": Nostalgia and the "New" Emigrant in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dickens Quarterly*, 18 (2001), 49–61 (p. 60).

<sup>31</sup> Metz, 49–61 (pp. 51–2).

overall dislike of the States. Safely on board the ship with all his luggage in order, and before the ship set sail, he is filled with excitement, ‘in the best of spirits, and full of hope’.<sup>32</sup> However, the pressure of being a celebrity, of being followed, autographed, painted and sculpted soon took its toll. In his letters, he writes of having ‘almost paralyzed his right arm, by constantly shaking hands’.<sup>33</sup> In addition to gathering new material for a book and taking a break from writing during his trip to America, Dickens was ‘intending to raise the question of international copyright and the pirating of his books in America, which deprived him of the income on which he as a writer depended’.<sup>34</sup> His letters at this time are filled with his frustration at not having his concerns over what he called, ‘the unjust and iniquitous state of the law in that country, in reference to the wholesale piracy of British works’ taken seriously.<sup>35</sup> Unfavourable reviews in the American press of *American Notes* did little to abate his anger and frustration.<sup>36</sup> As Tomalin argues, in the American chapters of *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) Dickens found another opportunity to further emphasise all that he disliked about America, ‘pointing out, with savage humour’ the ‘corrupt newspapers, violence, slavery, spitting, boastfulness and self-righteousness, obsession with business and money, greedy, graceless eating, hypocrisy about supposed equality, the crude lionizing of visitors’.<sup>37</sup> Even before Martin and Mark’s ship ‘touched the shore’, she is ‘boarded and over-run’ by ‘a legion’ of ‘news-boys’, shouting out the news they had on sale. The names of the papers — the Sewer, Stabber, Family Spy, Private Listener, Peeper and Keyhole Reporter — say it all about Dickens’s intense dislike of the American newspaper publishing industry (220). A few pages later, when Martin meets Mr. Jefferson Brick, War Correspondent of the *Rowdy Journal*, he asks him ‘whether this paper of ours [...] deals in forgery? In forged letters [...] solemnly purporting to

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<sup>32</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, III, p. 10 [3 January 1842].

<sup>33</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, III, p. 151 [22 March 1842].

<sup>34</sup> Tomalin, p. 127.

<sup>35</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, III, p. 257 [7 July 1842].

<sup>36</sup> See Robert McParland, *Charles Dickens’s American Audience* (Plymouth: Lexington, 2010) for a study of Dickens’s critical reception of America, particularly pp. 67–82.

<sup>37</sup> Tomalin, p. 141.

have been written at recent periods by living men' (227). No doubt, this is a reference to 'a crudely forged letter attributed to him in a New York Newspaper'.<sup>38</sup>

It is hardly likely, then, that *Martin Chuzzlewit* is an instruction to readers on how to settle properly in America. If anything, in order for Dickens to adequately show his disillusionment with the country, Martin's plan of settlement must come to nothing: his failed emigration is imbricated in a critique of America and her institutions. Metz argues that Martin and Mark's failure is 'the predictable outcome of a long chain of judgement errors made by a pair of novice travellers'.<sup>39</sup> On the contrary, I argue that Martin and Mark are not entirely unsuspecting travellers. When Mark cheerfully tells Martin that he has heard a 'military officer' say that the 'Walley of Eden' is filled with 'fleas', 'wampires', and venomous 'snakes', he hastens to reassure him that the officer was most likely 'one of another Company I dare say, and only made up the story that we might go to his Eden, and not the opposition one' (295). Martin tells General Choke that he is willing to settle in Eden 'subject to your opinion and the agent's advice' (299). It is 'serious news' to him to hear that the General is in fact 'a member of the Eden Land Corporation [him]self' as he had previously hoped that he might obtain some 'disinterested advice' (299). Despite his 'secret misgivings on the subject', Martin agrees to 'see the agent, see the maps, and plans' and then 'conclude to go or stay' (300). Sure enough, when they reach the office, a map of Eden, 'a great plan which occupied one whole side of the office', catches his eye (304). Eden comes across as a 'flourishing city', an 'architectural city!' where there are 'banks, churches, cathedrals, market-places, factories, hotels, stores, mansions, wharves; an exchange, a theatre; public buildings of all kinds, down to the office of the *Eden Stinger*, a daily journal; all faithfully depicted in the view before them' (307). The original illustration by Phiz, 'The Thriving City of Eden as it Appeared on Paper', shows Martin and Mark standing enthralled in front of the map, while the emigration agent, Scadder — a gaunt man with a knowing smirk around his mouth — lurks in the background, smoking his pipe (Fig. 20).

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<sup>38</sup> Tomalin, p. 141.

<sup>39</sup> Metz, (49–61), p. 52.

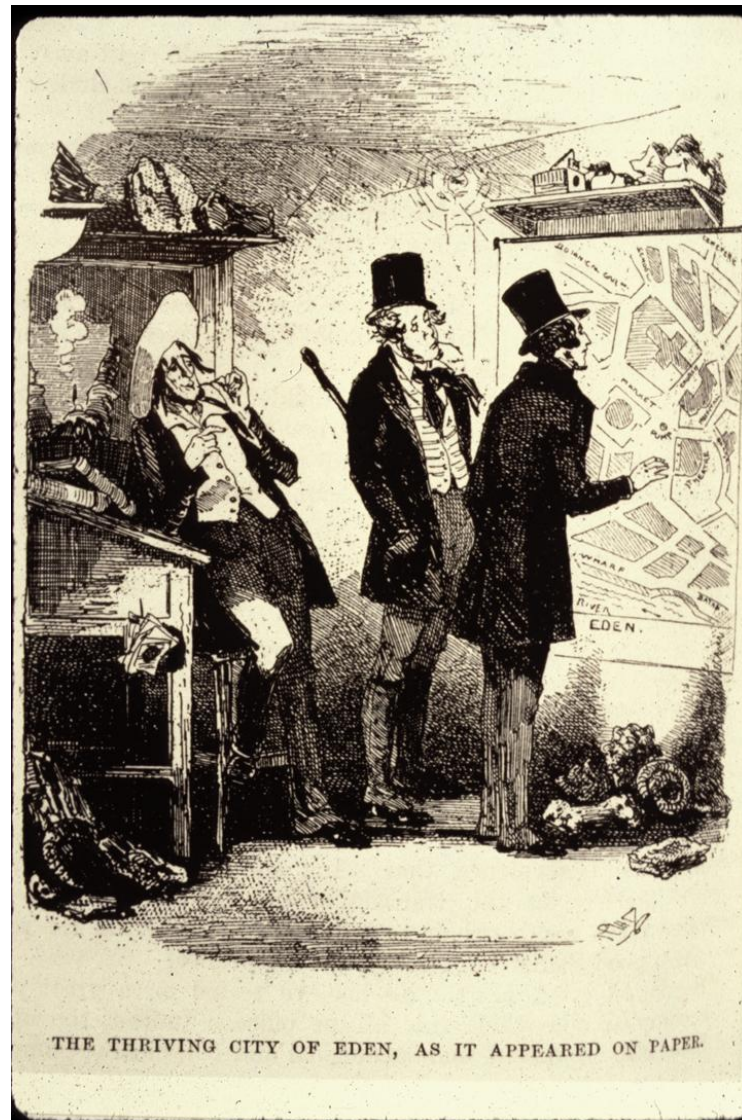


Figure 20: Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), *The Thriving City of Eden as it Appeared on Paper*, September 1843

The map of Eden is not unusual in any way — like many of the maps of new settlements, it has a planned infrastructure and well developed roads.<sup>40</sup> There are signs for a botanical garden, school, cemetery, hospital, theatre, chapel, wharf, baths and river. Predictably, at the centre of the town is a church and water pump. Yet when they reach Eden, the ‘monotonous desolation of the scene’ strikes them:

A flat morass, bestrewn with fallen timber; a marsh on which the good growth of the earth seemed to have been wrecked and cast away, that

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<sup>40</sup> Phiz’s illustration of Eden is similar to the maps that John Galt drew for his city, Guelph.

from its decomposing ashes vile and ugly things might rise; where the very trees took the aspect of huge weeds, begotten of the slime from which they were sprung, by the hot sun that burnt them up; where fatal maladies, seeking whom they might infect, came forth at night, in misty shapes, and creeping out upon the water, hunted them like spectres until day; where even the blessed sun, shining down on festering elements of corruption and disease, became a horror; this was the realm of Hope through which they moved (325).

The accompanying illustration by Phiz, 'The Thriving City of Eden as it Appeared in Fact', shows a dejected Martin, sitting next to a log stump with a few sketches on it, with his head in his hands looking out over the swamp (Fig. 21).



Figure 21: Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), *The Thriving City of Eden as it Appeared in Fact*, September 1843



In true settler mode, Mark grips onto the branch of a tree, with an axe (a symbol of the settling emigrant) in his left hand, as if he is about to start felling the tree. Two notices on the two log huts behind them show that one is the office of ‘Chuzzlewit & Co. Architects and Surveyors’ and the other is the ‘Bank and National Credit Office’. Amidst the gloom of the swamp, these two log huts are the only references to the organised, ‘thriving’ city that Martin and Mark saw on the map of Eden in Scadder’s office. The irony of the situation is clear — apart from a couple of trees in the background, there is nothing to fell and no land to clear, because most of it is swampy marshland, unfit for settlement.

In Scadder’s office, Mark realises that the map is a poor semblance of the truth when Scadder admits that the market-place — and indeed, many of the public buildings — ‘ain’t built’ yet (307). ‘The soil being very fruitful, public buildings grow spontaneous, perhaps’ (307), Mark comments sarcastically, hoping to draw Martin’s attention to the contradictions in Scadder’s account of Eden. Scadder, in fact, is not an outright cheat. He tells Martin the truth when Martin asks if there are ‘several architects there’, answering that there ‘ain’t a single one’ (307). He is reluctant to sell them the land, ‘at one time requesting them to think of it, and call again in a week or a fortnight; at another, predicting that they wouldn’t like it; at another, offering to retract and let them off, and muttering strong imprecations upon the folly of the General’ (308-9). Martin’s own preliminary caution, and Mark’s subsequent distrust show that the two participate in the culture of suspicion that emigration literature produced and was embedded in. Yet, this does not prevent Martin from being misled: he buys into the version of Eden that the map projects notwithstanding all the markers around him.

The map of Eden fits into a wider concern of the novel on the nature of texts and their ability to seduce the reader into believing that they are true. Merry, Pecksniff’s younger daughter, tries to pacify her drunken husband Jonas that she has been reading ‘all night long’ while sitting up for him: ‘The strangest story, Jonas! And true, the book says’. Jonas replies:

Was there anything in it about a man’s being determined to conquer his wife, break her spirit, bend her temper, crush all her humours like so

many nutshells? [...] That'll be a true story though, before long; for all the book says nothing about it. It's a lying book, I see. A fit book for a lying reader (395).

By their very nature, books can seduce people into buying and believing them. On his visit to Salisbury, Tom Pinch takes a walk among the markets and shops, only to come across bookshops, 'whence a pleasant smell of paper freshly pressed came issuing forth':

And in the window were the spick-and-span new works from London, with the title-pages, and sometimes even the first page of the first chapter, laid wide open: tempting unwary men to begin to read the book, and then, in the impossibility of turning over, to rush blindly in, and buy it! (64).

The notion of men being seduced by the materiality of the book and 'rushing blindly in' to buy it shows how the commodity status of the book is secured through the book's appeal to the senses. The first part of this thesis established that the authenticity effect played an integral part in the commodification of certain texts of emigration literature. The first and third chapters have shown that the fear of misinformation is a constant theme of emigration literature: *Martin Chuzzlewit* picks up on the idea of the misrepresentations and anxieties in print and relates them to the context of emigration.

If the map of Eden sets into circulation one set of images of emigration, Martin sets another into circulation upon his return, talking about the place 'in pretty strong terms' (459). In doing so, Martin participates in the oral circulation of narratives that led him to emigrate in the first place. The map is the only piece of 'information' that Martin reads in his decision to emigrate. He reads little else by way of handbooks, letters or guides. Interestingly, however, much of the information and ideas that he gleans is through word of mouth and through stories of *oral* communication. It is significant, for example, that a few pages before he decides to up and leave for America, he hears John Westlock say that 'I feel sorry that I didn't yield to an impulse I often had, as a boy, of running away from him [Pecksniff] and going abroad'. When Martin questions, 'Why abroad?', Westlock replies, 'In search [...] of the livelihood that I couldn't have earned at home. There would have been something spirited in that' (174). Martin's sudden decision to emigrate is driven no doubt by his own desire to

carry out something as 'spirited'. A few pages later, after he takes his decision to travel to America, he comes across a coach guard who tells him of a certain 'Lummy Ned of the Light Salisbury' who 'had set up in the public line here, and couldn't meet his engagements, so he cut off to Liverpool one day, without saying anything about it, and went and shipped himself for the U-nited States' (189). Martin takes a 'sudden interest' (188), and asks the coach guard 'several questions', all of which are of practical importance, such as

how long had the fortunate guard of the Light Salisbury been in crossing the Atlantic; at what time of year he had sailed; what was the name of the ship in which he had made the voyage; how much had he paid for the passage-money; did he suffer greatly from sea-sickness? (189).

The coach guard provides ready answers, but unbeknownst to Martin, 'his friend possessed little or no information' on 'these points of detail'; thus 'either answering obviously at random, or acknowledging that he had never heard, or had forgotten' (189). The circulation of oral narratives of emigration is also evidently important, but the novel registers the ways in which these can be just as false as textual ones.

Achieving total objectivity when it comes to representing distant places, and producing an objective account of how to emigrate are almost impossible. There is not a single source in the novel that Martin goes to that provides him with the correct information.

Martin's emigration to America fails in material terms, and '[i]n health and fortune, prospect and resource, they came back poorer men than they had gone away' (471). Nonetheless, the trip has a lasting influence on his character and outlook on life. Firstly, he learns how not to be selfish in America. The 'knowledge of himself' and his selfishness finally dawns upon him. '[I]n the hideous solitude of that most hideous place', 'he felt and knew the failing of his life, and saw distinctly what an ugly spot it was'. 'Eden was a hard school to learn so hard a lesson in; but there were teachers in the swamp and thicket, and the pestilential air, who had a searching method of their own' (452). Secondly, moving away from England teaches Martin the value of being at home and what home actually means:

Often at night when Mark and Martin were alone, and lying down to sleep, they spoke of home, familiar places, houses, roads, and people whom they knew; sometimes in the lively hope of seeing them again,

and sometimes with a sorrowful tranquillity, as if that hope were dead (454).

He realises that ‘though home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit answered to, in strongest conjuration’ (471). Here, Dickens is clearly drawing on the homesickness he experienced on his trip to America. In May, a couple of months before he arrived back home, he wrote to John Forster,

As the time grows nearer, we get FEVERED with anxiety for home...Kiss our darlings for us. We shall soon meet, please God, and be happier and merrier than ever we were, in all our lives...Oh home-home-home-home-home-home-HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!.<sup>41</sup>

While Martin’s settlement may have failed in material terms, nonetheless, it has taught him important lessons which have a greater staying power.

Thus, in his depiction of Eden in the America chapters of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens draws upon stock characters and tropes in the literary culture of settler emigration. We need only to cast half a glance backwards over this thesis to discover that Dickens’s character and tropes in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, such as the scheming Land Company, the lying agents, the false representations of settlements are all motifs that occur again and again in emigration literature. Think back, for example, to James and Harriot Parks in the first chapter of this thesis who warn against further family members relying on ‘Mr. Becks’ if they want any edible food on the voyage out, or to the third chapter, where Moodie expresses her intense dislike of Cattermole for circulating propaganda in her home town.<sup>42</sup> Thus, while the emigration scenes of *Martin Chuzzlewit* are a critique of America and her institutions, nonetheless, they register a wider preoccupation at the time surrounding the veracity of emigration literature and its ability to project visions of places that readers had no practical experience of.

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<sup>41</sup> Dickens, *Letters*, III, p. 248 [26 May 1842].

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter One, ‘Disseminating Information’.

**Mary Barton: Recreating the Knowable Community**

If Dickens draws on the motifs of emigration literature to shape his discourse of emigration in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, in *Mary Barton* Gaskell uses representations of the emigrant's letter as an endorsement of the emigrant's success. At the end of *Mary Barton*, the narrator projects her gaze outwards, onto a small settlement in Canada:

I see a long low wooden house, with room enough and to spare. The old primeval trees are felled and gone for many a mile around; one alone remains to overshadow the gable-end of the cottage. There is a garden around the dwelling, and far beyond that stretches an orchard. The glory of an Indian summer is over all, making the heart leap at the sight of its gorgeous beauty.<sup>43</sup>

The narration shifts in both tone and style here to narrate Jem and Mary's Canadian life. The narrator projects her gaze from England to the colonies to observe a scene of perfect domesticity: 'At the door of the house, looking towards the town, stands Mary, watching the return of her husband from his daily work; and while she watches, she listens, smiling' at her son Johnnie singing a ditty around her (392). After the industrial strife and the melodrama of the novel, the ending in Canada offers the reader a scene of untroubled contentment. Gaskell had never been to Canada, and Canada had never held a sway over her imagination in the way that the States had.<sup>44</sup> Her image of settler life is drawn from contemporary accounts of the Canadian bush circulating either as oral narratives, or through print. While Gaskell's depiction of life in Canada seems to offer Mary and Jem a solid stability in comparison to the turbulence of Manchester, it does not posit the colony as a place unchanged by the vicissitudes of time. Through the image of the 'felled' 'primeval' trees, Gaskell depicts the colony as a place that has been worked on by man, not as a place of pristine untouched nature. Clearing the bush is one of the first tasks of settlement, and in doing so, Jem has turned the unruly, wild landscape into a suitable place to live.

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<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, ed. by Macdonald Daly (London: Penguin, 1996; [1848]), p. 392. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Gaskell's letters to her American friend, Charles Eliot Norton, *Letters*, pp. 606–611 [5 April 1860]).

Through the scene of Jem and Mary in Canada, Gaskell echoes an image that was frequently used in contemporary debates surrounding emigration. Her image of man having tamed a rural wilderness has close parallels, for example, with that of Thomas Carlyle, in *Chartism*. Carlyle writes:

in a world where Canadian Forests stand unfelled, boundless Plains and Prairies unbroken with the plough; on the west and on the east, green desert spaces never yet made white with corn; and to the overcrowded little western nook of Europe, our Terrestrial Planet, nine-tenths of it yet vacant or tenanted by nomads, is still crying, Come and till me, come and reap me!<sup>45</sup>

For Carlyle, the untamed Canadian forests offer England a means to rectify her problem of excess labour. The supposedly empty space of Canada provides the ‘briefless Barristers, chargeless Clergy, taskless Scholars [in England] languishing in all courthouses, hiding in obscure garrets, besieging all antechambers, in passionate want of simply one thing, Work’ with the opportunity that they need.<sup>46</sup> The question of work — or, rather, the lack of it — defines *Mary Barton*. After the fire at their mill, the Carsons decide to modernise and lay off hands. John Barton’s misery is occasioned by the lack of available opportunities following his redundancy. By contrast, Jem’s job as an engineer allows him to move easily to Canada. He becomes an ‘instrument-maker to the Agricultural College’ that is being newly established ‘at Toronto, in Canada’: ‘It is a comfortable appointment, – house, – land, – and a good percentage on the instruments made’ (375). For a novel that concerns itself with the effects of industrialisation on labourer’s lives, Jem’s job in Canada is particularly apt. It suggests that Canada presents the opportunity for a new community to develop, but in ways that do not repeat the detrimental effects that industrialisation has had on Manchester.

Of all the characters in the novel, Jem is one of the few to have consistent, regular employment. It is not want of work that pushes him to emigrate, but the desire for anonymity that both he and Mary need in order to rebuild their lives following the

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, 2nd edn. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1842), p. 112. For more information on Carlyle’s changing views on emigration, see Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), pp. 96–7 and pp. 114–115.

<sup>46</sup> Carlyle, p.112.

trial and the death of John Barton. He correctly fears that he ‘might find, in spite of a jury’s verdict, that too strong a taint was on his character for him ever to labour in Manchester again’ (349). He remembers how ‘some one suspected of having been a convict was shunned by masters and men’ and ‘how he himself had thought it did not become an honest upright man to associate with one who had been a prisoner’ (349). Even though Jem has done no wrong, his arrest is enough to sully his reputation. Sally Leadbitter, Mary’s friend, cannot bring herself to even say what he is: ‘Decent men were not going to work with a – no!’ (359). For all her gossiping nature, she is right in this: ‘As he [Jem] stood in the entrance to the foundry [...] many of those employed in the works passed him on their return from breakfast; and, with one or two exceptions, without any acknowledgement of former acquaintance beyond a distant nod at the utmost’ (375). His fears are cemented after John Barton’s death: ‘I could live it down if I stayed in England; but then what would not Mary have to bear? Sooner or later the truth would out; and then she would be a show to folk for many a day as John Barton’s daughter’ (375). The distance between Canada and Britain offers Jem and Mary the opportunity they need to escape the shame they would have faced, had they stayed in England. The absence of a community who knows them, as well as the chance of employment, ensures the success of their settlement.

Given the narration of the projected gaze in the last scene of the novel, and the narrator’s shift in tone, it is in many ways unsurprising that the final scene has been read as detached from the rest of the novel. Suvendrini Perera is one of the few critics to argue otherwise, when she writes that the ending has not been ‘read within the same interpretive framework as the rest of the narrative’:

the migrations and overseas voyages in novels such as *Mary Barton*, *Alton Locke*, *David Copperfield*, and *Great Expectations* are often read within a different frame of reference — one of “magic” or “escape” — rather than as part of the novel’s processing and configuration of the specific social situation seen as its main concern.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 52.

However, in Perera's view, the 'resolution by migration in *Mary Barton* can be read as the ultimate expression of [a] spatial relationship' between the 'internal and the domestic' that is 'neither sudden nor unprepared for but based on [the novel's] existing network of connections, influences, and transactions'.<sup>48</sup> Perera's comments that the Canadian scene is part of the novel's existing spatial network deserves further consideration. Critics working on the commodity culture of *Mary Barton* have highlighted the ways in which the novel registers the global politics of the cotton trade.<sup>49</sup> Canada is also connected to England through more personal networks. Jem returns from his day's work in the forest carrying letters from England. The letters contain news that Will and Margaret 'are to be married on the twenty-fifth of this month, and he's bringing her out here next voyage; and Job Legh talks of coming out [...] to try and pick up a few specimens of Canadian insects' (393). The novel recognises the importance of chain migration in consolidating family structures and friendship ties. It is telling that Jem and Mary's long cottage has 'room for more' (392), a symbolic gesture to the vast expanses of Canada which can supposedly support an incoming population.

In its anticipation of the colony's growing population, the novel, once again picks up on Carlyle's notion in *Chartism*, that emigration would make the British nation stronger:

Is it not as if this swelling, simmering, never-resting Europe of ours stood, once more, on the verge of an expansion without parallel; struggling, struggling like a mighty tree again about to burst in the embrace of summer, and shoot broad frondent boughs which would fill the whole earth? A disease; but the noblest of all, – as of her who is in

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<sup>48</sup> Perera, p. 52.

<sup>49</sup> See 'Mechanization, Free Trade, and Imperialism: Cotton', in Suzanne Daly, *The Empire Inside: Indian Commodities in Victorian Domestic Novels* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), pp. 36–60; 'Coziness and Its Vicissitudes: Checked Curtains and Global Cotton Markets in *Mary Barton*', in Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 55–80. For a more general reading of the commodity world in Gaskell's industrial novels, see Christoph Lindner, *Fictions of Commodity Culture: From the Victorian to the Postmodern* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 20–38.



pain and sore travail, but travails that she may be a mother and say,  
Behold, there is a new Man born!<sup>50</sup>

In short, Canada is conceived of in *Mary Barton* as a community which is far removed enough from Britain in order provide Jem and Mary with the distance that they need and yet at the same time, connected to it through epistolary exchange. The depiction of chain migration through letters at the end of the novel constructs Canada as a safe haven for a microcosmic version of the community in England. The colony is thus shown in the process of becoming a smaller version of the rural Manchester that we saw at the opening scenes of the novel, where the Barton and Wilson families take a walk on Green Heys Fields at the end of the working day. In the end, the colony ends up as a mini-rural Manchester — but with the potential for new beginnings.

### ***David Copperfield: Textual Connections***

By the time Dickens finished *David Copperfield* in November 1850, Urania Cottage had been running for about three years. Dickens's vision of emigration as a successful means of rehabilitating fallen women into society clearly shapes the novel's plot: at the end of the novel, Little Em'ly and Martha both emigrate along with Mr. Peggotty, leaving behind their old lives to start new ones in Australia. After moving from job to job, and successfully exposing Uriah Heep for fraud, Mr. Micawber is once more left unemployed. He emigrates out with his family on the same ship as the Peggottys on the suggestion of David's aunt, Betsy Trotwood, and with her financial support.

As in *Mary Barton*, where Canada affords Jem and Mary the anonymity they need to begin their lives again, so too in *David Copperfield*, Australia provides Little Em'ly and Martha with an opportunity for fresh starts. 'Our future life', Mr. Peggoty informs David, 'lays over the sea': 'No one can't reproach my darling in Australia. We will begin a new life over theer!'.<sup>51</sup> Sure enough, Em'ly finds her calling on board the

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<sup>50</sup> Carlyle, p. 112–3.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ed. by Nina Burgis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; [1850]), p. 711. All further quotations from this book are taken from this edition and referenced in-text, unless otherwise stated.

ship. She takes care of 'some poor folks aboard [the ship] as had illness among 'em' and of the 'children in our company' (846). In the colony, this transforms into a way of life: she is 'fond of going any distance fur to teach a child, or fur to tend a sick person [and] liked by young and old; sowt out by all that has any trouble' (847). Moving to Australia may be a means of removing herself from the dangers of falling back into her old way of life, but even in the colonies, she remains apart from the other settlers. Little Em'ly and Mr. Peggotty live 'in a solitary place, but among the beautifullest trees, and with the roses a-covering our Beein to the roof' (847). As Mr. Peggotty points out, 'the solitooode done her good', for 'No one knows how 'tis' that Em'ly is so young and unmarried (847). Like her literary sister Ruth in Gaskell's *Ruth*, Little Em'ly is exiled from married life and instead carves herself out a different trajectory in order to redeem herself. Her removal from society to the backwoods symbolises her new-found purity and as a nurse and teacher. She is fundamental to the development and continuity of her community. Martha marries a 'young man, a farm-laborer' (847) in her second year and settles down to become a hard-working farmer's wife in the bush, but she too, lives far removed from society living 'fower hundred mile away from any voices but their own and the singing birds' (848). The solitude that marks the lives of these fallen women in the colonies is a stark contrast to the busy, public life of Mr. Micawber. Micawber begins life as a labourer 'in the Bush', 'turning to' the land 'with a will', 'that theer bald head of his, a perspiring in the sun' (849). He works his way up the social ladder to become 'a Magistrate' in 'Port Middlebay Harbor [...] a town' (849) and a 'diligent and esteemed correspondent' for the colonial periodical *Port Middlebay Times* (849).

Unlike *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Mary Barton*, *David Copperfield* is written in the first-person narrative. As David does not emigrate himself, he cannot describe Australia for the reader, nor can he narrate the settler's experience through a projected gaze. As David notices, the issue contains two of Micawber's letters, 'an advertisement of a collection of similar letters by him, to be shortly republished, in a neat volume, "with considerable additions;" and [...] the Leading Article was his also' (851). The newspaper reports a social dinner which Micawber's family have attended. They

appear to have settled well: his eldest child, Wilkins, and his daughter are both married and hold good positions in society.

In the face of his earlier incompetence, Micawber's success in Australia has been understood by some critics as a fantastical and unrealistic solution. Moore, for example, argues that 'Dickens seems to equate success in the colonies with some kind of colossal bluff':

For the impecunious Micawbers it [Australia] is a place where they can effortlessly prosper, and where Mr Micawber's empty rhetoric can achieve a success that it would never have found in his English existence. Thus, the prosperity of the Micawbers, the Peggottys and even Mr Mell on the one hand confirms the popular belief that emigration would lead to prosperity, while on the other, the sheer absurdity of the resolution is ironic.<sup>52</sup>

For Moore, Micawber's success in the colonies is neither real nor reproducible: it is a farce of a resolution. In *Postal Plots*, Laura Rotunno argues that Micawber 'fails' to rise to the 'position of respected writer — the position reserved for the eponymous hero of the novel'. Although Rotunno argues that his letters are 'culturally significant' because they conform to a long tradition of letter-writing that stretches back to the eighteenth century, she does not make a connection between Micawber's letter-writing and his successful settlement in Australia.<sup>53</sup>

Micawber is a prolific letter-writer, who dominates many of the scenes in the novels through his epistolary, rather than bodily, presence. 'Letters!' marvels David's aunt, 'I believe he dreams in letters!' (775). As this thesis has demonstrated, letters and periodical culture are integral parts of the emigrant experience. Circulating in both personal and public networks, letters were important for the maintenance of family relationships and for encouraging potentially curious readers to emigrate. Emigrants during the voyage to Australia performed their settlement on board the ship through an imagined print periodical culture. Emigrant authors, such as Susanna Moodie, turned

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<sup>52</sup> Moore, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Laura Rotunno, *Postal Plots in British Fiction, 1840–1898: Readdressing Correspondence in Victorian Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 46.

to colonial periodicals as initial outlets for their literary endeavours.<sup>54</sup> As I pointed out earlier, even Eden in *Martin Chuzzlewit* has its own periodical, the *Eden Stinger*. When Micawber tells Betsey Trotwood that emigration ‘was the dream of my youth, and the fallacious aspiration of my riper years’ (743), David thinks with wry amusement that Micawber ‘had never thought of it [emigration] in his life’ (743). While Micawber may not have done so, nonetheless, his letters pre-empt the idea of home and settlement in a number of different ways.

In one of his letters to David, he writes, that he is ‘bidding adieu to the modern Babylon’ and is ‘about to establish myself in one of the provincial towns of our favoured island, (where the society may be described as a happy admixture of the agricultural and the clerical)’ (514). The description that he gives of a town which is part agricultural, part clerical and in a provincial area could well be taken to refer to a settlement in Sydney or Melbourne, but in actual fact, he is going to move to Canterbury: ‘It may be expected that on the eve of a migration which will consign us to a perfectly new existence [...] I should offer a few valedictory remarks to two such friends as I see before me’ (520). In a later letter, Mrs. Micawber takes up the language of emigration and settlement in another context, when she writes to David that ‘The pecuniary means of meeting our expenses, kept down to the utmost farthing, are obtained from him with great difficulty, and even under fearful threats that he will Settle himself (the exact expression)’ (609). Dickens plays on the word ‘settle’: while Mrs. Micawber’s use of the verb refers to Micawber’s potential suicide, the verb also speaks of the future when Micawber will indeed to be settled in Australia and will turn his literary skills into fame and fortune. Thus, even before his move to Australia, Micawber considers himself as an emigrant, an itinerant figure needing to establish himself.

Given all of this, it is entirely appropriate that, as an emigrant, Micawber should establish himself as a letter-writer of some acclaim in a flourishing Australian periodical. His success and appearance in print at the end of the novel is a culmination

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<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the early forms of literature in Australia, see Elizabeth Webby, ‘Writers, Printers, Readers: The Production of Australian Literature before 1855’, in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (London: Penguin, 1988), pp. 113–125 (p. 113).

of what has been the novel's subtext all along. In his own way, Mr. Peggotty is also as successful as Micawber. 'We've allus thrived', explains he to David.

We've worked as we ought to't, and maybe we lived a leetle hard at first or so, but we have allus thrived. What with sheep-farming, and what with stock-farming, and what with one thing and what with t'other, we are as well to do, as well could be (846).

Both *Mary Barton* and *David Copperfield* reproduce the familiar narrative trajectory that equates emigration with success. There is, however, something curiously banal about how Gaskell and Dickens construct emigration in their novels. Rather than probing the central features of emigration literature, the two authors reproduce in their novels stock images such as the successful emigrant and the hard-working sheep farmer that emigration literature set into circulation. The novel thus draws on the tropes of emigration literature in order to shape its own aesthetics and discourse on emigration. While it may not be a form of booster literature, nonetheless, this re-circulation of emigration motifs in the novel reaffirms particular ways of thinking about emigration.

### **'Merely Crossing': Emigration Literature and the Novel**

Before Mr. Peggotty leaves David for Australia, the two of them 'spoke, with some approach to cheerfulness, of Mr. Peggotty's growing rich in a new country, and of the wonders he would describe in his letters' (717). However, David comes to know of how his former friends are faring, not through personal correspondence, but because Mr. Peggotty travels all the way back to England to see him and his family with an issue of the *Port Middlebay Times*. Through its depiction of the print and textual networks produced out of emigration, the novel interrogates the relationships between Britain and the colonies. It depicts a world in which geographically distant places are only partially interconnected through the global mechanisms of print circulation (i.e. the shipping of newspapers from one country to another, or the establishment of printing presses abroad). Local instances of coincidence and chance meetings are also just as important in sustaining relationships over time and space in the context of resettlement.

David's literary fame is such that news of it has reached Australia. Mr. Peggotty 'points' to where Micawber has published a public letter of appreciation directly addressed to David:

My dear Sir,

[...] though estranged (by the force of circumstances over which I have had no control) from the personal society of the friend and companion of my youth, I have not been unmindful of his soaring flight [...] Go on, my dear sir! You are not unknown here, you are not unappreciated. [...] Go on, my dear sir, in your Eagle course! The Inhabitants of Port Middlebay may at least aspire to watch it, with delight, with entertainment, with instruction! (851).

This is Micawber's first letter to David since he has emigrated, and in a curious inversion, he writes him a personal note via public means. The notion that David is not 'unknown' or 'unappreciated' and that the 'inhabitants' of Port Middlebay will continue to follow his 'soaring flight' demonstrates David's global reach, and the power of the print market to keep different parts of the globe connected by providing a common reading base.

David comes to hear of other characters aside from Micawber through the issue of the *Port Middlebay Times* that Mr. Peggotty brings back to him. David is 'pleased' to see 'the name of Doctor Mell' in the paper, the 'formerly poor pinched usher to my Middlesex magistrate' (850). But the novel imagines the circulation of print in broader terms as well. Just as colonial newspapers find their way back to England and the figures are instantly recognisable to those who read it, so too in the colony do people carry English newspapers that are instantly recognisable to settlers. Mr. Peggotty explains how he and Little Em'ly come to hear of the death of Steerforth, the man who seduces Little Em'ly.

Their come along one day, when I was out a-working on the land, a traveller from our own Norfolk or Suffolk in England (I doen't rightly mind which), and of course we took him in, and giv him to eat and drink, and made him welcome. We all do that, the colony over (847).

The traveller that comes to their home in Australia has 'an old newspaper with him, and some other account in print of the storm' in which Steerforth dies: this is how Little Em'ly comes to hear of it (847). The novel thus imagines print to connect

characters into a wider network than their face-to-face contacts, but it almost never portrays print flowing smoothly through its routes of global circulation. More often than not characters become caught up in this wider network because other characters travel between places and bring printed texts with them. In other words, the novel imagines print as being portable in the proper sense of the word: characters move with text, and as the mobile text begins to circulate, it forges new connections.

The novel thus imagines how the colonies and Britain are enmeshed in a network of portable print. This emphasis on circulation produces a very distinct spatial imaginary. In the same way that emigration literature, the letters, and the handbooks and the manuals, for example, all try to produce a certain aesthetics of place, where the colonies are like home, or are very far away from home, the novel posits a more confused and confusing relationship between the colonies and Britain. Moore argues that:

the fact that Dickens never saw this country [Australia] – to which he exiled two of his own sons – gave it a strangely illusory quality that made it both real, and yet not real. As a result there is something not quite real about the lives of the characters he ships off to the settlement, and the wealth that they accumulate. In *David Copperfield*, for instance, Dickens seems to equate success in the colony with some kind of colossal bluff. [...] and suggests an authorial warning that the Australia Dickens depicts is, quite literally, a utopia – a no-such-place.<sup>55</sup>

As I have argued above, the novel reads to me more of an endorsement of the familiar images of emigration, rather than a critique of it. If Australia is a utopia in the novel, it is no more a utopia than it is in emigration literature. In the same way, the spatial interconnections between the colonies and home are troubled and curiously morphed. The idea of the colony as an abstract, fictional place is pressed upon the reader through Micawber's actions after he makes the decision to emigrate. David notices that Micawber 'practises' for Australia before he goes:

Shall I ever recall that street of Canterbury on a market-day, without recalling him, as he walked back with us; expressing, in the hardy roving manner he assumed, the unsettled habits of a temporary

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<sup>55</sup> Moore, p. 12.

sojourner in the land; and looking at the bullocks, as they came by, with the eye of an Australian farmer! (745)

A few pages later, David makes a similar observation:

Mr Micawber [...] 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 of the confines of civilisation, and about to return to his native wilds (782).

Both these quotations show that Micawber *acts* emigration out. In the same way that the emigrants on board the *Alfred* and *True Briton* perform settlement on board the ship in order to prepare themselves for the actual task of settlement in Australia, so too for Mr. Micawber, emigration is something that can be performed and practised prior to the actual event. Emigration can be lived as a fiction before it becomes a fact. The fictionalizing of emigration, however, results in a curious morphing of geographical distance.

In the novel, distance is recognised for what it is only when Mr. Peggotty admits that ‘It’s a mort of water [...] fur to come across, and on’y stay a matter of fower weeks’ (846). Before they emigrate, the Micawbers are convinced that they will not only return, but that their emigration will not cause the cutting of relations with England. Mrs Micawber reminds her husband that he is ‘going out [...] to this distant clime, to strengthen, not to weaken, the connexion between yourself and Albion’ (787). When David tries to dissuade Micawber from emigrating to Australia, on account of the fact that it is very long way away, he muses that ‘It is merely crossing [...] merely crossing. The distance is quite imaginary’. David recalls,

how odd it was, but how wonderfully like Mr Micawber, that, when he went from London to Canterbury, he should have talked as if he were going to the farthest limits of the earth; and, when he went from England to Australia, as if he were going for a little trip across the channel (787).

This distortion of distance occurs in *Mary Barton* as well: when Mary leaves Manchester for the first time in her life, as she starts her search for Jem, she feels an overwhelming sense of loss as the train pulls out of the station: ‘She was losing sight of the familiar objects of her childhood for the first time; and unpleasant as those objects are to most,



she yearned after them with some of the same sentiment which gives pathos to the thoughts of the emigrant' (282-3). When Jem decides that he wants to leave Manchester, he says that he'd 'as lief' leave England as well and go to Canada (376). In both these novels, the colony and England are not separate, distinct places. Instead, in the spatial imagination of the characters they morph into each other, so that places within England are imagined as distant from each other and the colonies are imagined as proximate.

In the novels discussed here, emigration is far from an escape strategy on the part of the authors, an easy means of resolving difficult plots or characters. Such arguments not only undermine the literary skill of Gaskell and Dickens, but they also fail to acknowledge the social context within which the two authors were writing. Emigration was clearly intensely important to both the authors as a legitimate means of philanthropy. If emigration literature set into circulation a certain way of conceiving settlement in the colonies, then Gaskell's and Dickens's novels took these representations up: the repetition of certain themes in their novels solidifies this way of conceiving emigration. Yet this was not an unthinking absorption of the world around the authors: at the same time as drawing on the motifs of emigration literature, the authors also turn emigration literature into a motif. In their novels, the textual culture of emigration becomes sites for the interrogation of what it means to inhabit a wider world and to be connected to friends and family in distant places through text. The novel takes up emigration literature's preoccupation with settlement in new and distant places. As the first half of this thesis has demonstrated, emigration literature produces its colonial ideology through its skewed spatial relations. Over and again, emigration literature tried to make the unfamiliar, familiar and to make the far away, near. Wherever possible, it concentrated on the similarities between Britain and the colonies in order to collapse the sense of geographical distance. Yet at the same time, given the immense finality of most people's migrations in the nineteenth century, emigration literature could not deny that the distance between emigrants and their families in Britain was also insurmountable. When it comes to representing emigration, the novel owes its distortion of distance to emigration literature. The distortion of distance in the novel captures the complex ways in which emigration and its literature

reverberated across other cultural modes of expression. As a genre of the nation, it makes sense that the novel imagines the textual and print culture of emigration as integral to this process of establishing a knowable community within the context of the global network of the British Empire.

## CONCLUSION

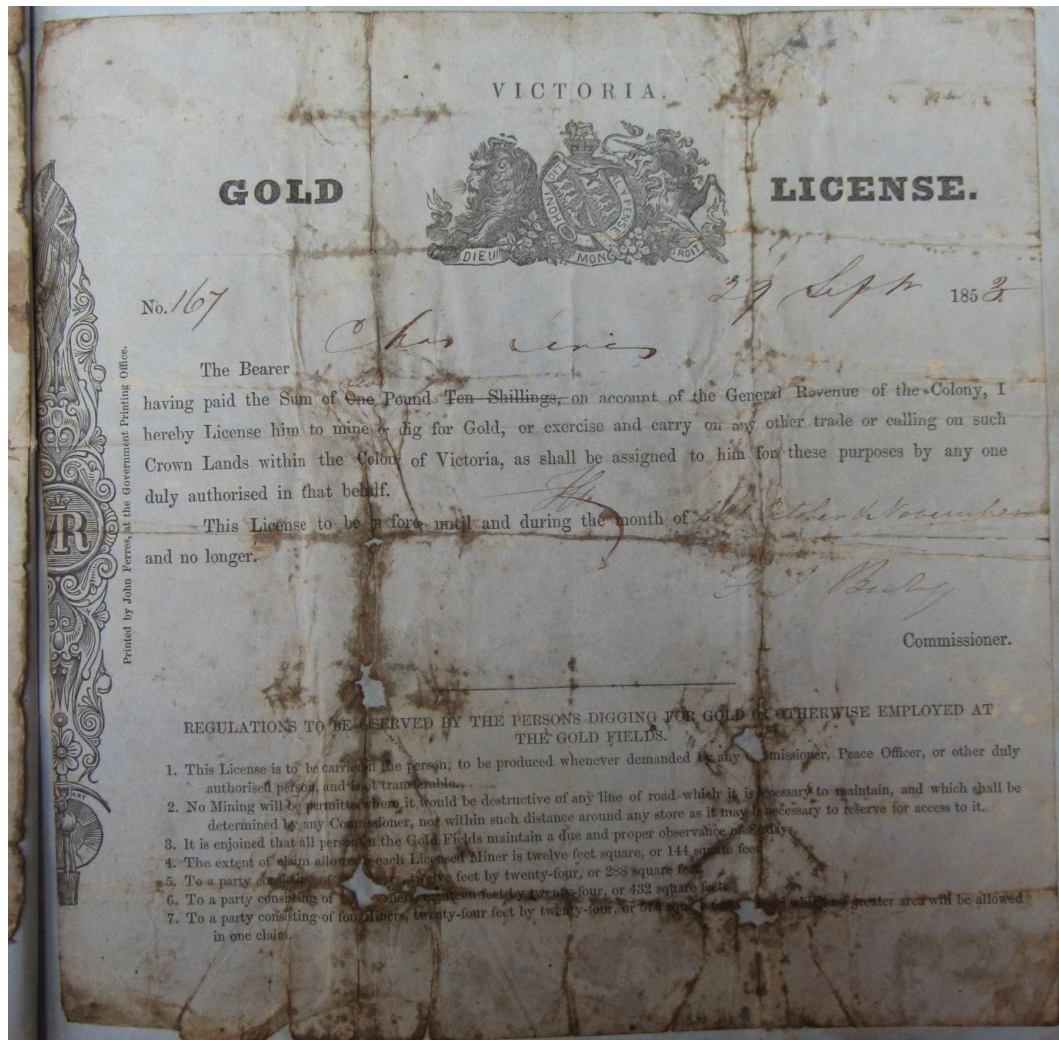


Figure 22: Charles Henry Lines's Gold-Digging License

After a voyage of three months, Charles Henry Lines, the exuberant young twenty-three year old we met at the beginning of this thesis, arrived in Melbourne on 5 November 1852. A gold-digging license that is now held at the Mitchell Library, Sydney indicates that almost a year later, he was in Ballarat, digging for gold in the hope of making it big (Fig. 22). Although this hope may not have been realised, the trajectory of the rest of his life is the stuff that emigration literature is made of. After spending some time in Ballarat, he travelled down to Sydney, and in 1860, married Jane Anne Harriet Day. Jane's family had been in Australia for two generations: her grandfather Thomas Day had been transported from England on the Second Fleet in

## Conclusion

1790. They had at least one daughter and lived a comfortable life, with Lines occupying socially prominent positions towards the end of his life. He became appointed as a staff member on the Sydney City Council in 1864 and then rose through the ranks to become the City Treasurer of the Council from 1883 until his death in 1891.

Lines's shipboard diary, steadily recording his journey towards Australia day by day, testifies to the integral relationship between text and nineteenth-century settler emigration. As this thesis has demonstrated, each stage of the emigrant experience — the decision to move, the voyage itself, and the process of settling — produces, and is produced by, a proliferation of text. In an attempt to gauge the range and scope of the textual culture of nineteenth-century settler emigration, this thesis has eschewed a single-genre focus. Instead, it has examined a wide array of genres and media. Positioning print against manuscript, word against image, fact against fiction opens up a new field of interrogation. It has allowed me to demonstrate the pervasive influence of settler emigration's textual culture and to identify the ways in which emigration literature shaped the aesthetics of genres that were not produced out of the moment of emigration literature. A more inclusive field of analysis has also allowed me to bring genres that have hitherto received little, if any, critical attention to light and to reinterpret familiar genres in new ways. The interdisciplinary method of reading employed in this thesis breaks down binaries, not only between textual and visual culture, but also between the genres of textual culture as well. Reading broadly across canonical texts and non-canonical ephemera allows me to gauge fully the impact of emigration literature.

This thesis has demonstrated that the defining characteristics of emigration literature are its preoccupations with mobility and materiality. Mobility shapes emigration literature's form *and* content. In their different ways, printed emigrants' letters, manuscript shipboard periodicals and settler accounts, all reflect on what it means for people to be detached from their homes and to make new homes in distant places. But they are also physical objects that are determined by the condition of being geographically mobile. Printed letters are produced from manuscript ones that travel back to England, shipboard periodicals are produced on the move, and Moodie and Parr Traill's accounts of settlement are produced in Canada, but published in England.

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As is by now well established in contemporary scholarship, print in the nineteenth-century is inherently mobile. The print market, circulating libraries, second-hand markets and printing presses in the colonies — only some of the mechanisms of circulation in the nineteenth-century — all participated in keeping texts moving through overlapping and competing networks. In the context of emigration literature, however, the text's mobility opens up a troubled and contested space of interrogation.

Through their circulation, emigration literature transferred the reality of one place to another, but, as I have shown throughout this thesis, this transfer is ruptured and troubled. As texts that move from one place to another, they become open to suspicion regarding their authenticity. With little to no first-hand knowledge of the distant colonies that emigration literature described, it became difficult for the reader to know whether what they were reading was factually correct or not. Recognizing this, editors and authors were keen to assert the materiality of the text and material conditions of their making in order to convince a potentially doubtful reading public of the text's authenticity. As circulating objects negotiating the distance between Britain and the colonies, the texts of emigration literature produce a new, combined aesthetic of mobility and materiality.

This thesis has shown that the powerful sway that emigration literature held over the cultural imagination is testified to by its prevalence in genres and media that are not directly produced out of the practices of settler emigration, such as narrative paintings and novels. When nineteenth-century novels and paintings depict emigration, they do so through the texts of emigration culture, be they maps, periodicals, newspapers or letters. They draw on the tropes of emigration literature — on the image of the hard-working agricultural labourer, on the fear that texts are economical with the truth, and on the extension of kinship ties over space and time. Simultaneously, however, emigration literature becomes a motif in texts that are not directly produced out of the practices of emigration. The novels and narrative paintings discussed in this thesis draw on the textual culture of emigration in order to probe into its cultural impact. Through their representation of the texts of emigration culture, novels and paintings consolidate ways of thinking about the distance between Britain

## *Conclusion*

and her colonies produced by emigration literature, and at the same time, produce new ways of engaging with it through their critique of it.

Although the purposes, audiences and contexts of production and consumption of the genres and media explored in this thesis differ hugely, in their own ways they all influenced how British people thought about their place in the world and their extending kinship ties across time and space. Emigration literature shares much with travel literature: the focus on emigration in these texts necessarily entails an engagement with mobility, flow and circulation of texts, peoples, ideas and things, but crucially, unlike travel literature, emigration literature is also defined by its emphasis on settlement, place and stability. The texts discussed in this thesis are complicit in the act of colonial erasure: their emphasis on founding new homes in the colonies and in relaying that information back to a British audience makes invisible the violence of colonization and settler emigration.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Books in Government-Assisted Emigrant Ship Libraries

70

No. 25.

List of Books,  
Maps, Tablets,  
Stationery, &c.

No. 25.

#### LIST OF BOOKS, MAPS, TABLETS, STATIONERY, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, AND APPARATUS SUPPLIED TO THE EMIGRATION COMMISSIONERS' SHIPS.

No. of Copies.	RELIGIOUS.	Edit. and Binding.
1	Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress - - - -	32mo., cloth.
1	Doddridge's Rise and Progress - - - -	18mo., sewed.
1	Law's Serious Call - - - -	12mo., cloth.
1	Learn to Live - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Learn to Die - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Imitation of Christ - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Sherlock's Practical Christian - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Taylor's Golden Grove - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	"    Death, Judgment, &c. - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Trimmer's Scripture Lessons - - - -	12mo., cloth.
1	"    Catechism - - - -	12mo., boards.
1	Barnes' Notes, vols. 1 and 2 (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half calf.
1	Life of Leighton (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half roan.
1	"    Bunyan (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half roan.
1	"    Baxter (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half roan.
1	Pilgrim's Progress (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half roan.
1	Doddridge's Rise (R. T. Society) - - - -	18mo., half roan.
2	Lessons on Truth of Christianity - - - -	18mo., stiff cover.
1	Manners and Customs of the Jews - - - -	18mo., half roan.
1	Life of Abraham - - - -	18mo., stiff cover.
1	Life and Travels of St. Paul - - - -	18mo., stiff cover.
6	Church Catechism - - - -	18mo., sewed.
25	Prayer Books for Emigrants at Sea.	
—	A supply of Bibles and Testaments.	
POETRY.		
1	Burns' Poetical Works - - - -	8vo., sewed.
1	Selection from British Poets, 2 vols. - - - -	12mo., cloth.
4	The Garland, "Poetry for Childhood and Youth" - - - -	18mo., cloth.
BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.		
1	Biographies of British Poets - - - -	12mo., cloth.
1	Life of Wellington - - - -	12mo., cloth.
1	"    Nelson - - - -	12mo., cloth.
1	Tales of a Grandfather - - - -	Royal 8vo., cloth.
1	Kings of England (Mozley) - - - -	18mo., cloth.
VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.		
1	Columbus's Discovery of America - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Cook's Voyages - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Travels of Mungo Park - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Bligh's Voyages - - - -	18mo., cloth.
1	Anson's Voyages - - - -	18mo., cloth.

No. of Copies.	NATURAL HISTORY.	Edit. and Binding.	List of Books, Maps, Tablets, Stationery, &c.
1	Natural History, Beasts - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	"    Birds - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	"    Insects - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	"    Reptiles - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	"    Trees - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Nature displayed - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
FICTION AND MISCELLANEOUS.			
1	Labour Stands on Golden Feet - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Moralities for Home - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Robinson Crusoe - - - - -	8vo., sewed.	
1	Vicar of Wakefield - - - - -	8vo., sewed.	
1	Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Useful Arts - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	History of the Robins - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Cottage Cookery, by Esther Copley - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Lord Ashburton on Common Things - - - - -	12mo., sewed.	
1	The Young Emigrant and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Ship and the Island and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Prophet and the Lost City and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	The Seeker and the Finder and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Rising and Thriving and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Story of Wellington and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Round the World and other Stories - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
1	Mill's Guide to the Tool Chest - - - - -	12mo., sewed.	
1	Treatise on Poultry - - - - -	12mo., wrapper.	
1	Cultivation of Arable Land - - - - -	12mo., wrapper.	
1	Daw's Suggestive Hints on Secular Instruction - - - - -	12mo., cloth.	
1	"    "    Industrial Life - - - - -	12mo., cloth.	
1	Campbell's Farmers' and Cottagers' Guide - - - - -	12mo., sewed.	
1	Blacklock's Treatise on Sheep - - - - -	18mo., cloth.	
6	Monthly Parts of the "Leisure Hour."		
6	"    "    of "Sunday at Home."		

SCHOOL APPARATUS AND MATERIALS.

- 1 Set of Alphabets on Cards.
- 2 Round Rulers.
- 1 Blackboard or Substitute.
- 1 Box of White Chalk for ditto.
- 6 Quires of Foolscap Paper.
- 25 Quill Pens.
- 48 Unframed Slates 6 by 4.
- 500 Slate Pencils.
- 100 Copy Books, with engraved Head Lines.
- 2 gross Medium Pens.
- 4 dozen Pen Holders.
- 25 Lead Pencils.
- 6 Lead Ink Wells, flat.
- 1 Bottle Ink and Basket.

No. 25.

SCHOOL BOOKS, MAPS, TABLETS, AND DIAGRAMS.

List of Books, Maps, Tablets, Stationery, &c.	No. of Copies		Edit. and Binding.
	2	Treatise on Mensuration - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	1	Appendix to ditto - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	2	Lessons in Housewifery - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Plain Instructions for Children - - - - -	
	1	Mercator's Map of the World - - - - -	
	1	Groombridge's Atlas - - - - -	12mo., stiff cover
	4	Bethell's Spelling by Dictation and Transcribing - - - - -	12mo., stiff cover.
	4	Elementary Catechism, "British Empire" - - - - -	18mo., sewed.
	4	" " "Geography" - - - - -	18mo., sewed.
	4	" " "England" - - - - -	18mo., sewed.
	1	Tablet Spelling, 33 Sheets - - - - -	18mo., sewed.
	30	First Book of Lessons - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	12	Second Book - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	3	Sequel to Ditto - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	8	Third Book - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	3	Fourth Book - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	3	Supplement to Fourth Book - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	4	Reading for Girls - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	1	Art of Reading - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	1	Agricultural Class Book - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	4	English Grammar - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Key to ditto - - - - -	18mo., sewed.
	6	Compendium of Geography - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Epitome of ditto - - - - -	12mo., cloth.
	12	Sacred Poetry - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Tablet Arithmetic - - - - -	60 sheets.
	12	First Book of Arithmetic - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Key to ditto - - - - -	18mo., cloth.
	1	Tegehneier's Diagram, Thermometer, &c. - - - - -	
	4	Arithmetical Table Books, Multiplication, &c. - - - - -	

From: *Instructions to Surgeon Superintendents of Government Emigrant Ships* (London: George Eyre and Andrew Spottiswode, 1858), pp. 70–72.



Appendix 2: Emigration Paintings Referred to in Chapter 4



Figure 23: Paul Falconer Poole, *The Emigrant's Departure*, 1838, oil on wood, 67.9 x 91.4 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne



Figure 24: John Absolon, *We Are Out on the Ocean Sailing to our Home Beyond the Deep*, 1850, watercolour, 67.3 x 106.7 cm, private collection



Figure 25: Hubert von Herkomer, *Pressing to the West, A Scene in Castle Garden New York*, 1884, oil on canvas, 143 x 213 cm. Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig