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THE BRITISH IMAGE OF EMPIRE IN THE  
VICTORIAN NOVEL

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

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## Preface

For this project, I selected six novels, published in the second half of the nineteenth century, from 1847 to 1887, during the time that the British empire was at its peak of imperial power. I chose these particular novels because I wanted to study how the authors portray empire and how they regard imperialism as a social, economic, political, and religious force, underwritten by the belief, widespread during the reign of Queen Victoria, in Anglo-Saxon racial dominance. While studying these novels, I was interested in the contradictions and ambiguities that they present in order to avoid simplistic stereotypes and to gain a better sense of the complexities of thought and experience represented by the texts. I was especially interested in the cultural and literary connections among them. From the start, I wanted to get a picture of the British empire that swept across several decades because I wanted to see how that image changed over time. I wanted to understand not only how the novels related to one another but also how the authors used stereotypes of the East in order to privilege Western values. Those values, as I have analyzed them, concern cultural categories of race, class, and gender. In this preface, I present the primary focus of each chapter of the dissertation, so that the overall image of empire that I discuss will, I hope, reveal distinct intersections, parallels, and meaningful links among the novels.

In the opening chapter, based on William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847), I explain how the author presents an image of empire through marginality, a highly alluring space that exists on the fringes of English national consciousness. My purpose here is to illustrate how Thackeray uses the periphery

of empire as a satiric contrast, as a means of accentuating European discord and ridiculing those who are responsible, in his view, for fomenting conflicts within and between families. He also uses the narrative margin as a means of drawing attention to the potentialities of exotic lands, remote from the social and psychic fragmentation found in Europe, as exemplified in the novel by the Napoleonic wars, primarily. Since the author drapes the margins of empire in feminine exoticism, I also concentrate, in this chapter, on Thackeray's representation of female gender. His portrayal not only magnifies what he regards as women's natural role, in the home, nurturing their families, but also how the image of an exotic, distant world promises moral regeneration for the British. For the author, India and other colonies represent the hope of renewed vitality, because of the national leadership provided by middle-class families, British soldiers and their wives mostly, who reside in the far-flung regions of empire.

In the second chapter, based on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), I am concerned with how the Anglo-British attitude toward race and religion intersects with imperialism. We know that in the later chapters of the novel, after Jane has left Mr. Rochester, she wanders into a small village where she is rescued from starvation by the family of St. John Rivers. During this time, before Jane returns to Thornfield Hall, where she had been employed by Mr. Rochester as governess, she discusses with Rivers the possibility of working with him as a missionary in India. Rivers argues that Jane should marry him, not for love, but because they could best carry out God's command by working together. Even though Jane rejects Rivers's proposal—she cannot accept the idea of marriage without love—she fervently

supports his missionary ambitions. In fact, the novel ends with Jane's eulogy to Rivers, his devotion to the Christian faith and to the imperial project. He works as an "indefatigable pioneer," she says, one who "labours for his race" to bring religious truth to the natives. What I find in the later chapters of the novel, then, is something that most critics have given only slight attention—that is, the evangelical racism which inspires Jane to admire Rivers. The author's portrayal of the relationship that develops between the ambitious country parson and the independent English governess contributes to the notion that the Anglo-Saxon people are superior to all Others in the British empire.

By emphasizing the role that empire plays in *Jane Eyre*, I foreground what other scholars, especially those who have focused primarily on Jane's relationship with Rochester, have overlooked, the strong link between race, religious ideology, and the author's representation of English national identity. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Gayatri Spivak argues that Charlotte Brontë builds English nationhood and English female subjectivity through the portrayal of racist attitudes and colonial interests in *Jane Eyre*. Thinking about Spivak's essay, one question I had, from the beginning of this study, was this: how did British imperial ambitions engender racist attitudes so that inhabitants of the English nation regarded themselves as a superior people inspired by God to fulfill a divine mission? Another question, closely related to the first, was the following: how did the British justify the economic exploitation of indigenous populations in the colonies? Since we know that Rivers considers doing missionary work in other countries besides India, that his prospects for proselytizing extend to Africa and

other countries, and that Jane receives an income from the money her uncle presumably has made off of the slave labor of West Indian natives, it looks as though British imperial ambitions have no boundaries, either political or geographic. Another question, then, is this: if the British can imagine no limits to their mastery of racial Others, how does that sort of global dominion square with the pious humility which Christianity espouses and that Jane herself, in many ways, embodies? The imaginative portrayal of the British empire, a representation marked by contradictions and ambiguities, such as those found in *Jane Eyre*, is something that I explore, not only by examining the confusions located within individual works but also by comparing the texts of several authors.

In the third chapter, I consider the connection between Emily Brontë's central figure, Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and the image of empire that the author presents. Brontë portrays Heathcliff as a gypsy vagabond, an orphan whom Old Earnshaw carried, as a dirty child, from the Liverpool streets to the English moors. Here Heathcliff becomes involved with the decadent gentry, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, who regard him as a foreign interloper. Brontë portrays Heathcliff so that his racial origins remain ambiguous throughout the novel. We can see that uncertainty, for example, in the event when he and Catherine Earnshaw, Old Earnshaw's daughter, spy on Mr. Linton's children and are caught by the servant as they are looking through the window of the Linton's elegantly furnished mansion. When Mr. Linton, a magistrate, observes Heathcliff, he refers to him, quite derogatorily, as a "little Lascar [Indian sailor], or an American or Spanish castaway" (62). Soon after this incident, Nelly, the housekeeper, hoping to

lift the spirits of the dejected child, magnifies the ambiguity surrounding his racial origins when she remarks, “Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen” (67). These references, along with Nelly’s speculations about Heathcliff’s unknown travels, after he leaves the moors and returns as an adult, much changed, heighten the sense of uncertainty associated with his figure in the novel. When he does return, Heathcliff presents a striking figure because, in contrast to his tattered, beggarly appearance as a boy, he now wears the clothes of a gentleman and is quite self-assured. However, along with the alteration in his demeanor and outward appearance, a kind of wolfish ferocity lurks beneath his civilized exterior, as Nelly remarks. These events suggest to me, then, a link between Heathcliff’s racial origins and the image of the British empire, a connection that I discuss in this chapter. Along with that link, I am also intrigued by the apparent change in Heathcliff, as suggested by the sharp alteration in his appearance. His remarkable re-creation of himself suggests that he conforms, at least partly, to Homi Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity. This supposition is reinforced by the fact that Heathcliff brings savage vitality to the moors from abroad and infuses that substance into the traditional values of English civilization, as he interrogates race, class, and gender hierarchies.

The fourth chapter of this project is based on Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1861), in which the author portrays Colonel Herncastle as a British soldier who steals a fabled diamond, the “Moonstone,” from its shrine in India during the battle of Seringapatam. Since the actual battle took place late in the eighteenth century, we can see that Collins sets the events of the plot over half of a



century before he wrote the novel in order to accentuate Britain's historic relationship with India. As it turns out, that relationship is marred by ambiguities within the patriarchal legal establishment of Britain. Herncastle's right to own the jewel and to pass it on to his niece, Rachael Verinder, is an issue that gets mired in apparently endless legal squabbles. Collins shows us how the wrangling about legal affairs disturbs family relationships and affects them adversely over time. The plot hinges on the theft of the diamond from Rachael, after she receives it as a birthday gift from Herncastle, and the police investigation that follows in order to identify the thief and recover the jewel. Throughout the novel, the most likely suspects are three Brahmin priests who, breaking their religious vows, travel to England in order to recover the diamond and return it to the shrine from where it was taken. The Brahmins recruit an English child who possesses clairvoyant powers, apparently, to assist them. Ironically, Sergeant Cuff, the British policeman who carries out the investigation, determines, through sheer logic, that the loss of the diamond was a hoax undertaken by Rachel herself in order to acquire the insurance money. At the same time, Franklin Blake, Rachel's fiancée, carries out his own search for the thief but without conscious knowledge that he actually participated in the robbery. The tangled strands of the plot suggest the murky quagmire of the legal system that only complicates the mystery of who stole the diamond from Rachel's Indian cabinet. In order to solve the mystery, Blake ultimately rejects Cuff's logic and depends, instead, on "female" intuition. As Collins presents it, this instinctive power is particularly acute in women, in children, and in Ezra Jennings, a gypsy who befriends Blake. From these facts, based on the plot, which also focuses on the

suicide of Rosanna Spearman, Lady Verinder's maid, I examine the contradictions and ambiguities of the British legal system, especially as they relate to Collins's portrayal of empire. As Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity applies to Brontë's Heathcliff, I discuss how that concept also applies to Ezra Jennings, another gypsy, whose father was British and whose mother was born in one of Britain's colonies, left unnamed in the novel. In terms of hybridity, I compare and contrast Heathcliff and Jennings in order to understand better the authors' representations of empire and their attitudes toward imperialism.

In the final chapter of this study, I discuss two short novels, *King Solomon's Mines* (1887) and *She* (1888), written by H. Rider Haggard. These novels, as they were published later in the century, during the period of new imperialism, when more "scientific" justifications for imperialism were supplanting the claims of Christian morality, present a much different view of the British empire. Set in an imaginary oasis of central Africa, rather than in England, for example, *King Solomon's Mines* accentuates the legendary material riches of the "dark continent." As a kind of forerunner to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1888), Haggard's novel shows how three British adventurers encounter a native tribe, headed by a "savage" king and a bizarre female witch doctor, Gagoool, and how, after being deceived by her, they almost lose their lives in the fabled diamond mines. Despite his emphasis on the material wealth of Africa, Haggard, generally regarded by critics as a committed imperialist, presents another side in these novels. In fact, his interest in epistemology complicates his patriarchal ideology, so that his loyalty to the imperial project comes across as divided. In the last chapter of this study, I

discuss how that division of loyalty affects his portrayal of the central figures and how it intersects with his representation of race, class, and gender. The depth of division in Haggard's loyalty to the imperial project registers the deep chasm of ideological discord that we find in the British image of empire, overall, during this historical frame.

Family and Female Power in  
William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*

In William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847), an article of female clothing, sent from India to England, suggests how the author exploits the image of an exotic East in order to overturn the concept of class ranks in Britain.<sup>1</sup> When considered within the context of exoticism that informs the narrative as a whole, the alluring article also contributes to the sense that Thackeray is loyal to the British imperial project. Early in the novel, after Napoleon returns from Elba, causing the stock market to plunge, Mr. Sedley, a rich London merchant, loses the family fortune.<sup>2</sup> Following the sale of his estate, poverty forces him and his family to live in a cottage with the devoted Clapp family, formerly the Sedley's servants, now their landlords.<sup>3</sup> Even though penury grinds hard on family members, upsetting their relationships, Amelia, Mr. Sedley's daughter, wants to buy a Christmas gift for her son, little Georgy. Since the death of her husband, Lieutenant George Osborne, who was killed in the battle of Waterloo, Amelia has remained faithful to his memory, refusing all suitors, including Major Dobbin.<sup>4</sup> Since their childhood, he had admired and befriended Osborne.<sup>5</sup> While the lieutenant—actually Dobbin, as we find out afterward—left Amelia a small annuity, it is not enough to sustain her son, her parents, and herself during this crisis. Even worse, Mr. Sedley, hoping to regain his former status, squanders the annuity that his son, Jos, had been sending him. The aging stockbroker sold that vital source of income to a moneylender in order to invest in a preposterous scheme, which failed (447).

Because Amelia does not have enough money to buy Georgy's gift, she decides to sell the cashmere shawl that Dobbin sent her from India, where he is stationed with his regiment. When Amelia recalls the great value of the article, she hurries to the India shop on Ludgate Hill: "She was not mistaken as to the value of the Major's gift. It was a very fine and beautiful web: and the merchant made a very good bargain when he gave her twenty guineas for her shawl" (449).

Delighted now, Amelia buys the books that Georgy wants and, after returning home, sets them on the table. When her mother notices the volumes, she breaks into a tirade:

"Books!" cried the elder lady, indignantly, 'Books, when the whole house wants bread! Books, when to keep you and your son in luxury, and your dear father out of gaol [debtors' prison], I've sold every trinket I had, the India shawl from my back—even down to the very spoons, that our tradesmen mightn't insult us, and that Mr. Clapp . . . might have his rent.'" (450)

After Mrs. Sedley's outburst, Amelia feels ashamed and gives her mother the sovereigns left after her purchase. The quarrel causes the widow to regard herself as selfish for having kept little Georgy away from his paternal grandfather, Mr. George Osborne, a wealthy merchant, as Mr. Sedley once was. From the time of the stock market collapse, Mr. Osborne has snubbed Sedley, his former employer, regarding him as a social inferior. In fact, before his son's death, Mr. Osborne advised him not to marry Amelia, even though the marriage had long been arranged by the two families. Mr. Osborne's offer to allow little Georgy to live with him

meant, however, that the child could be freed from his mother's destitution, and that he would grow up with the material possessions and social advantages expected of a gentleman's son. Even so, Amelia refused Mr. Osborne's offer until after she argued with her mother. After sending Georgy to live with his grandfather, she suffers greatly, longing to be near her son, much as she grieves for her husband. Even though he is still a child, Georgy, in the new wealth that announces his gentility, is proud and happy. Occasionally, he condescends and allows a visit from his mother.

Here we can see that the author presents the cashmere shawl, a particularly precious and luxurious female garment, as an exotic allure. It points not only to the enormous wealth of the British colonies but also to what Patrick Parrinder calls the "spoils of empire." The scholar remarks, "The spoils of empire are most evident in the lavish and gaudy furnishings, the costumes, jewelry and headwear of *Vanity Fair*, since of all male novelists Thackeray is the most alive to women's fashions" (233). Because of its extraordinary beauty, the cashmere shawl calls to mind a land distantly removed in time and space from the fractious affairs of the central narrative. Through Dobbin's saving gifts, both Amelia's shawl and the one that her mother sold, the author suggests the comfortable opulence of a country that is far removed from the din of family strife, what Thackeray presents as squabbling based on sentimental delusions, like Amelia's martyrdom, at the heart of the narrative. Exotic items, such as the shawl, that originate in the colonies but crop up in the central narrative, focused on events in Europe, create a sense of Britain's imperial power. Thackeray presents alluring articles, both manufactured goods and

exotic foods, as a windfall for the British, provided by their far-flung empire. Along with the allure of those items, the author portrays British soldiers and civilians with the tacit assumption that it is natural for them to live and work in the colonies. Thackeray not only sympathizes with “good” soldiers, like Dobbin, who send gifts from overseas, but he also presents an attitude, as I will show, of racial superiority. Throughout the novel, foreign Others merely cater to British interests and fuel their fantasies. Considering, further, that Thackeray condemns the upper classes as religious hypocrites, while associating genuine Christian principles, such as compassion and selflessness, with the middle classes, the sense of his allegiance to the imperial project is even stronger. In the Victorian period, middle-class evangelicals spread the doctrine of Christianity to indigenous peoples around the globe.<sup>6</sup> Considering these facts as set of related elements, then, I believe that Thackeray regards imperialism is an inherent feature of the cultural milieu that he presents in the novel.

The fact that Amelia sells the cashmere shawl in order to buy books for her son, to contribute to his education, even though her family is starving, suggests that she is deluded by the vain ambitions of the upper classes. The author presents the self-effacing Major Dobbin as a figure who is similarly deceived. In fact, he is so infatuated with Amelia that he pursues her, romantically, for fifteen years, until the novel’s closing chapters. Promoted from the rank of Captain to that of Major, after the battle of Waterloo, and later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Dobbin represents the consummate good soldier: humble, brave, affectionate, intelligent, and generous, though rather clumsy. As one of the puppet figures that Thackeray

discusses in “Before the Curtain,” he “dances in a very amusing and natural manner” (6).<sup>7</sup> His naturalness is evident in how children respond to him affectionately. Mr. Clapp’s daughter calls him “Mr. Sugarplums,” and Georgy, who calls him “Ol’ Dob,” is saddened when the soldier leaves Amelia near the end of the novel. Nonetheless, it is clear that, due to his obsessive loyalty to the governing classes—his long-standing devotion to Amelia and his blind admiration for Osborne, a pompous philanderer and gambler--Dobbin is caught up in the same vortex of vanities that entrap the other characters.

The only character who is caught in the circle of vanities yet is able to see past them is Becky Sharpe, the novel’s central figure. The author portrays her as a parvenu governess, a keen-witted vixen who rises in society because she understands how the upper classes are blinded by their own vanity and preys on them, as they prey on each other. Since Becky’s father was a disreputable artist and her mother was an actress, she learned to perform naturally, so that she climbs from her “vulgar” origins to the highest ranks of society and participates in their deceitful competitions. They perpetuate schemes against one another in order to acquire more power, wealth, and prestige. When their backs are turned, Becky ridicules them by mimicking their hypocritical behaviors. For example, as a child, she mimics Miss Pinkerton, the Head Mistress of an academy for young ladies, by carrying on imaginary dialogues with a little doll that is a caricature of that lady, whom the narrator refers to, sarcastically, as the “Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Doctor Johnson” (21-22). In the novel, mimicry reinforces Thackeray’s metaphor of his characters as puppets performing a dance for the reader. Mimicry



dramatizes the idea that, however spontaneous and natural the puppet figures may appear, their behavior is staged, driven by artifice and cloaked in sham theatrics. In certain moments, Becky reflects that the transparent intrigues of the upper classes, with their “humdrum virtue,” are tedious and insipid (623). Nevertheless, for her own ends, she exploits their shallow self-conceit, even up to the concluding scene of the novel. Through these events, then, Amelia’s martyrdom to her self-absorbed husband, her father’s aspiration to gentility, Dobbin’s lengthy infatuation with her, and Becky’s mimicry, Thackeray is satirizing the upper classes, primarily their lack of family values, as he views them.

In this chapter, I will explore the author’s presentation of empire, set mostly in the margins of the narrative, as a means of reinforcing his satire of the upper classes in the narrative center. My analysis is divided into three parts. The first section explores the social relationships of the two merchant families, the Sedleys and the Osbornes, primarily, as their sons strive to place themselves on a social plane equal to that of the aristocrats. In the first part, I touch briefly on the author’s portrayal of the aristocrats as it relates to their involvement with the rising merchants and as it relates to Thackeray’s portrayal of Jews. I explain how he stereotypes racial Others, especially Jews and blacks. As Thackeray’s satirical critique of the upper classes contradicts the racist and sexist elements of the narrative, I discuss that contradiction in the opening section of the essay. In the second part of my analysis, I discuss how the author presents empire as a means of satirizing aristocratic families, the Crawleys and Southdowns, whom the merchants, in their quest for more power and prominence, envy and emulate. In the

final section, I discuss how the author presents empire as a contrast to the central narrative, so that middle-class family values stand over against the physical, moral, economic, and psychological devastation brought about by the vanity of the upper classes.

### I. Imperial Margins: Laughing at Genteel Merchants

Early in the novel, when Amelia arrives home from Miss Pinkerton's Academy, she shows her friend Becky, an orphan, many of her belongings, "her books, and her piano, and her dresses, and all her necklaces, brooches, laces, and gimcracks." Since Becky has no family, Amelia insists on giving her a turquoise ring and some clothes. She also thinks of giving her a cashmere shawl: "Could she not spare it? and had not her brother Joseph just brought her two from India?" At this point, the teenaged females talk about the importance of family:

When Rebecca saw the two Cashmere shawls which Joseph Sedley had brought home to his sister, she said, with perfect truth, "that it must be delightful to have a brother," and easily got the pity of the tender-hearted Amelia, for being alone in the world, an orphan without friends or kindred.

"Not alone," said Amelia: "you know, Rebecca, I shall always be your friend, and love you as a sister—indeed I will."

"Ah, but to have parents, as you have—kind, rich, affectionate parents, who give you everything you ask for; and

their love, which is more precious than all! My poor papa could give me nothing, and I had but two frocks in all the world! and then to have a brother, a dear brother! Oh, how you must love him!” (24).

Here, in the narrative center, Becky speaks of Amelia’s family, both her parents and her brother, Jos, as the ideal of selfless love. She presents Amelia’s home life as perfect happiness, of course, in order to exaggerate her own situation as an orphan with “no mama,” as she says sometimes, to gain her friend’s sympathy, and, hopefully, to receive one of the handsome shawls as a gift. Even though Amelia feels compassion for Becky, vowing that she will love her as a sister, we can see that the young lady does not completely accept the image of her family as the ideal of domestic bliss that Becky describes. Amelia suspects, in fact, that some motive other than love rules her family. After Becky praises Jos, who is older than Amelia, for his gift of two cashmere shawls, tokens of his affection, supposedly, the young lady laughs out loud. Becky responds, “What! Don’t you love him? you, who say you love everybody?” Although Amelia explains that she does love Jos, she suspects that he does not feel the same about her: “Only Joseph doesn’t seem to care much whether I love him or not. He gave me two fingers to shake when he arrived after ten years’ absence!” (25).

Shortly after this scene, when Jos visits his family, we learn that he has a huge income from his former position as a tax collector, employed as a civil servant by the East India Company in Boggley Wallah, India. When he returns to England, he flaunts his wealth by wearing the flamboyant attire of a young “blood,” a dandy,

and by indulging in fashionable pleasures, attending the theater and opera, drinking and dining out, for example (26-29). With lodgings apart from his parents, he leads the gay life of a bachelor on the town, even though he is painfully shy, almost afraid of females. Unlike the affectionate brother that Becky imagines, Jos, when he meets Amelia after being separated from her for such a long time, displays his genteel manners, the two fingers that he offers her with such dainty politeness, rather than his love. Amelia's laughter points to the contradiction between what his gifts are supposed to represent, his affection, and the condescending behavior of a vain gentleman. Thackeray uses the cashmere shawls here as a means of revealing the ex-Collector's hypocrisy, of satirizing the gentility that he assumes, based on his large government salary and his father's social position. The exotic shawls help to show how Jos's assumption of upper-class privilege gives him a false sense of superiority that dampens the bond of affection between himself and his sister. At the same time, however, the beautiful garments, as they are hand woven and made from a fabric produced in Kashmir and Tibet, beckon the reader to a foreign country, India, that is teeming, both in the reader's mind and in actuality, with immense resources, where Jos became wealthy.<sup>8</sup> That country is alluring, primarily because it is distanced, both in time and in space, from Jos's hypocritical behavior and refined gentility at the narrative center.

Some time later, after Becky leaves the Sedley family, the auction of Mr. Sedley's estate shows how Thackeray's representation of empire magnifies tensions in the narrative center. As the auctioneer, Mr. Hammerdown, waves his ivory hammer in the air, he accepts bids on household items, while a throng of

shoppers rummage through the contents of Sedley's house, both upstairs and down. The company includes a number of "dingy guests of oriental countenance, who thrust printed cards into the [auctioneer's] hand and offer to bid." When Mr. Hammerdown presents for sale the portrait of a gentle-man riding an elephant, that item elicits an unexpected response from the spectators:

"No. 369," roared Mr. Hammerdown. "Portrait of a gentleman on an elephant. Who'll bid for the gentle-man? Lift up the picture, Blowman, and let the company examine this lot." A long, pale, military-looking gentleman, seated demurely at the mahogany table, could not help grinning as this valuable lot was shown by Mr. Blowman. Turn the elephant to the Captain, Blowman. What shall we say, sir, for the elephant? but the captain, blushing in a hurried and discomfited manner, turned away his head, and the auctioneer respected his discomposure (160).

After the officer, Captain Dobbin, looks away, Mr. Hammerdown lowers the price of the portrait several times. He even suggests that someone in the crowd make an offer by naming a price. The crowd chuckles, however, because Mr. Moss, a professional "wag," as the narrator calls him, compares the falling price to the collapse of the elephant, as the spectators might imagine it, under the enormous weight of its rider, a "very stout gentle-man." The company finds the portrait comically absurd because of the contradiction that it presents between what is supposed to be the representation of a fearless hunter in some remote jungle and the image of a fat, inelegant figure seated atop the elephant. When the guests laugh,

Mr. Hammerdown admonishes Mr. Moss for deprecating the portrait as a work of art. The auctioneer then attempts to sell it by pointing out certain “realistic” features: “[T]he attitude of the gallant animal quite in accordance to natur’; the gentleman in a nankeen jacket, his gun in his hand, is going to the chace; in the distance a banyhann-tree and a pagody, most likely resemblances of some interesting spot in our famous Eastern possessions.” After Mr. Hammerdown notices that the painting makes Dobbin uncomfortable, he turns aside and spots another gentleman in the audience and his companion, who bids on the item. Both this officer, Rawdon Crawley, the younger son of an aristocrat, and Becky, now his wife, are amused, as Captain Dobbin was, initially, by the picture. When he recognizes the Crawleys, he is even more uncomfortable than before, so that his “head [sinks] down into his military collar” (162). Even though Dobbin hopes to avoid the couple, he cannot. In order to purchase the piano that he wants to give Amelia, as a fond memento of happier days, he must bid against Becky. After Dobbin’s negotiator, a Jewish aide-de-camp, carries on the competition against the Crawley’s representative, another Jewish character, Dobbin wins the competition and buys the piano. At this point, Becky is surprised because she recognizes Dobbin from the days when she lived with the Sedleys. Afterward, as the chapter concludes, Becky carries with her the portrait of Jos, the fat gentleman whose likeness is depicted in the painting. As she and Rawdon drive away in a buggy, she comments, with an anti-Semitic waspishness that echoes that of Thackeray himself, on the shoppers who remain at the sale: “Look at them with their hooked beaks,” she says, “They’re like vultures after a battle.”

The portrait of Jos highlights tensions in the narrative, based on differences in class rank, because the laughter that it elicits from the spectators--mostly commoners invited to the auction after the wealthier patrons have purchased the more expensive articles—ridicules the squabbles of the central figures. In other words, the realistic details of the painting, the image of a rotund figure wearing a hunter's outfit, the auctioneer's mention of the "banyhann-tree," and the "pagody," incite humor that pokes fun at the vain affairs, battles and campaigns, to use the novel's central metaphor, of the major characters. In fact, the crowd's laughter deflates the assumption of superior masculine gentility and courage that the image of Jos is supposed to represent. In that sense, the auctioneer's use of the word *gentleman*, not only as it applies to Jos but also to Dobbin and Rawdon, is ironic. Mr. Hammerdown does not distinguish in rank among the three figures, who come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Dobbin, for example, because he is the son of a grocer, has no claim to gentility. In fact, his schoolmates ridiculed him because of his father's retail business. They believed that it was a "shameful and infamous practice, the contempt and scorn of all real gentlemen" (45). Of course, the auctioneer uses the word *gentlemen* as a sign of respect and courtesy, applied equally to all three males. But in the context of the whole novel, the three figures are anything but social equals. Particularly, since everyone is laughing about the portrait, the auctioneer's use of the word resonates, ironically. The estate sale represents, then, a sort of festive market, with "carnival laughter," as Mikhail Bakhtin defines it, that undermines, altogether, the idea of class ranks: "It [carnival laughter] marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and

prohibitions” (Bakhtin 10).<sup>9</sup>

When Dobbin recognizes Jos as the figure portrayed in the painting, he shows discomfort because he knows that that so-called gentleman is actually a fool and a braggart, as he proved himself to be at Vauxhall, discussed below. After returning to London from India, the ex-Collector makes a fool of himself by repeating tall tales about hunting tigers, stories as ludicrous as the image of him riding the elephant (39).<sup>10</sup> Jos’s pretense of manly courage, as suggested by the portrait, embarrasses Dobbin. Because of events at Vauxhall, he knows that Jos is anything but the gallant gentleman that he imagines himself to be, or the fearless hunter that he wants others to view him as being. Dobbin knows, too, that Jos cares less about his family than he does about himself, and that he does not suffer, as they do, from the bankruptcy. The portrait, then, is sharply satiric, because it ridicules the notion of a gentleman as a heroic leader of British society in this novel, subtitled, “A Novel Without A Hero.” Although the spectators laugh at the picture of Jos, the auctioneer, in his attempt to assign more worth to it, refers, with pride, to the remote place that it depicts, as one of Britain’s “famous Eastern Possessions.” Since we know that Jos amassed a fortune while working in India, apart from his family, the portrait, somewhat like the shawls, entices the reader. It suggests a far-away place that is a reservoir of natural resources, material goods, and monetary rewards, all free from the turmoil of family affairs in England. In that sense, exotic images, as they contrast sharply with the vain, often sentimental, delusions of the central figures, such as we see when Dobbin purchases the piano for Amelia and allows her to believe that Osborne gave it to her, show how the



novel contributes to the image of an exotic East and how the author exploits that stereotype for his own ends. Images of an exotic Orient presented throughout the novel add to the sense that Thackeray is loyal to the British project of imperialism. The close association between imperialism and exoticism strengthens that supposition. In *Victorian Writers and the Image of Empire*, Laurence Kitzan remarks, “The world pictures created by the imperial writers were a series of often vivid illustrations presented in a gallery to tempt the palates of their readers” (53). As the portrait of Jos, with its ironic overtones and background imagery suggests, the empire beyond England’s geographic borders presents a welcome contrast to the wrangling, based on class hierarchies primarily, in the narrative center.

The laughter that the portrait arouses among the commoners further deflates the notion of masculine gentility because the ridiculous likeness suggests that Rawdon’s superior status is, likewise, a kind of self-delusion, similar to Pip’s “self-swindling” in Dickens’s *Great Expectations*. The crowd’s humor diminishes Rawdon’s aristocratic stature because he is standing in the midst of the commoners and participating in carnival laughter that suspends rank and privilege, as Bakhtin says. Rawdon’s metaphorical loss of status is reinforced by the fact that he has just married Becky, and, because of her lowly origins, has been cut out of Matilda’s, his rich aunt’s, will. Rawdon’s presence at the auction is ironic, because it mocks his aristocratic privilege as something artificial, like the painting itself, produced by culture rather than by nature. Because Rawdon’s affection for his new bride, as suggested by his elopement, and by his willingness to go against the upper-class tradition of marrying within one’s rank, is natural, it is more salubrious and

meaningful, in the author's view, than class privilege. Even though, at this point, Rawdon is still in competition with his older brother, Mr. Pitt, and his uncle, Bute Crawley, for Matilda's money, Becky is the one who engineers their schemes. The fact that Rawdon allows her to take the lead and willingly submits to her plans, despite her vulgar origins, shows that he genuinely cares for her. He recognizes, too, that she is more clever and intelligent than he is. We can see, then, that the portrait, as it elicits laughter from the crowd, helps to degrade both Jos and Rawdon. Mr. Hammerdown's name suggests not only his role as an auctioneer, but also this degradation of his customers from their elevated status as upper-class gentlemen.

The portrait of Jos makes Dobbin uncomfortable, too, because it recalls events at Vauxhall that took place earlier while Becky was staying with the Sedleys. During the estate sale, Dobbin tries to avoid Becky because he blames her for what happened at Vauxhall, for embarrassing the Sedleys and for bringing out the worst in his friend, Osborne. The festive atmosphere at the London pleasure gardens and the conflicts between gentlemen there, incited by Becky's scheme to marry Jos, anticipated the laughter of the auction. When Dobbin accompanied the two couples, Amelia with Osborne and Becky with Jos, to Vauxhall, everyone expected that the rich ex-Collector would propose marriage to the governess. During the festivities, clumsy Dobbin was the odd-man-out, so to speak. Following Osborne's instruction that he should hold Amelia's cashmere shawl, Dobbin found himself standing alone, forgotten by the two couples, as they amused themselves, drinking, dining, and strolling about the gardens. After drinking the entire contents

of a bowl of rack punch, Jos began to sing loudly, to his “diddle-diddle darling,” attracting much attention, so that a crowd gathered around the box where the couples were seated. While the crowd laughed, some wag made a joke about a fat man on a tightrope. Embarrassed, Osborne urged Jos to leave. Emboldened by the punch, however, he ignored the lieutenant and put his arm around Becky’s waist. The crowd, seeing that she could not free herself, redoubled its laughter. When Jos invited the on-lookers to come inside the box, Osborne was about to knock a man down, but Dobbin arrived and averted calamity by shooing away the spectators. At that point, Osborne scolded Dobbin for his absence, grabbed the shawl, and put it around Amelia. After ordering Dobbin to take Jos to his lodgings, Osborne escorted the ladies home. Before leaving, Jos confessed to Dobbin his intention to marry Becky.

The Vauxhall incident, in the narrative center, presents Becky so that she can exploit the vanities of the gentlemen around her. What foils her scheme in this case, however, is Jos’s ludicrous behavior. As he lies in bed the next morning, with a tremendous headache from the rack punch, several people make fun of him. As they play along with his fantasy that he is a ferocious pugilist, Osborne, Dobbin, Mr. Brush, Jos’s valet, and Mr. Hosbin, the doctor, make the ex-Collector’s pretense of masculine gentility look even more absurd. Jos’s ludicrous grimace—“I believe I’m very terrible when I’m roused,” he says--causes Dobbin and Osborne to laugh at him openly. Osborne’s laughter has a sadistic edge, however. Angry with Jos for making him look foolish on the previous evening, Osborne tells him that he was maudlin, rather than terrible, and even does a little dance with Dobbin in order

to humiliate the fat ex-Collector. This dance is the sort of mimicry that Becky performs with such malicious delight. It satirizes the gentlemen at Vauxhall, both Jos and Osborne himself, because it reminds us that they are caught in the whirl of artifice, driven by their own vanities. After dancing with Dobbin, Osborne tells him that he is determined to bring down the “great, hectoring Nabob,” as he calls Jos.<sup>11</sup> Osborne is most concerned that Jos’s marriage to Becky will tarnish his own image as a young blood. Since Osborne plans to marry Amelia, he does not want a lowly governess to become a member of the Sedley family. So he tells Jos the falsehood that Becky threatens to sue him for misrepresentation, if he does not propose marriage to her, as everyone expects. That information frightens bashful Jos, severs the affair with Becky, and embarrasses the Sedleys, so that she has to leave their family.

We can see, then, that the Vauxhall incident amplifies tensions, based on class rank, between the gentlemen, Jos and Osborne, with Dobbin standing aside, looking awkward, left out of the amusements. Given the facts that Dobbin outranks Osborne in the military and that his father is a wealthy alderman, who was granted a knighthood for his courage in resisting Napoleon, this situation is highly ironic (53). The author satirizes Dobbin, as well as Jos and Osborne, however, because the grocer’s son, so infatuated with Amelia, wants to join their genteel coterie, full of petty jealousies and conspiracies. As Dobbin stands apart, holding her cashmere shawl, the garment reminds us of Jos’s hypocrisy, earlier. The shawl suggests that Dobbin’s desire to participate in the sordid affairs of the upper classes is wrong headed. At the same time, the shawl points to the empire beyond, populated by

soldiers like Captain Dobbin, who are detached and distanced from family disputes, fraught with deceit and subterfuge, like Osborne's scheme to oust Becky.

Through the laughter directed at Jos and Osborne's disdain for him, it is clear that the author is satirizing rich merchants and their sons, especially their pursuit of genteel status through vain behaviors, such as carousing on the town, womanizing, proving their manhood with fist fights, and imagining themselves as heroic figures. What contributes to Osborne's disdain of Jos is that he feels that he is superior to the wealthy ex-Collector. Even though he and Jos are social equals, Osborne regards himself as superior to "money-grubbing vulgarians" like Jos, like his own father, or like the greedy banker, Fred Bullock. Much later, in order to receive a substantial dowry from old Osborne, Bullock marries Lieutenant Osborne's sister, Maria (413). Becky, quite insightfully, deduced that Osborne interfered with her scheme to marry Jos. So she took the lieutenant's measure, as she said. She sized him up before bringing him down, seducing him, in other words, much later, in Brussels. Because the narrative, after Becky leaves the Sedleys, focuses primarily on her involvement with the aristocratic Crawleys, the painting of Jos at the auction reanimates tensions inflamed at Vauxhall. And, since Dobbin is Becky's rival in the bidding war, the auction also sets him up as her moral adversary, later in the novel. In both the auction and the Vauxhall event, Thackeray satirizes the notion of gentility through the public's derision of merchants' sons. The crowds' laughter, in both cases, deflates the pretense of masculine gentility and, in doing so, ridicules the deceitful social entanglements of the upper middle class, driven by the ambition of "snobs," as Thackeray uses the

term, to rise in society.<sup>12</sup>

Besides reanimating the tensions aroused at Vauxhall, the portrait of Jos anticipates events near the end of the novel. Dobbin, when he buys the piano, behaves as Amelia's "Newfoundland dog," tantamount to her slave (641). On the other hand, when Becky purchases the portrait, she pragmatically packs it away as insurance against hard times. She knows that the painting has value as a tool to manipulate Jos. After leading a Bohemian life, wandering about the Continent, trying to evade the scandal of her affair with the powerful Marquis, Lord Steyne, of Gaunt House, Becky finally wends her way back into the upper classes by flattering Jos. While residing at the Elephant Hotel, a third-rate boarding house in the German state that Thackeray calls "Pumpernickel," she happens to meet him, vacationing there with Amelia, little Georgy, and Dobbin. When Jos takes Georgy to the casino, she notices the little scamp, as she calls him, though she does not know, at first, who he is. Wearing a mask during the festivities, Becky is playing roulette. She is down on her luck, as she has been since the news of her affair with Lord Steyne spread throughout Europe. After asking the boy to place a bet for her, her luck changes, as she wins a purse full of money. Becky's chance encounter with Georgy changes her luck overall, too, as it allows her once again to entwine Jos in the skeins of the green silk purse that she knitted for him when she lived with the Sedleys. The purse is a metaphor for her scheme to marry the nabob his money.

After Becky speaks with Jos, he visits her in her garret at the Elephant Hotel. As he approaches her room, he can see a university student, Fritz, lying on a bed in the apartment across from hers and another, Max, crouched outside of her

door, pleading with her to dine with him. Becky admonishes Max, shouting to him that her grandfather, actually Jos, should not see them there. Both students are dressed slovenly. Fritz wears “jack-boots and a dirty shlafrock,” while Max, “exceeding smart and dirty too,” has “whitey-brown ringlets and a large finger ring.” As the narrator explains, when the students speak to one another, Jos cannot understand them because he has not studied the French language. After Jos asks Max to point out Becky’s room, the student responds in French and flings himself on the bed with Max, across the hall. Jos hears them laughing inside their room. After he enters Becky’s garret, the two students eavesdrop on them. For the meeting, Becky dresses seductively, wears lots of rouge, and entices the ex-Collector, with food and drink, to lie on the bed with her. Somewhat perplexed by the situation, Jos does not lie down, however, but sits in a chair and listens, while Becky plays the role of a forsaken mother. Playing on his vanity, hoping to regain his affection, Becky tells Jos that he was the first “man [she] ever—ever saw.” The hesitation in her remark shows how naturally she performs. She omits the word “loved,” changing it to the word “saw,” hoping that Jos can fill in the blank, mentally. In order to erase his doubts about what happened at Vauxhall, Becky blames Osborne for breaking up their romance, explaining that he was jealous of her. She portrays herself as a virtuous female, whose friends have been unfaithful and whose husband cruelly deserted her. Becky plays the part so convincingly that Jos imagines that she is as innocent as a “white robed angel.” Becky even suggests that the hot climate where her husband, Rawdon, is working might kill him, thus freeing her to marry Jos. After leaving the apartment, he considers some means of

helping her. Meanwhile, Max and Fritz join Becky in her apartment, where she amuses them by mimicking Jos, dancing around, as she eats sausage and drinks brandy (632-633).

Becky's seedy surroundings and the behavior of the two students should have tipped off Jos that she was wallowing in debauchery with them. But Thackeray's depiction of him in this event accentuates his figure as an obtuse buffoon. His inability to understand what the students are saying and his bewilderment when he observes Becky's room heighten his clownish figure, especially as Becky tries to lure him into the bed with food. In the carnival atmosphere of *Pumpnickel*, Becky has returned to her Bohemian origins, in a sense, so that, even though she cannot count on the salacious allure of her youth to seduce him, Jos makes easy prey for her theatrical talents.<sup>13</sup> While Becky's reputation has hounded her, so that she cannot establish herself for long among the upper classes on the Continent, she fits in naturally with the company of the two students. They feed off of her, financially and sexually, as she has lived off others throughout the novel. Even so, she is happier with her sardonic, raffish companions than with the tedious routines and hypocritical piety of the upper classes. The students' dirty apparel, like Becky's dingy garret, suggests the spontaneous vulgarity of their existence, in contrast to the artifice behind Jos's supposedly refined accomplishments as a gentleman. Since Jos cannot understand French, the language that the students speak, Thackeray is clearly satirizing his snobbish pretense of worldly knowledge. Their sneering attitude mocks Jos's gentility, which Becky mimics with such carnal appetite, eating sausage and drinking brandy,



while she dances, after he leaves.<sup>14</sup> Her dance and the students' laughter demean his genteel status, bring him down off the elephant, so to speak—as the name of the hotel might prompt us to see—as the crowd's laughter at the auction did. Their scoffing attitude parallels the facetious humor of the wags that we have seen before at Vauxhall and at the estate sale.

In his discussion of the function of laughter in the “historical development of culture and literature,” Bahktin, in *Rabelais and His World*, remarks:

True ambivalent and universal laughter does not deny seriousness, but purifies and completes it. Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified: it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naïveté and from sentimentality. Laughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, forever incomplete. It restores this ambivalent wholeness (122-123).

As Bahktin's analysis suggests, the laughter directed toward Jos symbolically frees English society, restoring its “ambivalent wholeness” in a sense, by doing away with class hierarchies. Portraying Jos as a foolish, naïve clown, Thackeray satirizes the upper classes, especially as Jos is duped by Becky's theatrical performance as a devoted mother. The fact that she never had time for own son, little Rawdy, almost always leaving him with the housekeeper, Briggs, yet performs so naturally the role of a loving mother, makes a mockery of the devotion

to family values that the upper classes, as Thackeray portrays them, hypocritically profess. Becky's performance also throws light on Amelia's martyrdom, as she dotes on the memory of her husband and tries to reproduce, through little Georgy, his gentility. By showing how those vanities are artificial, rehearsed, Becky performance makes Amelia's behavior look selfish and maudlin, even though, in her own mind, she has Georgy's best interests at heart. In this context Amelia's eager willingness to take Becky back as a member of her family appears as her desire, in actuality, to lord it over her, as she did when they were teenagers.

Shortly after this scene, when Jos again visits Becky in her room at the Elephant Hotel, she shows him the portrait that she purchased years before during the auction: "It was the portrait of a gentleman in pencil, his face having the advantage of being painted up in pink. He was riding the elephant, away from some coca-nut trees, and a pagoda: it was an Eastern scene" (654). After seeing the portrait of himself, which Becky enhanced with pink brush-strokes, Jos is flattered and emotionally shaken. She insinuates, as she did before, that she regrets that they had never married. Here the portrait, with its pink color, associates Jos with Miss Pinkerton's Academy for young ladies, so that his effeminate attributes, ridiculed by his father in the early chapters, stand out. In his portrayal of Jos, Thackeray reverses the ex-Collector's gender features in order to satirize the image of masculine gentility and bravado that he flaunts. This touched-up drawing, which presents empire in the narrative margins, looks back to events that took place in the opening chapters. In doing so, the portrait makes the plot circular, contributing, in other words, to the author's theme of characters trapped within a vortex of vanities:

“Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!*” the narrator remarks, “Which of us is happy in this world?”

Early in the narrative, the author presents Jos’s corpulent body as a sort of battleground of contradictory impulses associated with the desires of the rising merchant classes. While Becky resides with the Sedleys, for example, Amelia reminds her brother of the promise that he had made to take her to Vauxhall, as she wants to help Becky win Jos for her spouse. After he states emphatically that he cannot go out that night, Mr. and Mrs. Sedley explain that they cannot escort the girls on the following night because of a previous engagement. At that point, Mr. Sedley jokes that Jos can take the girls to Vauxhall, because “‘He’s *big* enough.’ At which speech Mr. Sambo at the sideboard burst out laughing, and poor fat Joe felt inclined to become a parricide almost.” Mr. Sedley, continuing his raillery, pretends that Jos is a helpless female: “‘Undo his stays!’ continued the pitiless old gentleman. ‘Fling some water in his face, Miss Sharp, or carry him up stairs: the dear creature’s fainting. Poor victim! Carry him up; he’s as light as a feather!’” (34). Still poking fun at Jos, his father orders “Sambo,” the black servant, to go to the stock exchange and get Jos’s elephant. Seeing his son about to cry with vexation, however, the old jokester, holding out his hand, says, “It’s all fair on the Stock-Exchange, Jos,—and Sambo, never mind the elephant, but give Mr. Jos a glass of Champagne. Boney himself hasn’t got such in his cellar, my boy!” (34).

In retrospect, Mr. Sedley’s facetious remark about the fairness of the stock-exchange is ironic, of course, since afterward he loses the family fortune by gambling in the stock market. But his verbal attack on his son also presents the

psychological anxiety, brought about by social and economic disturbances, associated with class ranks. For example, one contradiction in Mr. Sedley's joking is that, as he ridicules Jos by associating him with the elephant, he scoffs at the significance of the empire, even though it provides the flow of goods and services, imports and exports, both material and nonmaterial, that strengthen the British economy.<sup>15</sup> When Mr. Sedley laughs at Jos, he ridicules the socio-economic significance of the British empire, which is commonly represented in this age by images of the elephant.<sup>16</sup> Yet afterward, the old jokester finds himself financially dependent on his son's remittances, money that Jos made in India, and on Dobbin's earnings as a soldier of the British empire. The fiscal stability of Jos's and Dobbin's earnings contrasts sharply with the uncertainty of old Sedley's stock market venture. The risky aspect of his venture, as he enters into the laissez-faire economic system, is represented by other upper-class characters, Rawdon and Osborne, for example, who gamble by playing cards throughout the novel.

In the author's presentation of empire, the element of risk is muted, however. For example, even though Thackeray does present the incident of Mr. Scape, who went bankrupt by investing in the "great Calcutta House of Fogle, Fake, and Cracksmen," the purpose of that incident is to show the obtuse selfishness, like Mr. Sedley's, of Jos's desire for social prestige. After he moves into the Black Hole district of London, where prominent Anglo-Indians reside, Jos takes possession of Scape's household belongings and admires himself in the mirror once owned by that man (578-579).<sup>17</sup> The ironic justice of Scape's financial loss points to the contradictory aspects of the rise to gentility, as Thackeray regards

it. From an economic standpoint, Scape's loss was unfortunate. But it was also fortunate in the sense that he escaped, as his name implies, from the vain pursuits that make Jos and his father fatuous and despicable gentlemen. Like Sedley's investment in the stock market, Scape's gamble failed, because, as the name of the investment firm, "Fogle, Fake, and Cracksmen," suggests, it was an illegal means of earning a living. Jos's lawful appropriation of his property, then, contributes to our sense of empire as a vital economic source. In other words, the material bounty provided by the empire beyond Britain's geographic borders, as it contrasts with the financial instability associated with the *laissez-faire* economic system, in the narrative center, further illustrates how Thackeray's representation of English reality depends on his construction of an India that exists only to serve English fantasies.

Another ironic contradiction in the old gentleman's raillery is that he does not see how the "inter-imperialist" rivalry, as Vladimir Lenin later refers to it, between England and France, which Sedley implicitly endorses in the comparison of his wine with Napoleon's, is potentially disastrous.<sup>18</sup> That rivalry has fatal consequences that he does not anticipate. The financial disaster that takes place when the Corsican upstart—who, on the national stage, presents an analogy to Becky's private campaigns—returns from Elba, the bloodshed of the war, and the use of flattery with which Becky eventually lures Jos to his death, all contribute to the irony of this scene, especially as the old gentleman's vanity blinds him to the possibility of those consequences.

Mr. Sedley's mockery, which depends on his characterization of Jos as a

female, also reflects contradictions inherent in the British image of a feminine empire. A common assumption at this time was that indigenous tribes had remained unchanged for centuries and were inferior, supposedly, to patriarchal England.<sup>19</sup> Jos's effeminate qualities express an anxiety that shadowed this assumption: the fear of homosexuality that underlies the British assumption of the metropole as masculine and the periphery as feminine. Thomas R. Metcalf explains that in India the British government condemned prostitutes as "contaminated" yet urgently made them available to the soldiers. That contradiction, the scholar asserts, points to a fear of homosexuality: "Such an 'effeminate' pattern of behavior among the members of the ruling race had to be avoided at all costs. Nevertheless, in the hyper-masculine society of the Raj, a barely suppressed homosexual tension can be seen shaping much of the erotic attraction of India" (Metcalf 104). When Mr. Sedley ridicules Jos for having effeminate features, he expresses his own anxiety, then, about what constitutes proper gender roles and about the empire, gendered as female. Even further, the laughter that this scene evokes is double-edged. While Mr. Sedley mocks his son's girlish vanity, the old gentleman comes off as arrogant and insensitive, so that we sympathize, somewhat, with "poor fat Joe." Sambo's behavior reinforces the point that Mr. Sedley's ridicule redounds against himself, as it does against all snobs, according to the author. While Thackeray presents Sambo as the stereo-typical black servant, who smiles and accommodates his master, the servant's laughter, while apparently echoing that of Mr. Sedley, also presents an ambiguity, because, as Joseph Sherman has argued, it may be directed as much at the father as at his son.<sup>20</sup> That ambiguity suggests that the author is satirizing Mr.

Sedley's homophobic fears, which he attempts to displace onto Jos, but which redound against himself.

From the incident of the estate sale, we can also glimpse the author's attitude toward racial Others. The narrator clearly denigrates the "dingy guests of oriental countenance" with the implication that, like parasites, they feed off of the misfortunes of wealthy Anglo-Britons (166). Through his condescending attitude, the narrator stereotypes Jewish figures, who, in their negotiations with the auctioneer, represent both Dobbin and the Crawleys.<sup>21</sup> Since racial Others, rather than the English figures, do the actual bartering, that portrayal suggests that they are more avaricious than the British figures are: "The Hebrew aide-de-camp in the service of the officer at the table bid against the Hebrew gentleman employed by the elephant purchasers, and a brisk battle ensued over this little piano, the combatants being greatly encouraged by Mr. Hammerdown" (162). As Becky's comment about their large noses, "hooked beaks," suggests, the author portrays Jews as so driven by base passions, such as greed and sexual lust, that they have no regard for the privacy and sanctity of an English home. Similar to Charles Dickens's portrayal of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*, Thackeray presents Jews as dirty, "dingy," so that they remain culturally distanced from a British society that places a premium on material cleanliness, equated with spiritual purity.<sup>22</sup> The dinginess of the Jewish figures at the auction is different than that of the German students in *Pumpernickel*, however, because Becky's attitude toward each group is different. Her attitude toward the Jews, whom she refers to as "vultures after a battle," is demeaning. The narrator tacitly approves of her derogatory comment. On the other

hand, she finds Max's and Fritz's dinginess on a scale that is congenial with her own squalor, so that the author is not deriding the students, as he does the Jews, whom he places outside of Europe's assumption of cultural superiority and racial dominance.

We can see how Thackeray stereotypes Jews later in the novel, too, when Amelia, Georgy, Jos, and Dobbin, about to leave on vacation for Pumpernickel, board a steamer in London.<sup>23</sup> The narrator explains that the family of Lord Bareacres, a prominent nobleman whose wife was humiliated by Becky in Brussels, stands apart, speaking to nobody, and stares at a bustling congregation of tourists headed for the Continent. The carriages of the nobility, "emblazoned with coronets, and heaped with shining imperials," make it difficult for the passengers to move about freely on the foredeck. After the couriers finish their duties, they gather around to look at the magnificent carriages, when they are joined by some Jews. The narrator remarks,

It was a wonder how my Lord [Bareacres] got the ready money to pay for the expenses of the journey. The Hebrew gentlemen knew how he got it. They knew what money his lordship had in his pocket at that instant, and what interest he paid for it, and who gave it him (596-97).

With the expression "ready money," the narrator recalls Rawdon's and Becky's extravagant lifestyle, always living above their means, gambling, and always owing money. As they generally lacked the cash to pay their bills, they lived on credit, on "nothing a year," as the narrator puts it. So here Thackeray is satirizing aristocrats,



like Rawdon and like Lord Bareacres, whose credit is extended, ironically, by the Jewish moneylenders. The Jews know that Bareacres lacks the cash to finance the trip, so he must borrow from them, at a hefty rate of interest, in order to maintain his image and support his expensive lifestyle. The imperial insignias of his carriages display the false idea that ancestral privilege provides him with economic means and moral substance. Thackeray stereotypes Jews, then, as shrewd, greedy, and alien. That stereotype amplifies his satire of the upper classes, whose moral corruption is linked to the racial Otherness that the Jews embody, just as Jos's greed is mockingly linked to theirs in the auction scene. This incident shows, too, how the rising merchants envy the aristocrats, as Jos constantly stares at Lord Bareacres and his wife: "[T]he movements of the noble pair occupied Jos's mind entirely. The presence of the lord fascinated him, and he could look at nothing else" (597).

Thackeray's ideology is contradictory in the sense that, while he satirizes class ranks, showing a democratic impulse, he simultaneously denigrates foreign Others. For example, he portrays Miss Rhoda Swartz, the "rich woolly-haired mulatto from St. Kitt's," as a humorous caricature.<sup>24</sup> She is a wealthy heiress, acquainted with Amelia at Miss Pinkerton's Academy. On the day of Amelia's departure, Miss Swartz "was in such a passion of tears, that they were obliged to send for Dr. Floss, and half tipsify her with salvolatile." With his depiction of the heiress's physical features, frizzy hair and dark skin, as in the name "Swartz," which means *black*, Thackeray presents her as a stereotype of black people. In his representation, much later, of her West Indian brother, who attends Reverend

Veal's school, the author presents the same features, "mahogany complexion" and a "wooly head" (545). Miss Swartz's hyperbolic outbursts of emotion contribute to the stereotype. Afterwards, as Amelia is saying farewell to her friends, the narrator mentions the heiress's "hysterical *yoops*" (17). Her screams present a display of emotion far greater than that of the refined English girls, who are merely crying and kissing one another. That contrast adds to the stereotype of blacks because it implies that Miss Swartz, despite the fact that she has attended the finishing school, is ruled by her emotions, that she lacks the intellectual capabilities needed to develop a sense of social poise.<sup>25</sup>

Thackeray continues his satiric portrayal of the Creole heiress later, during the time that she enters London high society and dazzles everyone with her money and her jewels. At this point, Dobbin has gone on an errand in an attempt to convince Mr. Sedley that he should allow Amelia to marry Lieutenant Osborne. Dobbin's appeal is somewhat convincing because Mr. Sedley thinks that the marriage might give him some sadistic satisfaction, since old Osborne disapproves of it. As we find out later, the elder Osborne urges his son to marry Miss Swartz because of her huge fortune. But Osborne, in a conversation with Amelia, only ridicules the heiress, her wealth, her race, and her attempt to fit into upper-class society:

“My sisters say she has diamonds as big as pigeons' eggs,  
George said laughing. ‘How they must set off her complexion!  
A perfect illumination it must be when her jewels are on her neck.  
Her jet-black hair is as curly as Sambo's. I dare say she wore a

nose-ring when she went to court; and with a plume of feathers in her top-knot she would look like a perfect Belle Sauvage” (193).

From Osborne’s derision of Miss Swartz, we can see how Thackeray develops the stereotype that he started with when she was at Miss Pinkerton’s Academy. Despite her great wealth, Osborne regards the heiress as no better than a servant. The stereotype of Sambo, who smiles and pleases his master, contributes to the image of Miss Swartz as a ridiculous fool.<sup>26</sup> The author again uses hyperbole to ridicule the black female, whose gaudy, oversized diamonds suggest that, in Osborne’s estimation, she does not understand proper English decorum. Even more absurd and demeaning is the image of Miss Swartz wearing a nose-ring at court, so that she appears as a savage, ludicrously out of place among British royalty. Thackeray presents her love of bodily decoration--“white feathers in her hair” and a “yellow satin train that streeled after her like a comet,” for example—as a savage propensity that goes along with her cultural illiteracy. Mrs. Colonel Haggistoun, her chaperon, writes letters for her because she has trouble spelling words correctly. Miss Swartz, despite her training at Miss Pinkerton’s Academy, has no accomplishments that a refined lady is supposed to possess. Besides her inability to spell words correctly, she can play only two pieces on the piano, and she knows only three songs.

What contributes to Thackeray’s depiction of Miss Swartz is that her father, as Osborne explains, was a German-Jew, “connected with the Cannibal Islands in some way,” who became wealthy from the ownership of slaves (194). The fact that the heiress’s father is a German-Jew presents another racial slur, as we have seen how Becky refers to “Hebrews” at the auction as vultures, and how Thackeray uses

them to debunk Lord Bareacres's family. Miss Swartz's association with the Cannibal Islands goes even further. The connection to cannibalism places her beyond the bounds of accepted cultural practices in the West.

Despite George's ridicule of Miss Swartz as a female who is wholly unsuited to be the wife of a gentleman, his father not only hopes for that union but even states that he will marry her himself. Thackeray presents Mr. Osborne's adamant desire for a marriage, based solely on wealth, as evidence of his vulgarity, of his inability to rise above his common, middle-class origins, and of his stubbornness. His son's vituperative recoil from the thought of such a marriage is tacitly approved by the narrator, as is Lieutenant Osborne's affair with Miss Pye, a quadroon from St. Vincent's. While the author satirizes Osborne as a womanizer, he accepts his racial dominance, the fact that black females are at the soldier's disposal, sexually. So Osborne's affair with Miss Pye complements Thackeray's racist caricature of Miss Swartz, as a woolly-headed fool.<sup>27</sup>

The author's racist depiction of foreign Others, like Miss Swartz, Miss Pye, and Jos's Indian servant, Loll Jewab, suggests his support for the imperial project because those figures, portrayed as inferior, merely cater to British needs (571). Miss Swartz, for example, pays double at Miss Pinkerton's Academy, and even though, with her vast wealth, she marries a Scottish nobleman, James McMull, her race disallows her from becoming a full-fledged member of British high society. In that genteel world, "blood" is what distinguishes those considered as authentic members of the aristocracy, "nobs of West End," for example (413). Miss Pye, another West Indian female, likewise serves the interests of a British soldier, taking

care of Osborne's sexual needs, as we have seen. Thackeray also portrays Jewab as a racial Other, a caricature, similar to Miss Swartz, who is useful to Jos for a short time. While living outside of the tropical zone, Jewab cannot tolerate the bracing Northern climate, a feature that contributes, supposedly, to the vigor of the Anglo-Saxon race and the superiority of its civilization.<sup>28</sup> So the servant shudders continuously. His chattering teeth alone imply his cultural difference and inferiority, according to the author. With his dusky complexion, yellow eyeballs, and white teeth, Jewab frightens Jos's maids, who mistake him for the devil (558). Although he performs the menial tasks of a servant, such as lighting his master's hookah, he serves Jos's interests, primarily, by making him appear majestic, like a Governor-General of India (570-71). The boys at St. Martin's Lane make fun of Jewab and, after teaching Jos's European servant how to make "curries, pilaws, and pipes," he is sent back to India, on board the ship that Dobbin has invested in, because he has fulfilled the purpose of making his master look superior. Although Jewab is a native of India, the "Jew" in his name suggests the generalized nature of his racial inferiority. Thackeray's portrayal of foreign Others, like the Quashyboos and the Cocoanut Indians, for whom, late in the novel, Becky affects Christian compassion, when she attempts to reestablish herself in British society, illustrate his imperialist commitments (622). He presents racial Others as mere instruments of British power and ambition.<sup>29</sup>

The author's support for the imperial project is also suggested through another image of Jos, in the narrative margin, that has aroused much controversy among critics.<sup>30</sup> The author presents him, not long after he starts working in

India, as completely isolated from society. When Jos writes to his parents from Bengal, his letter shows that he is far removed from their “civilized” life in the city.

The narrator explains,

Boggley Wallah is situated in a fine, lonely, marshy, jungly district, famous for snipe-shooting, and where not unfrequently you may flush a tiger. Ramgunge, where there is a magistrate, is only forty miles off, and there is a cavalry station about thirty miles farther; so Joseph wrote home to his parents, when he took possession of his collectorship. He had lived about eight years of his life, quite alone, at this charming place, scarcely seeing a Christian face except twice a year, when the detachment arrived to carry off the revenues which he collected, to Calcutta (28).

Jos’s letter emphasizes his detachment from civilization, as he works at a great distance, travelling either by foot or on horseback, from the magistrate in Ramgunge, and even further from the cavalry station, some thirty miles beyond the town. The fact that he rarely sees a Christian face contributes to the sense that he lives on the remote fringe of the empire, and that he faces not only an unknown wilderness but also heathen Indians. The critical controversy stems, I think, from the narrator’s voice, as it fluctuates, registering different tones, depending on the situation that he is presenting, during the novel. For example, the narrator speaks sarcastically, using the words “fine” and “charming” to depict the inhospitable

aspect of Jos's outpost that is forbidding, "jungly" and "marshy." The narrator's genteel voice, what James Phelan calls the "sociolect of the genteel upper-middle class," may mislead the reader into thinking that Thackeray is ambivalent about imperialism, as Sandy Morton Norley argues (127). But, as Phelan explains, the narrator's, genteel voice is often undercut by his dominant, straightforward voice.<sup>31</sup> So we should not take his sarcasm here as an indictment of imperialism but rather as an expression of his distaste for swampy places, populated by wild beasts and "savages."

The author's portrayal of Jos living in the jungle is doubly ironic, then, because he is better off living there, making a fortune among tigers and savages, than in England, surrounded by the familial disputes and internecine conflicts that eventually kill him. Despite the genuine success that he achieved in the East, however, Jos, at home in Russell Square, feels he must promote himself as a fearless hunter. For example, while Becky is living with the Sedleys, Jos tells her that he went on a hunting expedition in India and that the mahout was pulled down from his elephant by a tiger. When Becky warns Jos that he should not put himself in such dangerous situations, he responds that the danger only makes the hunt more pleasing. The narrator comments that Jos had been on a tiger hunt only once, and that he was "half killed—not by the tiger, but by the fright" (39). All the while that Jos is prevaricating, telling Becky how brave he was in India, he is getting caught up, metaphorically, in the skeins of the green silk purse that she is knitting for him. The purse metaphor contributes to our sense of Becky's ability to charm and flatter Jos, while he remains blind to her intentions (39). The metaphor also associates

money-grubbing Becky with the greed of the “Hebrews” that she scorns, because her purse equates to their moneybags. The ironic contrast between India, supposedly an impassable wilderness full of predatory beasts but actually the source of immense wealth, and England, putatively a civilized nation but actually full of savage threats to human life, displays the imperialist reasoning within Thackeray’s realism.<sup>32</sup>

## II. Mocking Aristocratic Families

Thackeray’s portrayal of empire contributes to his satire of aristocratic families, particularly the humanitarian concern that they profess for the poor and for natives in the colonies. In Chapter 9, “Family Portraits,” for example, when the narrator introduces the reader to the Crawleys, he portrays Mr. Pitt, Sir Pitt Crawley’s eldest son, as an educated nobleman, whose career in college was “highly creditable”: he had studied the “ancient and modern orators with great assiduity” and spoke often at the debating societies. Even so, the narrator speaks sarcastically of Mr. Pitt’s accomplishments:

But though he had a fine flux of words, and delivered his little voice with great pomposity and pleasure to himself, and never advanced any sentiment or opinion which was not perfectly trite and stale, and supported by a Latin quotation; yet he failed somehow, in spite of a mediocrity which ought to have insured any man a success (84).

The narrator’s satiric attitude here affects our view of Mr. Pitt’s political career and



his espoused religious faith later.<sup>33</sup> After college, Mr. Pitt works as the Private Secretary for his maternal grandfather, Lord Binkie, and afterward spends ten years in the diplomatic service in Pumpernickel but gives up that position because of slow advancement. Thackeray's satire allows the reader to easily recognize Mr. Pitt's self-serving ambition:

He wrote a pamphlet on Malt on returning to England (for he was an ambitious man, and always liked to be before the public), and took a strong part in the Negro Emancipation question. Then he became a friend of Mr. Wilberforce's, whose politics he admired, and had that famous correspondence with the Reverend Silas Hornblower, on the Ashantee Mission. He was in London, if not for the Parliament session, at least in May, for the religious meetings. In the country he was a magistrate, and an active visitor and Speaker among the destitute of religious instruction. He was said to be paying his addresses to Lady Jane Sheepshanks, Lord Southdown's third daughter, and whose sister, Lady Emily, wrote those sweet tracts, "The Sailor's True Binnacle," and "The Applewoman of Finchley Common" (84).

Here Thackeray marginalizes the image of empire, as suggested by Wilberforce's correspondence with Reverend Hornblower at the Ashantee Mission, in order to accentuate the impulse of the aristocracy to fortify its hegemony. The narrator reveals how Mr. Pitt furthers his ambition by advocating a humanitarian

cause, the abolition of slavery, as he takes part in the Negro Emancipation debate and also affiliates himself with Wilberforce, champion of the anti-slavery movement. While Mr. Pitt presents a front of spiritual devotion to the public, always attending the religious meetings in London, public acclaim, the sort that Wilberforce gained through his “famous correspondence” with Hornblower, is what the politician actually seeks.<sup>34</sup> Deborah Thomas explains, too, the hypocrisy of Mr. Pitt’s anti-slavery politics, as he is “willing to sell one of the two Parliament seats supplied by their rotten borough of Queen’s Crawley to Mr. Quadroon,” a West Indian planter who would not favor abolition (Thomas 49).<sup>35</sup> The narrator also shows how Mr. Pitt, in the performance of his duties as a magistrate in the country, affects sympathy for the “destitute of religious instruction.” The religious piety that he presents to the public outwardly, his apparent concern for the British working classes, is, in reality, his dissembling politics at work at home. The contradiction between the image of a human-itarian servant that Mr. Pitt wants to project to the public and his use of a government post for profit is striking. He conceals his ambition behind his avowed support for a popular cause and behind his feigned sympathy for racial Others, such as the Chickasaw Indians. They are the subject of one his “long, dismal sermons” that the narrator satirizes earlier, when Becky gives a spelling lesson to Sir Pitt’s daughters (79). Through his portrayal of Mr. Pitt as a ridiculous abolitionist, then, Thackeray further reveals his own racist attitude.

Mr. Pitt’s political aspirations also influence his choice of a spouse, as he hopes to marry Lady Jane Sheepshanks, whose sister, Lady Emily, is the author of

“sweet” religious tracts. Her pamphlets are sweet for Mr. Pitt because they represent the British working classes and foreign Others as much in need of his moral instruction.<sup>36</sup> They contribute, in other words, to the perception of him as a humanitarian public servant with noble aims. The titles of pamphlets composed by Lady Emily point to Thackeray’s conservative politics and to his racist ideology. Those tracts--“The Sailor’s True Binnacle,” “The Converted Cannibal,” “The Apple Woman of Finchley Common,” among others-- mock the progressive politics of the so-called humanitarians.<sup>37</sup> Victorian readers would regard such publications as inane attempts to represent members of the working classes and foreign Others, incapable of understanding the principles of Christianity, as sympathetic objects of religious zeal. For example, in a poem that Lady Emily wrote to Reverend Hornblower before their marriage, the author satirizes her avowed compassion for blacks. Ironically, she portrays them, in sentimental language, as a race forever enslaved: “Lead us to some sunny isle, / Yonder in the western deep; / Where the skies for ever smile, / And the blacks for ever weep” (320). The preposterous contradiction here, of course, is that the isle is sunny, with skies that smile, precisely because the blacks are weeping, a condition that allows Lady Emily and Reverend Hornblower, her husband-to-be, to forever compose tearful lyrics about freeing them from slavery. Lady Emily’s poem recalls Mr. Pitt’s political agenda, the public adoration that he hopes to inspire by associating himself with Wilberforce. Her alliance with Reverend Hornblower is sullied by corrupt motives, too, as it shows how she exploits the popular cause of abolition for her own ends. Afterward, her marriage to Hornblower, who was “tattooed in the

South Sea Islands” while hoping to become Bishop of Caffraria, illustrates the perverse motives, in Thackeray’s view, that drive aristocrats to misrepresent racial Others as worthy of Christian philanthropy. Reverend Hornblower’s motive for getting tattooed, political ambition, is the same impulse that drives Lady Emily to compose religious tracts with blatantly absurd titles. The depth of her hypocrisy is suggested by the scope of her political influence. The narrator remarks that she had “correspondences with clerical gentlemen in most of our East and West India possessions” (320). Her affected sympathy for the natives and her marriage to Reverend Hornblower reinforce the reader’s sense of Mr. Pitt’s corrupt ambitions, advanced through his politically advantageous marriage to Lady Jane. The author presents the far-flung empire, then, as a means of amplifying his satire of the British ruling classes in the narrative center.

We can recognize the author’s conservative politics and racist ideology again later in the competition between Lady Southdown and Mr. Pitt for control of Queen’s Crawley. Mr. Pitt’s marriage to Lady Jane presents a family battle for power that he had not anticipated. After the death of his father, when Mr. Pitt becomes the landlord of Queen’s Crawley, his mother-in-law tries to usurp his authority. At this point in the narrative, Becky and Rawdon return to the estate for Sir Pitt’s funeral. When they arrive, Becky perceives that Lady Southdown wants to seize power from her son-in-law. Her savage looking headdress, a “large black head-piece of bugles and feathers, which waved on her ladyship’s head like an undertaker’s tray,” trumpets her lust for power and makes her look absurd. The couple also notice that Lady Southdown looks like a “tremendous old Guy.” The

remark refers to the stuffed figures paraded on Guy Fawkes Day. Becky and Rawdon think, in other words, that Lady Southdown looks like a stuffed dummy. So the shrewd governess ingratiate herself with her new female relative by feigning sympathy for the low and the downtrodden, objects of Lady Southdown's sham sentiments:

She [Becky] described how in former days she had been indebted to Mr. Crawley for religious instruction, touched upon the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common," which she had read with greatest profit, and asked about Lady Emily, its gifted author, now Lady Emily Hornblower, at Cape Town, where her husband had strong hopes of becoming Bishop of Caffraria.

But she crowned all, and confirmed herself in Lady Southdown's favour, by feeling very much agitated and unwell after the funeral, and requesting her ladyship's medical advice, which the Dowager not only gave, but wrapped up in a bed-gown, and looking more like Lady Macbeth than ever, came privately in the night to Becky's room, with a parcel of favorite tracts, and a medicine of her own composition, which she insisted that Mrs. Rawdon must take (405-406).

In this scene, Thackeray sets empire in the margin as a means of ridiculing females who participate in politics. The author derides them for wasting their private lives figuring out how to manipulate public opinion and participating in political affairs that, in his view, should remain as a preserve of male power. He

shows how Lady Emily's religious tract, "The Washerwoman of Finchley Common," for example, is nothing but a springboard for her political aims, advanced through her marriage to Reverend Hornblower. By presenting herself as a repentant sinner, rescued by humanitarian efforts, Becky ingratiates herself with Lady Southdown. The governess not only mentions that she has read Lady Emily's pamphlet but also, while pretending to be ill, adopts her phony sentiments. Becky acts as if she is indebted to Mr. Pitt for her religious faith, based on instruction that she received when she was his father's governess. She plays the role of a religious convert, in fact, behaving as though she were once as hapless as the ludicrous figure represented as "The Washerwoman of Finchley Common." The irony is that those figures, as we can tell from the titles of other tracts composed by Lady Emily, "Fleshpots Broken; or The Converted Cannibal," for example, are caricatures like Miss Swartz, though without her money, of course.

From his satire of how the Southdown females exploit evangelical Christianity in order to propel their political ambitions, we can identify the racist component of Thackeray's conservative politics. Since the pamphlets present members of the British working classes and foreign Others as ridiculous figures, they suggest that he places both groups on a plane that is below what he regards as Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. In other words, in order to mock Lady Emily, Thackeray presents, in the pamphlet titles, figures who have no humanity, as he believes, because he wants to show the absurdity of her hypocritical efforts to portray herself as a Christian humanitarian. His satire is sharp because the reader knows that her representations are not based on actual downtrodden, repentant

sinners, as Lady Emily would like the public to believe. The “Converted Cannibal,” the “Washerwoman of Finchley Common,” and other ludicrous figures slander Others because Thackeray presents them as mere objects of Lady Emily’s sham sentiments. Since their only purpose is to serve as tokens for her religious theater, his representation is demeaning to them. His mockery goes even further. Since she portrays, as religious converts, foreign Others, who, in his view, are incapable of attaining spiritual salvation, she does not live according to the Christian principles that she professes. From the connection between the figures she depicts and Lady Emily, Thackeray suggests that upper-class females who represent racial Others as worthy of Christian philanthropy have savage propensities, like the objects of their apparent religious ardor. This equation of politically driven, Anglo-Saxon females with savages, as suggested by Lady Southdown’s headdress, for example, is what gives Thackeray’s satire such force. So the pamphlets perpetuate the ideology of racial and working-class inferiority. By mocking Lady Emily, then, showing how her religious devotion is feigned, Thackeray displays his own racist attitude.

As the primary vehicle of Thackeray’s satire, Becky, through her pursuit of money and social prestige, reveals the savage impulses of upper-class females. By cleverly adopting the vain behaviors of the upper classes, she uses her acting skills to win their approval and to rise in society. Her last name, “Sharpe,” implies her social intelligence, how she masters, with sham theatrics, games of social power. When, for example, following Sir Pitt’s funeral, Becky pretends to be ill, she opens the door for Lady Southdown’s pretense of concern for her, even though the upstart governess disgraced the aristocratic Crawleys when she married Rawdon. Lady

Southdown cares nothing for the Crawleys, of course, as her actions are calculated to advance the power of her own family, descended from Lord Binkie. The irony is that both she and Becky are playing a role, though Lady Southdown is completely fooled by Becky's skillful performance. In that sense, Thackeray implies that her Ladyship, though she can invent schemes to gain power, is obtuse, like her son-in-law, Mr. Pitt. In the author's view, Lady Southdown is even more despicable than Mr. Pitt, because, by engaging in politics, she crosses the bounds of what is natural for females, nurturing her family, as discussed below. Thackeray's comparison of her Ladyship to Lady Macbeth, whose political ambition impels her husband's downfall, accentuates the perverse impulses that drive Lady Southdown's participation in politics. Clearly, then, Thackeray feels that females have no business meddling in political affairs. He subscribes, in other words, to the ideology of "separate spheres," as discussed by Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout the novel, Thackeray presents medicine as a metaphor to show how aristocratic families dose each other with false religious piety. Mrs. Bute Crawley, the wife of Sir Pitt's brother, Reverend Bute, for example, doses old Miss Crawley, Matilda, with her hypocritical acts. Mrs. Bute prescribes many religious materials, such as Lady Southdown gave to Becky, with strict orders that the old lady remain in bed. While Mrs. Bute acts as though she is looking out for Matilda's health and her salvation, her prescription is calculated to speed up the time of the elderly lady's death. Of course, the Reverend's wife, like the other family members, is after the spinster's inheritance. Mrs. Bute's medicine defeats her own



purpose, however, because she is too zealous in applying the strict routine of bed rest and spiritual readings to Matilda, who much preferred Becky as her nurse. Matilda, who is aware of the motives of her relatives, that everyone is “hankering after [her] money,” encourages the competition among them because it satisfies her vanity (244). Everyone is relieved when Mrs. Bute is called back to the rectory because of her husband’s rather comical riding accident. The accident is humorous because the domineering Mrs. Bute blames her husband’s accident, ironically, rather than her own hypocrisy, for the couple’s loss of favor with Matilda. Thackeray’s satire of the aristocrats, like his ridicule of the merchants, then, shows how upper-class families are wracked from within by their pursuit of political power, wealth, and prestige.

Thackeray’s presentation of empire reinforces his satire of upper-class females so caught up in political ambitions that they deny their maternal instincts and neglect their children. During the time that Becky and Rawdon visit Mr. Pitt at Queen’s Crawley, for example, Becky leaves little Rawdy at home in Mayfair. But she ingratiates herself with Lady Jane by feigning an interest in her children. Becky admires little Matilda and praises the two-year-old boy as a “perfect prodigy of size, intelligence, and beauty.” Becky also works her way into Lady Southdown’s favor by inventing a story about how much medicine, “calomel freely administered,” that she gave little Rawdy, which, she claims, saved his life (405). During the same visit, the narrator tells us that Mr. Pitt, now called Sir Pitt, takes satisfaction in the conflict between Lady Southdown and Mrs. Bute, because his aunt had “long held ascendancy over him”:

To be considered young was complimentary doubtless; but at six-and-forty to be treated as a boy was sometimes mortifying. Lady Jane yielded up everything, however, to her mother. She was only fond of children in private; and it was lucky for her that Lady Southdown's multifarious business, her conferences with ministers, and her correspondence with all the missionaries of Africa, Asia, and Australasia, &c., occupied the venerable Countess a great deal, so that she had but little time to devote to her granddaughter, the little Matilda, and her grandson, Master Pitt Crawley. The latter was a feeble child: and it was only by prodigious quantities of calomel that Lady Southdown was able to keep him in life at all (394).

In this scene, the imperial margin accentuates Thackeray's satire of aristocratic females. Lady Southdown's voluminous correspondence with "all the missionaries of Africa, Asia, and Australasia" shows that she no business, as the author sees it, doing missionary work, presenting a philanthropic face to the public, supposedly looking out for the natives, while, in the privacy of her home, neglecting her grandchildren. The contrast between Lady Jane, who is "only fond of her children in private," and her mother suggests that Lady Southdown is not fulfilling her duties as a maternal caregiver. In Thackeray's view, she is not doing what comes naturally to females. In fact, when Lady Southdown doses her grandson with calomel, she treats him as she treats the natives, that is, affecting sympathy for him so that others will regard her as a loving and devoted matriarch.

By comparing Lady Jane's "feeble child," Master Pitt Crawley, with the natives, Thackeray also implies that females who neglect their sons transform them into effeminate weaklings, like little Lord Southdown, Lady Southdown's son. While leading a dissolute life, he is disaffected from his mother, and, in the charades, discussed below, he has two roles, both female, a chambermaid and an old woman (497-498). According to Thackeray, the misspent energies of upper-class women has the effect of feminizing their sons, as we can see in Sir Pitt, known at Eton as "Miss Crawley" (84). His resentment comes from the fact that, as the narrator says, females in his family have treated him like a child for forty-six years.

On the other hand, Thackeray portrays Lady Jane as a truly caring mother who has no interest in politics. Her mother rules over her, however, so that little Master Crawley is victimized by his grandmother's obsession with missionary politics, the same sort of ridiculous "telescopic philanthropy" that Dickens presents in his portrayal of Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House* (365-66).<sup>39</sup> What sharpens the contrast between Lady Jane and her mother is the author's portrayal of Rawdon as a genuinely devoted father and Becky as an uncaring mother. Afterward, when Lady Jane, rather than Becky, pays Rawdon's debt and frees him from prison, Thackeray presents their mutual affection as a natural quality that contributes to his portrait of them as genuinely devoted parents. The alignment of Lady Jane and Rawdon throws a harsh light on Mr. Pitt's and Lady Southdown's hypocritical politics, behavior that victimizes their own children. By telling Lady Jane that she doses little Rawdy with calomel, Becky plays the part of a loving mother, although, as she has "no mamma," she has no maternal instincts. She proves once again, then,

how naturally she can perform.

Becky's most thrilling dramatic performance comes later, in the charades episode, when she shows the audience how an ambitious female, regardless of her vulgar origins, can make virtual slaves of her male admirers, regardless of their class rank.<sup>40</sup> On the night of the charades, held at Lord Steyne's mansion on Great Gaunt Street, the audience gathers for an event that Sir Pitt considers improper, yet he attends because he knows that his Royal Highness will be there (508). The first charade, which contains three miniature dramas, linked by the motif of gender domination, is a stylized improvisation that calls on stereotypes of the Orient to entertain the ladies and gentlemen.<sup>41</sup> A young dandy who has travelled in the East, Bedwin Sands, is employed by Lord Steyne to manage the revels. Sands has published a book with pictures of himself in Oriental costumes, accompanied by a black man, so he is quite skilled in creating images of the Orient designed to move the audience with sensational effects.<sup>42</sup> In the first charade, Sands plays the part of a Turkish officer, the Aga. While seated on a couch in an attitude of idleness, he pretends to smoke a hookah. When the Aga claps his hands, a Nubian slave, dressed lavishly in "eastern ornament—gaunt, tall and hideous," appears and bows before him (492). Upon the Nubian's entrance, the narrator says, "A thrill of terror and delight runs through the assembly." The charade emphasizes the Aga's power and cruelty as he denies Zuleikah—a slave girl as beautiful as the Nubian is ugly—her plea to be reunited with her Circassian lover. At this point, the audience whispers that Sands, during his Eastern travels, traded some rifles in exchange for the odalisque, and that he had thrown many slave girls into the Nile.<sup>43</sup> The audience

is thrilled again, this time by the removal of the girl's veil, as she "drops down in an attitude of the most beautiful despair" and pleads with Hassan, the Aga, to free her.

Sands stages the first charade in the tableaux as a European love story, disguised in exotic costumes. While the first charade plays on the fantasies and desires of the spectators, the upper-class audience is completely fooled by Sands's stylized poses, Western stereotypes of the Orient that dramatize male dominance. In the author's representation of empire, the master/slave relationship that the actors portray on stage provides background imagery for the domestic power struggles he has been describing, not only sentimental affairs, like Amelia's and Osborne's, but also parent/child relationships, like that of Amelia and little Georgy.<sup>44</sup> Deborah Thomas correctly argues that Thackeray's view of the East is founded on an "ethnocentric dichotomy between European ways and other ways prevailing in India and . . . the Islamic East," but Western stereotypes of the East presented here do not reveal any genuine cultural differences between the Orient and the Occident (Thomas 41). Instead, Sands appropriates exotic stereotypes in order to magnify the sensational aspects of Becky's performance, in the third tableau, as Clytemnestra.

By opening the charade sequence with a romantic tale that supposedly represents the Orient but more accurately portrays contemporary Europe, and following that with a scene that places the same figures in a comic situation, the author makes the point that Sands's representation of the Turks is based on stereotypes, such as the Aga's pose of idleness or the Nubian's costume and

terrifying look. We know that the audience of aristocrats is duped, however, because they whisper about Sands, speaking of him as though he were an actual Oriental despot. In the second tableau, an “enormous Egyptian head” appears on stage, which, “to the surprise of the Oriental travelers, sings a comic song, composed by Mr. Wagg” (493). The “eastern travelers go off dancing, like papageno and the Moorish King, in the Magic Flute.” The comic interlude relieves the tension of the first scene, so that the reader, if not the spectators, can see how Sands manipulates the stereotypes in preparation for Becky’s performance as a murderess. The absurdity and laughter of the comic charade, in fact, mocks the upper-class audience, presenting them as a crowd of foolish carnival puppets, to use the narrator’s metaphor, who perceive the stereotypes as true representations of the Orient.<sup>45</sup>

Sands does create the illusion of cultural difference, however, by constructing an image that imposes European fantasy and desire upon figures dressed in Oriental costumes. The stage manager arranges theatrical events in a particular sequence in order to heighten dramatic tension and sensationalize Becky’s performance. By killing Agamemnon, played by Rawdon, Clytemnestra overturns the image of male dominance, presented in the opening charade, and supplants it with the frightening sense of monstrous female power.<sup>46</sup> Becky’s performance is so life-like that it frightens the spectators, who believe that she might have actually stabbed her husband: “The darkness and the scene frightened people. Rebecca performed the part so well, and with such ghastly truth, that the spectators were all dumb” (494). By placing the Orient within the tradition of

Western stereotypes, Sands cleverly confuses theatrical performance with the ongoing schemes and power politics of the audience. Becky's acting is so compelling, in fact, that the upper-class males of the audience, King George and Lord Steyne in particular, are completely at her bidding.<sup>47</sup> His Royal Highness admires her ruthlessness: "Heigh ha? Run him [Rawdon] through the body. Marry somebody else, hay?" he says. And Lord Steyne becomes her Newfoundland dog, so to speak: "Lord Steyne was her slave: followed her everywhere, and scarcely spoke to anyone in the room beside." Becky's triumph over such powerful persons makes a deep impression on Rawdon, too. As her spouse, he naturally feels threatened: "They [her triumphs] seemed to separate his wife farther than ever from him somehow. He thought with a feeling very like pain how immeasurably she was his superior" (499).

What the third tableau, with Becky's stunning performance as a murderess suggests, then, is Thackeray's fear of females ascending in socio-political power. Becky's performance as Clytemnestra figuratively raises the "monster's hideous tail above water," as the narrator says afterward, in the famous passage on "fiendish marine cannibals" (617). The charades ironically reveal the sadistic impulses that the governess has artfully concealed up to this point in the narrative. Maria DiBattista's analysis of the charades points, quite insightfully, to the "sexual imperialism" that "lies beneath England's treatment of women" (830). So it is clear that the author fears what might happen if females acquire too much freedom.<sup>48</sup> We can sense that anxiety in his portrayal of other female figures as well. Amelia, Lady Southdown, Mrs. Bute, and even Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter at Queen's

Crawley, all point to Thackeray's apprehensions about female power.

In his portrayal of Amelia, for example, the author's fear of female power is evident as she lords it over Dobbin, whom Thackeray presents, otherwise, as a highly creditable warrior. Besides the fact that Dobbin, in the battle of Waterloo, killed the Frenchman who shot Osborne, showing true bravery, the soldier is portrayed as a devoted family man. After he gives up his romantic fantasy about Amelia and she gives up her illusions about Osborne, they marry, settle down in England, and have a daughter, little Janey. Dobbin's prudent judgment and keen perception, as he sees through Becky's schemes, and his child-caring attributes make him most suitable as the male head of the family, in the author's view. Even Becky admires Dobbin, the man with the "bamboo cane," as she calls him, and scolds Amelia for not having married him earlier. The narrator also praises Dobbin by putting his name on his short list of true gentleman, whose rare qualities of courage, honesty, and humility contrast with the proud and pompous males of the upper classes (601-602). Nonetheless, for fifteen years, Amelia takes advantage of Dobbin. She captivates him with her performance, not as brilliant as Becky's perhaps, but equally deceptive, presenting herself to him and to the men in his regiment, who adore her, as a vulnerable heroine, in need of their emotional support (259). Even though Amelia, after Osborne's death, remains faithful to him, she has no trouble accepting Dobbin's gifts. She depends on him for economic security, even though she rejects him as a suitor, until the end. The only character who seems to question Amelia is Mrs. O'Dowd, the wife of Major O'Dowd, the head of Dobbin's regiment. Mrs. O'Dowd believes that Amelia lacks vitality and



spirit, especially in comparison to her robust niece, Glorvina, who, she feels, would make a much better wife for Dobbin than Amelia would. When Mrs. O'Dowd, in Madras, wants to attract Dobbin as a spouse for her niece, the narrator remarks, "Very likely Amelia was not like the portrait the Major had formed of her" (421). We can see, then, that Amelia, like Becky, possesses power over males that the author presents as predatory and dangerous. In fact, Dobbin becomes ill and almost dies on the journey from Madras to England, after he hears from his sister that Amelia might marry Reverend Binney. Similarly, the portrait of Lady Southdown as an ambitious female, who has no time for her grandchildren, but who thrives on public approbation, suggests the author's fear of females gaining power in the political realm. Thackeray's comparison of Lady Southdown to Lady Macbeth implies that she, too, has monstrous qualities, like Becky's.

Miss Horrocks, whose name connotes horror, presents another example that illustrates the author's apprehension about females gaining socio-political power. After Becky rejects Sir Pitt's marriage proposal, he carries on an affair with the butler's daughter, allowing her far more freedom than the other servants at Queen's Crawley. Sir Pitt indulges her fantasy as a lady, allowing her to enjoy liberties far above her station as a family servant. When the polite families of the neighborhood see what has happened, they "[flee] from the Hall and its owner in terror." Miss Horrocks rides around the countryside in a carriage with Sir Pitt, parading for the tenants the fancy ribbons in her cap. He even takes her with him on a trip to South Hampton in the elegant family carriage with four horses. From observing these events, the neighboring farmers and tenants are sure that the couple will marry.

This situation is embarrassing to Mr. Pitt, of course. His father's indiscrete behavior, not only behaving as though the butler's daughter were an aristocrat but also drinking in public taverns, dampens his eloquence at missionary meetings. When Mr. Pitt gives a sermon about the benighted condition of the King of Timbuctoo and his many wives, also benighted, some "tipsy miscreant from the crowd ask[s], 'How many is there at Queen's Crawley, Young Squaretoes?'"

Again, the author satirizes Mr. Pitt, who speaks of the natives as unenlightened in order to portray himself as a humanitarian public servant, concerned about the saving of heathen souls. The drunken wag ruins his speech, however, since his question, which everyone knows refers to Sir Pitt and Miss Horrocks, makes Mr. Pitt look like an absurd hypocrite. But even though the wag's ridicule deflates Mr. Pitt's assumption of upper-class superiority, the ascendance of Miss Horrocks, at least as presented through the image she has of herself rising in station to that of a lady, reveals Thackeray's anxiety about female power. After Sir Pitt's death, Mrs. Bute catches Miss Horrocks in the act of stealing valuables from his room, upbraids her, and deflates her fantasy. The ascent of the butler's daughter and her sharp fall from power present a succinct parallel to Becky's rise from her lowly station as the daughter of an alcoholic artist to the most envied female in England, perhaps, followed by her scandalous undoing. Mrs. Bute's surly behavior confirms, too, the narrator's statement about females: "Who has not seen how women bully women? What tortures have men to endure, comparable to those daily-repeated shafts of scorn and cruelty with which women are riddled by the tyrants of their own sex?" (317). These illustrations confirm, then, Thackeray's fear that females might

acquire too much power in the social, economic, and political spheres. Even further, the author's representation of females with a monstrous appetite for power serves ideologically to legitimate the subordination of females in Victorian society.

Following the charades, Becky gets ensnared in the tangled threads of her scheme to possess Lord Steyne's privilege and live off of his money. The sardonic Steyne admires her talent for deceiving others, not only her husband, Rawdon, but even himself. Her talent backfires, however, because, the upper classes, in Thackeray's view, enclose hypocrisy and corruption within their socio-political system. What impels Becky's downfall is that she delays and does not visit Rawdon in jail while he is imprisoned for a debt. Instead, she sends an apologetic letter to her "*odious old monstre,*" as she calls him, affectionately, explaining that she was unable to get the money needed to free him on the first night of his imprisonment. But he is resentful because he feels that she did not take action soon enough. So he writes to Lady Jane, who pays his debt and frees him. Afterwards, upon arriving home in Mayfair, Rawdon discovers Becky entertaining Lord Steyne. She is alone with him because he has secured another position for the housekeeper, Briggs, who, for the sake of appearance, had been acting as Becky's "moral sheepdog." When the two gentlemen quarrel, Rawdon, now a retired Colonel, strikes the Marquis violently, leaving a scar on his forehead. Convinced that Becky has been unfaithful, Rawdon wants to settle the dispute with Lord Steyne by defending his honor in the tradition of true gentlemen, that is, by dueling with pistols. So Rawdon recruits Captain Macmurdo, a trustworthy confidante from the Life Guards Green, to act as his second and present the challenge to the nobleman.

Later, while Macmurdo and Rawdon are in the officers' club, the Colonel is astonished when Mr. Smith, a stranger, congratulates him on his new appointment as Governor of Coventry Island. The news of Rawdon's appointment is published in both papers, the *Observer* and the *Royalist*. From the conversation between Mr. Smith and his friend Mr. Brown, we learn that Coventry Island has a climate so infernally hot that it killed the two previous Governors. We also learn that the government post pays an annual salary of two or three thousand pounds. Afterward, Lord Steyne sends his emissary, Wenham, a lawyer, to convince Rawdon that he was wrong about the Marquis' intentions toward Becky. Rawdon is disgusted with Wenham, who claims that Becky is innocent, making it look as if his master was a victim of the soldier's jealousy. Encouraged by Macmurdo, however, the disheartened husband decides against the duel and accepts the post as Governor of Coventry Island. As it turns out, Lord Steyne, through his political patronage, secured the position for Rawdon as a means of bribing him, avoiding the duel, and shutting down any public controversy about the scandal (535-538).

These events show, once again, how the pursuit of power and privilege entangles the upper classes in sordid intrigues. What is most important for Lord Steyne, who fears that the strain of insanity that runs in his family may someday imprison him, as it did his son, is hushing up the scandal, keeping it out the newspapers, and retaining his image as the most distinguished nobleman in the country. The newspaper article in the *Royalist*, for example, carries the story of Rawdon's appointment rather than the gossip of Lord Steyne's affair with a governess. So this incident suggests how the aristocrat works behind the scenes to

maintain his public image, hypocritical behavior that recalls Mr. Pitt's dissembling politics. The author presents Steyne as a coward, like Jos, since he defends his honor with political patronage rather than with pistols. On the other hand, even though Thackeray portrays Rawdon as ensnared in Becky's scheme, the author's sympathy rides with the soldier. Unlike Osborne, who planned, after the war, to quit the military, Rawdon, though he is retired from the army, always remains emotionally attached to it, as his reliance on Macmurdo shows. So Thackeray favors Rawdon and presents him, late in the novel, as good-hearted soldier, gone astray but morally repentant.

In his portrait of Rawdon reformed, serving his punishment on Coventry Island, we can see how the author's representation of empire contributes to his satire. After explaining that Rawdon sent Becky a small annuity, and that he was paying off his debts by sending money to Sir Pitt, the narrator says that he "wrote to his little boy regularly every mail":

He kept Macmurdo in cigars; and sent over quantities of shells, cayenne pepper, hot pickles, guava jelly, and colonial produce to Lady Jane. He sent his brother home the *Swamp Town Gazette*, in which the new Governor was praised with immense enthusiasm; whereas the *Swamp Town Sentinel*, whose wife was not asked to Government House, declared that his Excellency was a tyrant, compared to whom Nero was an enlightened philanthropist. Little Rawdon used to like to get the papers and read about his Excellency (538-539).

From this portrait of Rawdon, we can see how Thackeray's satire, in the imperial settings that crop up in the narrative margins, reinforces his ridicule of the upper classes in the narrative center. Even though the soldier has reformed, as shown by the money he sends to pay off his debts and by his generosity toward Macmurdo and Lady Jane, he still suffers from ambitious, backbiting females like Becky. The Coventry Island newspapers, which present contradictory accounts of him, show how he is still plagued by the vortex of vanities that beset him in Europe. As the narrator remarks afterward, "Those who know the English colonies abroad know that we carry with us our pride, pills, prejudices, Harvey-sauces, cayenne-peppers, and other Lares, making a little Britain wherever we settle down" (622). The two newspapers, the *Swamp Town Gazette* and the *Swamp Town Sentinel*, reflect the political hypocrisy found earlier, in the *Observer* and the *Royalist*. The difference, however, is that the provincial island newspapers mock those of the metropolis by making them look petty and ridiculous. The absurdity of political turmoil taking place on a small, hellish island, located in the remote seas of empire, reverses the perspective of the political squabbles of the central narrative and, by comparison, diminishes their importance. Besides little Rawdy, the only person who cares about the politics on Coventry Island is Sir Pitt, still looking, apparently, for some means of promoting himself in public. The image of Rawdon presented here is lightly humorous and ironic. Even though it shows how his vain pursuits have made a prisoner of him, it also shifts the perspective of the narrative from inside to outside. We laugh at him, in other words, because Coventry Island presents a microcosm of European vanity that the old, reformed soldier now can

see. Since he was always an affectionate father, the infernal heat of his punishment comes primarily from his separation from his son. This is, of course, another satiric jab at the upper classes, who put up only a pretense of concern for their children, according to Thackeray. And, when little Rawdy reads about his Excellency, it is almost as though Rawdon is laughing at his former vanities from afar.

But even though Rawdon serves his punishment in this hellish environment, the fact that he is presented, sympathetically, as a reformed soldier, whose government post abroad provides him with a stable income, and that he is quite dutiful and generous, like Dobbin in India, implies the author's loyalty to British imperialism. Given the fact that the island supplies Lady Jane, also a sympathetic figure, with an abundance of exotic products—"shells, cayenne pepper, hot pickles, and guava jelly"—that image reinforces other alluring representations of colonial largess. Dobbin, for example, sends gifts to little Georgy and to Amelia from India:

He ordered and sent a box of scarfs, and a grand ivory set of chess-men from China. The pawns were little green and white men, with real swords and shields; the knights were on horse-back, the castles were on the backs of elephants. . . . He sent over preserves and pickles . . . . He sent over a pair of shawls, a white one for her and, a black one with palm-leaves for her mother, and a pair of red scarfs, as winter wrappers, for old Mr. Sedley and George. The shawls were worth fifty guineas a piece at the very least (382).

Dobbin's generosity creates a space for empire to dissipate, at least

temporarily, family concerns and squabbles, based on money primarily, in the narrative center. Even though the Major is not always happy in India, since he longs to return to Amelia in England, the flow of material goods from that colony, like Jos's enormous tax revenues, suggests the author's support for the imperial project. For Thackeray, the colonies hold promise for Anglo-Britons, not only in the sense of material prosperity but also in the sense of stronger family ties. At the end of the novel, for example, Dobbin advises Jos to return to India, where "Mrs. Crawley could not follow him" (664). Of course, it is too late for Jos to detach himself from Becky, as she has sunk her claws too deep within him. But Dobbin, now a devoted father, still yearns, somewhat wistfully, for the East. When he encounters Becky, for the last time, she is in London, still presenting herself, hypocritically, as a Christian do-gooder: "Her name is in all the Charity lists. The Destitute Orange-girl, the Neglected Washerwoman, the Distressed Muffin-man, find in her a fast and generous friend" (666). When Dobbin and his family happen to meet her, where she occupies a stall at one of the Fancy Fairs, held for the benefit of the destitute, he responds by grabbing his daughter, holding her out of harm's way: "The Colonel seizing up his little Janey, of whom he is fonder than anything in the world—fonder even than of his 'History of the Punjaub.'" Dobbin's spontaneous response conflates paternal affection with India, people with place, so that we can see how the old soldier, even in his contented married life, longs to flee from power-hungry females who, in England, foment family rivalries. The author ends the novel, then, with reference to this scholarly work, the "History of the Punjab," that, like the cashmere shawls, imaginatively beckons the reader, through



contrast with upper-class hypocrisy, to a foreign country, where middle-class families might thrive without the rancor associated with class rank and without internal disputes.<sup>49</sup>

### III. Contrasting Imperial Elephants

Thackeray presents the middle classes, good soldiers and their wives, in particular, as a contrast to the hypocritical values of the upper classes. Through his portrait of the O'Dowds, we can see how the author depicts what he regards as the rightful place of females, in their homes, nurturing their families. We know, for example, that the carousing philanderer, Lieutenant Osborne, though "heroic," was not a good soldier and family man like Dobbin. Instead, he was condescending toward Mrs. O'Dowd and planned to distance himself from her by quitting the army. Not long after he returns with his regiment from the West Indies, having had his affair with Miss Pye, thinking that he has little chance for promotion, Osborne shows his disdain for Mrs. O'Dowd:

As for remaining in the army as a married man, that was impossible. Fancy Mrs. George Osborne . . . in the East or West Indies, with a society of officers, and patronised by Mrs. Major O'Dowd! Amelia died laughing at Osborne's stories about Mrs. Major O'Dowd! He loved her much too fondly to subject her to that horrid woman and her vulgarities, and the rough treatment of a soldier's wife (119).

From this remark, it is clear that Thackeray presents Mrs. O'Dowd and what Osborne views as the "rough treatment of a soldier's wife" as a contrast to his

rakish gentility, marked by hedonism, unbridled spending, and womanizing. The lieutenant is offended by Mrs. O'Dowd's behavior, ironically, because she responds to the world openly and naturally, without regarding some people as superior to others. Her "vulgarity" stand over against Osborne's gentlemanly pretenses, since he views himself and Amelia, his future bride, as members of elite society, who, he believes, should not be found in the company of a common female. Mrs. O'Dowd's shenanigans, what Amelia laughs about, present a flow of spontaneous vitality, as we shall see, that overturns Osborne's exalted image of himself and undercuts his fatal delusion as a gentleman, which leads to his death in the battle of Waterloo.

During the social events in Brussels, on the eve of the battle, the author heightens the contrast between Osborne's upper-class values and Mrs. O'Dowd's impulse to nurture her family, the regiment itself, as she adopts it and looks after it. In the days prior to the battle, the vain lieutenant leaves Amelia, now his wife, alone much of the time, while he flatters himself by fraternizing with aristocrats, Lord and Lady Bareacres. Even though they feel that he is inferior to them, Lady Barearces condescends and gives the lieutenant and Amelia some tickets to a prestigious ball that is held on the night before the soldiers march off to fight the French. The British soldiers do not know, at this point, that they will engage the enemy the next day. During the ball, Osborne leaves Amelia sitting on a bench, moping, by herself. At one point, Becky, dressed brilliantly, walks over to Amelia, whose apparel is far less stunning her own, and, while affecting concern for her old friend, acts as if Osborne's gambling habit must be the cause of her unhappiness.

Of course, Becky uses this situation as a means of getting revenge on Amelia, who had the upper hand when they were teenagers. After their brief encounter, the little vixen dances with George, several times, and, on the sly, as she is leaving the ball, accepts a note from him. From afar, Amelia recognizes that the note sets up a tryst between Osborne and Becky. Quite upset, Amelia asks Dobbin to take her home immediately. After she leaves, Osborne, not understanding that he is a victim of Becky's wiles, obviously proud of what he believes is an amorous conquest, enjoys his victory by drinking several glasses of wine. When Dobbin returns and interrupts him with the news that they will march in three hours, Osborne is elated, because he sees an opportunity for glory.

Osborne's drinking and high spirits recall Jos's festive mood, when he indulged himself by drinking too much rack punch at Vauxhall. Since Osborne had sneered at Jos and had interfered with Becky's scheme to marry the ex-Collector, this situation, as it turns out, is quite ironic. Osborne's elation quickly turns to remorse, so that Becky achieves a victory of sorts over her old rival. She also derives some vindictive satisfaction in regards to Amelia, because she seduces her husband and far outshines her, socially, making a mockery of Amelia's promise to love Becky, always, as a sister.

As the lieutenant walks rapidly back to his quarters, his elation changes to self-reproach. He begins thinking about what fate has in store for him, his married life, and the possibility that Amelia is pregnant. He wishes that he could undo the events of that evening and leave for battle with a clear conscience. Still thinking of his family, he regrets that he squandered the small capital that his father gave him

at the time that he was disinherited. If he should die, Amelia would have no funds left to support her. He thinks further that he is not worthy of Amelia. He chastises himself for disobeying his father, who had always been generous to him and who had advised him not to marry her: “Hope, remorse, ambition, tenderness, and selfish regret filled his heart.” As dawn breaks, Osborne finishes a farewell letter to his father, and, thinking that Amelia is asleep, he walks into the bedroom. He gazes at her “sweet, pale face,” her closed eyelids, and her arm, “smooth and gentle.” The narrator, presenting Osborne’s thoughts and feelings, remarks, “And he, how selfish, brutal, and black with crime! Heart-stained, and shame-stricken, he stood at the bed’s foot, and looked at the sleeping girl. How dared he—who was he, to pray for one so spotless! God bless her! God bless her!” (280). As he leans over the bed to kiss her goodbye, she puts her arms around his neck, as she had been awake while he was looking at her. He leaves then, because the war bugle sounds, calling the soldiers to assemble.

In this scene, Osborne’s self-image and emotions vacillate from one pole to another, showing how he is caught up in a swirl of vanity that is separated from “reality,” as the author presents it. At first, the lieutenant regards himself, arrogantly, as a handsome seducer and courageous warrior, bound for fame and honors. But after he arrives home, feeling guilty about his affair with Becky, knowing that he may never see his young bride again, he is stricken with regrets. His violent change of heart signals the self-delusion upon which the notion of a gentleman is built. The sharp reversal of attitudes, as the lieutenant’s self-image swings from handsome womanizer to self-accusing sinner, opens to view the

delusional aspects of his concept of a gentleman. His sense of masculine bravado, like Jos's, is not only vain but also hypocritical and contradictory. Those qualities are shown in how he treats Amelia, initially, as beneath his station, and afterward, as a white-robed angel without fault. In Thackeray's presentation, those twin extremes are removed from the earthy knowledge and practical wisdom of the middle classes, as represented by the O'Dowds, primarily.<sup>50</sup> So the soldier becomes a victim, in a sense, of his own fantasy, as he is shot while pursuing a Frenchman in retreat from the British. Although Osborne's family and the public regard him as war hero, the reader's knowledge of his hypocrisy before the battle mocks the notion of a heroism altogether.

According to the author, the concept of class rank is inherently unhealthy, then, since it perpetuates behaviors that ultimately wreck human happiness by destroying families. We know that because, after Osborne leaves his bride, Thackeray offers us an ironic parody of his departure. Jos, parading as a military person of some import, vows to watch over his sister. Yet, when he hears that the enemy is approaching Brussels, he flees and leaves Amelia unprotected. Mrs. O'Dowd, on the other hand, upbraids Jos for his cowardice and, showing genuine courage, remains in the town with Amelia to wait for the return of her husband, and Amelia's, as a good wife ought to do, in Thackeray's view. Despite the danger, Mrs. O'Dowd waits in Brussels, protecting Amelia, until Major O'Dowd returns and the news arrives that Osborne has been killed.

Similarly, on the night before the battle, in contrast to the infidelity of Osborne, the O'Dowds show family solidarity as they prepare for the momentous

events ahead. Since they were not invited to the ball, the O'Dowds remain at home, so they have plenty of time to take their "natural wholesome rest in bed." When the Major asks his wife to wake him early the next morning and have his gear ready, she understands his implication, that the battle will take place on the following day. So, unlike Amelia, rendered helpless and passive by her husband's philandering, Mrs. O'Dowd acts immediately, prepares everything for her husband's departure, and, in doing so, relieves his mind of nagging concerns, so that he can rest peacefully. When, obeying her husband, Mrs. O'Dowd packs and arranges his war gear, she shows the nurturing impulses that Thackeray admires.

Mrs. O'Dowd, the good house-wife, arrayed in curl-papers and a camisole, felt her duty was to act, and not to sleep, at this juncture. "Time enough for that," she said, "when Mick's gone;" and so she packed his travelling-valise ready for the march, brushed his cloak, his cap, and other warlike habiliments, set them out in order for him; stowed away in the cloak-pockets a light package of portable refreshments, and a wicker-covered flask or pocket-pistol containing near a pint of remarkably sound cognac brandy, of which she and the Major approved very much; and as soon as the hands of the "repyther" pointed to half-past one, and its interior arrangements (it had a tone quite equal to a cathedral, its fair owner considered) knelled forth the fatal hour, Mrs. O'Dowd woke up her Major, and had as comfortable a cup of coffee prepared for him as any made that morning in Brussels (282-284).

Here the author reveals his ideology of female domesticity, similar to that of H. Rider Haggard, discussed in the final chapter of this study. By presenting Mrs. O'Dowd, somewhat comically, in curl papers and a camisole, along with a humorous illustration of her, entitled "Venus preparing the armour of Mars," Thackeray emphasizes her lack of affectation and the naturalness of her devotion to her husband. In contrast to ineffectual Amelia, rendered inert, lying at home in bed, worried about her husband's romantic liaison, Mrs. O'Dowd takes practical steps so that her husband will be fully prepared for the upcoming battle. Behaving as a "good housewife," Mrs. O'Dowd considers it her "duty to act, not to sleep," to brush his clothes, to arrange his war gear, to pack his travel bag, to do all that she can do to prepare him for the onslaught coming. The cognac that she puts in her husband's flask shows that Thackeray draws on the stereotype of the drunken Irishman, in some ways, but he modifies that image because the alcohol, in this case, shows the marital devotion of the O'Dowds. The cognac is a drink that "she and the Major approved of very much." Despite her vulgarity or, perhaps, owing to it, Thackeray portrays Mrs. O'Dowd as wise from her experience in the world. For example, she takes the Major's hint about when the battle will take place, and, doing what a good wife is supposed to do, according to Thackeray, she anticipates his personal needs. The chiming clock that she wears around her middle suggests that her heart has a moral valence, like the cathedral sounds she hears within the repayther, and that she has no illusions about time, human mortality. The clock, in fact, signals her responsibility to her husband. By serving him, she serves the regiment and, through it, she serves the English nation. When, the following

morning, the Major appears on parade, he is “quite trim, fresh, and alert, his well-shaved rosy countenance, as he sate on horseback, giving cheerfulness and confidence to the whole corps.” We can see, then, how the author contrasts the O’Dowds with the Osbornes, so that the genuine family values of the middle class overturn the genteel swagger and hypocrisy of the upper classes.

While the events described above take place in the narrative center, we can see, much later, during that time that the regiment is stationed at “Bundlegunge,” in Madras, how Thackeray presents, in the margin, Mrs. O’Dowd’s maternal instincts and worldly wisdom, as a contrast to upper-class vanity. After events in Brussels, Major O’Dowd, having been promoted, is now called Colonel, Sir Michael O’Dowd. In the novel, good soldiers, whom Thackeray sympathizes with, like Rawdon, Dobbin, and Major O’Dowd, receive military promotions, not through self-seeking, as in Osborne’s case, but through selfless devotion to their country.

It is Colonel O’Dowd’s habit, after meals, to relax by smoking a hookah, and he remains unperturbed by his wife’s scolding: “Age and heat have not diminished the Molloyes.” The narrator explains that Mrs. O’Dowd is as much at home in Madras as she was in Brussels, and that she feels as comfortable in the cantonment as under the tents, while watching over the soldiers:

On the march you saw her at the head of the regiment seated on a royal elephant, a noble sight. Mounted on that beast, she has been into action with tigers in the jungle have welcomed her and Glorvina into the recesses of their zenanas and offered her shawls



and jewels which it went to her heart to refuse. . . . Lady O’Dowd is one of the greatest ladies in the Presidency at of Madras—her quarrel with Lady Smith, wife of Sir Minos Smith, the puisne judge, is still remembered by some of Madras—when the Colonel’s lady snapped her fingers in the Judge’s lady’s face, and said *she ’d* never walk behind a beggarly civilian. Even now, though it is five-and-twenty years ago, people remember Lady O’Dowd performing a jig at Government House, where she danced down two Aides-de-Camp, a Major of Madras cavalry and two gentlemen of the Civil Service; and, persuaded by Major Dobbin, C.B., second in command of the –th, to retire to the supper room, *lassata nondum satiata recessit* (418).

The image of Mrs. O’Dowd, seated atop the elephant, contrasts sharply with the portrait of Jos, at the auction, because nature, rather than culture, has placed her there, perfectly at home among wild animals and native princes. Because of her moral strength of character and insatiable appetite for living, Mrs. O’Dowd, unlike Jos, belongs on top of the elephant, directing the nation with her family values. This is a position that Jos occupied only in a vicarious sense in the painting that everyone laughed about. When she refuses to accept gifts, shawls and jewels, from the natives, that behavior shows her selflessness, suggesting that her motives, unlike those of the upper classes, are altruistic. Colonel O’Dowd’s wife is famous and still remembered after twenty-five years, in fact, because she argued with Lady Smith, the judge’s wife, for allowing civilians, upper-class figures like those we have discussed, apparently, to assume precedence over the military. The quarrel

again shows how Thackeray uses the military institution to overturn class ranks in civilian society and to portray good soldiers and their families as the true leaders of the country and of empire. Mrs. O'Dowd's vulgarity, as shown when she snaps her fingers in Mrs. Smith's face or dances a jig a Government House, is the sort of spontaneous behavior that Osborne disdained because she refuses to accept or even acknowledge social class distinctions. Her boundless energy, in fact, as shown in the duration of her dancing, mocks the insipid sentiments and sordid affairs of the upper classes. As suggested by the Latin quotation from Juvenal's *Satires*, "Weary but not yet satisfied, she withdrew," Mrs. O'Dowd's tremendous vitality, which the narrator compares, jocularly, to the insatiable passions of a Roman courtesan, satirizes the governing classes, whose vain pursuits present a metaphoric prescription for death, rather than life.

Finally, we can see how Mrs. O'Dowd, "Peggy," as the narrator sometimes refers to her, applies her worldly wisdom to the task of mothering the regiment, as she good-naturedly interferes in the affairs of the soldiers and their spouses. She is popular with the men because she cares for them when they are ill, and she "defends [them] in all their scrapes." Even though some of the Captains' ladies, in their gossip, describe her as "intolerably domineering," Peggy applies pragmatic judgment and common sense solutions to the soldiers' problems, heading them off before they disrupt the entire regiment:

She interfered with a little congregation which Mrs. Kirk had got up, and laughed the young men away from her sermons, stating that a soldier's wife had no business to be a parson: that Mrs. Kirk

would be much better mending her husband's clothes: and, if the regiment wanted sermons, that she had the finest in the world, those of her uncle, the Dean. She abruptly put a termination to a flirtation which Lieutenant Stubble of the regiment had commenced with the Surgeon's wife, threatening to come down upon Stubble for the money which he had borrowed from her . . . unless he broke off at once or went to the Cape, on sick leave. On the other hand, she housed and sheltered Mrs. Posky, who fled from a Bungalow one night, pursued by her infuriate husband, wielding his second brandy bottle, and actually carried Posky through the delirium tremens, and broke him of the habit of drinking. . . (419).

From this passage, it is clear that Mrs. O'Dowd behaves as a good housewife to the whole regiment. She treats the soldiers like her own sons and does not allow the females too much power. She puts Mrs. Kirk in her place, for example, when she tries to form a church group, by "laughing the young men away from her sermons." Mrs. O'Dowd's sense of humor, akin to the laughter of the wags that we have seen before, convinces the soldiers that Mrs. Kirk, with her sermonizing, has strayed from what nature intended, that is, attending to her husband's needs. Peggy tells the young soldiers who are drawn to Mrs. Kirk that that lady would better off mending her husband's clothes, rather than spending her time acting like a parson, neglecting him. Mrs. Kirk recalls Lady Southdown and Lady Emily, in some ways, because, in Thackeray's view, she has no business at all leading a religious group, participating in public affairs. Mrs. O'Dowd's advice for Mrs. Kirk, that she should

pay heed to her family, recalls the nurturing behavior that Peggy showed her husband in Brussels. The fact that she is domineering, like a strong-willed parent, works for the benefit of the whole regiment. She ends Lieutenant Stubble's affair with the surgeon's wife, for example, by threatening him with the money that he owes her, so that his flirtation is squashed before it has a chance to create animosity that might run throughout the entire company. Lieutenant's Stubble's affair reminds us, too, of Osborne's marital infidelity, but Mrs. O'Dowd, with her moral sense and her practical wisdom, intercedes before the young soldier ends up as Osborne did. As a mother figure, Peggy plays many roles, all of them accorded to her by nature, by the instinct to nurse and heal and rescue people from their own shortcomings, as Thackeray regards them. By putting an end to Mr. Posky's alcoholism, she also saves his marriage, showing, once again, how, as a middle-class female, she places family values first. Mrs. O'Dowd's corrective actions are effective because she combines moral reproofs with humor and kindness, so that her intolerable dominance, as the ladies describe her behavior, is, ironically, her greatest virtue. For Thackeray, Mrs. O'Dowd is the true angel in the house, as shown by her instinct to mother the soldiers.

To conclude, we can see that there are several contradictions and ambiguities in Thackeray's representation of empire and in the novel as a whole. As noted earlier, there is a contradiction between his critique of class ranks and his racist ideology. While the laughter of the wags, directed toward upper-class gentlemen, deflates their pomposity, restoring a kind of ambivalent wholeness to society, as Bhaktin suggests, the derision that the narrator directs toward foreign

Others, like Miss Swartz, reveals Thackeray's racist attitude and political conservatism. He shows that he is politically conservative because the narrator ridicules humanitarian politicians, like Mr. Pitt, who advocate the abolition of slavery, and he derides females, like Lady Southdown and Lady Emily, who participate in politics, rather than staying at home, nurturing their families. Thackeray's racist attitude and his political conservatism are closely linked to his fear of females gaining too much socio-political power. So there is a contradiction between what looks like a democratic impulse in the author's critique of class ranks and his patriarchal view that females should stay out of politics. While, on the one hand, Thackeray scoffs at merchants, regarding them as snobs because they want to rise in society, on the other hand, he presents himself, through the narrator, as a racist snob, who denigrates foreign Others through demeaning caricatures of them. While the narrator uses Becky to satirize Miss Pinkerton, the genteel young ladies she educates, and the sons of merchants who court them, at the same time he ridicules blacks, Jews, American Indians, West Indians, and members of the British working classes, depicted in the titles of religious pamphlets that are blatantly absurd.

Another ambiguity comes from Thackeray's presentation of stereotypes, as we see, for example, in the charades. While, at first glance, it may appear that the author presents Oriental culture as indolent, cruel, lascivious, and dominated by males, only so that he can strip off that romantic veil, afterward, with Becky's shocking performance as Clytemnestra, he never removes that mask, the West's stereotypical view of the East. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said, speaking

of *Vanity Fair*, states, “It is striking that never, in the novel, is that world beyond seen except as subordinate and dominated, the English presence viewed as regulative and normative” (89). Said is right, because, even though Sands’s stylized poses mock the aristocrats, who foolishly accept the stereotypes as genuine representations of the Orient, the author does not present any authentic alternative to them. In his *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Cairo* (1846), we can see, for example, how Thackeray, similarly, plays off of a racial stereotype, reproducing its false pattern, thus perpetuating its culturally slanderous features, as he does in the charades. In Chapter VII, “Constantinople,” the author demythologizes Western stereotypes of the East by establishing ironic, often humorous, contrasts between his first-hand observations of the ancient city and European concepts, based on misleading representations of it. When describing the Sultan’s “palace of the Seraglio,” for instance, he remarks,

[T]he cloister with the marble pillars, the hall of the ambassadors, the impenetrable gate guarded by eunuchs and ichoglans, has a romantic look in print; but not so in reality. Most of the marble is wood, almost all the gilding is faded, the guards are shabby, the foolish perspectives painted on the walls are half cracked off.

The place looks like Vauxhall in the daytime (131).

Even more telling is the narrator’s, Titmarsh’s, description of his experience in the Turkish bath, which he compares to Lady Mary Wortley Montague’s “voluptuous picture,” painted one hundred and sixty years before his trip. Titmarsh’s portrayal of the bath is a humorous mixture of “sensational,” exotic

images, undercut with realistic features—that is, with incidents which deflate the sense of romance in the scene. In the painted gallery that he enters, along with his Christian servant, in a house in Tophana, Titmarsh mentions that he sees a “dozen of true believers smoking, or sleeping, or in the happy half-dozing state.” This observation apparently confirms the stereotype of the Oriental as an indolent hedonist and complements the voluptuous image of Lady Montague in the portrait of her. When Titmarsh turns to the putative facts, however, about his bath, the description is lightly humorous: he portrays himself entering the chamber, unable to stand upright, “stagger[ing]” around in wooden shoes, looking ridiculous with a white turban on his head, dressed in “three large cotton napkins” or towels (105). Added to this difficulty is that fact that he cannot speak the native tongue and, while entering the tepidarium, or dark room, which houses the public bath, he can hear the “followers of Mahound” laughing and singing. The narrator then shows some anxiety because his Christian servant, the dragoman, leaves him alone with the Muslims. Having asked for a private room, Titmarsh does not bathe with them, and, when he enters the Sudarium, the hot room, he feels that he is choking. After the choking sensation passes, however, Titmarsh begins to enjoy the bath, claiming that it induces a pleasant reverie. But just as he gets comfortable, he is confronted by an ugly man, a “brown wretch,” with a horse-hair glove on his arm, with bright eyes, and a shaved head with a “bristling top-knot, which [gives] it a demonic fierceness.” Light humor again relieves the tension induced by the appearance of the fiendish-looking Turk, whose actual purpose is to give Titmarsh a thorough soap scrubbing with an object that looks like “Miss MacWhirter’s flaxen wig.”

When the soap washing ends, the narrator explains that somebody brings in a “narghile, which tastes as tobacco must taste in Mahomet’s Paradise”:

and half an hour of such delicious laziness is spent over the pipe as is unknown in Europe, where the vulgar prejudice has most shamefully maligned indolence, calls it foul names, such as the father of all evil, and the like; in fact, does not know how to educate idleness as the honest Turks do (108).

In this chapter about Constantinople, the author’s presentation of the East seems convincingly authentic because he begins by stripping away the romantic aspects of the Sultan’s palace, as it might appear “in print,” as he says. In other words, he lifts the romantic mask from the marble pillars, the eunuchs, the ichoglans, and other features of the palace, leaving us with the sense that, due to his first-hand experience, the narrator is depicting the actual Orient, like “Vauxhall in the daytime.” After establishing his credibility, based on direct observations, however, the narrator presents images of the East that reinforce the romantic stereotypes that he seems to be undercutting. The painting of Lady Montague is voluptuous, the Turk is fiendish, and the narrator keeps the followers of Mohammed at a safe distance. Even though he uses humor and seems to open to our view the realistic aspects of the East, the author’s representation depends on the stereotype of the “honest Turk,” who is, above all, indolent. The author also plays on the stereotype of Orientals as heathens who are savage and lascivious, in order to produce the titillating effect that he is after. While Thackeray uses humor to create the impression of reality, his representation, like Byron’s romantic depiction



of the East in “The Giaour,” is, nevertheless, “in print.” In other words, his portrayal of the Orient, as it depends on a literary stereotype, is no more authentic than the representations of it by Romantic authors. Although Thackeray mildly critiques the traditional English morality that condemns idleness and is suspicious of pleasure, in doing so he reproduces the stereotype of the East as dirty, degraded, inferior, and comical. The Orient that the author depicts in his *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Cairo* presents, then, the same sort of ambiguity that we find in the charades. While Becky’s appearance as a monstrous female appears to strip the mask of romance from Sands’s stereotypes of the East, her performance actually depends on those stereotypes and reinforces them. As the narrator explains, Becky’s performance even eclipses that of Miss Winkworth, the “beautiful, black-eyed Houri,” who plays the role of the slave girl, Zuleika, and brings such delight to the audience, in the first charade (498). So the sense of horror in Becky’s tableau is magnified because Zuleika, wearing a veil and dressed in “gorgeous oriental costume,” embodies the stereotype of Eastern female submissiveness and voluptuous sensuality that Becky, with her perverse ambition, as the author presents it, overleaps.

We can also see a contradiction in the author’s attitude toward imperialism. He clearly opposes the inter-imperialist rivalry between England and France, based on masculine bravado, like Osborne’s, that promotes wars by glorifying the gentlemen who fight them. He opposes the social calamity that comes from such rivalries, as we see in the aftermath of the battle of Waterloo that takes place in Brussels. In his ideology of good soldiers and their wives as the leaders of the

British empire, and in his presentation of India as a country that is alluring to Anglo-Saxons as an ideal place for settlement, however, he does not suggest that any sort of violence might stem from the West's assumption that its Christian civilization is superior to all others, and he does not take into account the violent history of warfare that marks Britain's relationship with India, at least from the mid-1700s onward. (That relationship is discussed in the fourth chapter of this study, based on Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*.) While Thackeray derides the upper classes for the vanity of their social and economic ambitions, he presents India and the colonies as a huge source of material prosperity for Great Britain. Although that portrayal does not constitute a contradiction, exactly, it does present an ambiguity associated with the author's values, since, on the one hand, he places such importance on money, while, on the other hand, he disparages those who want to acquire it. In part, this ambiguity may be explained by the fact that Thackeray lost his own fortune, as Brantlinger discusses, by investing in an Indian agency house ("Rule" 95-96). Nonetheless, Dobbin's fascination with the "History of the Punjab" exerts a such a strong pull on our imagination, at the end of the novel, that we almost forget how much the author's representation of the British empire is invested in satiric racism and sexist politics.

## Notes

1. All references to the text are from William Makepeace Thackeray. *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero*. Ed. Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963.

2. For a discussion of bankruptcy in *Vanity Fair*, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, “Thackeray’s India,” 73-107. Brantlinger remarks that in Victorian fiction, the “distinction between gambling or speculation, and sound investment is fuzzy” (97). As Brantlinger explains, when, late in the novel Mr. Scape’s investment in a private firm in India, headed by Fogle, Fake, and Cracksman, leads to his ruin, that disaster is an “oriental version of John Sedley’s bankruptcy” (95). The fictional bankruptcies are examples of the “shady dealings,” as the scholar remarks, that led to the loss of Thackeray’s fortune in the 1830s.

3. Eric Hobsbawm discusses middle-class businessmen, particularly merchants, like Mr. Sedley, who wanted to rise socially: “Success brought no uncertainty, so long as it was great enough to lift a man into the ranks of the upper class. He would become a ‘gentleman’, doubtless with a country house, perhaps eventually a knighthood or peerage, a seat in Parliament for himself or his Oxbridge-educated son, and a clear and prescribed social role, (60). See Eric Hobsbawm. *Industry and Empire: from 1750 to the Present Day*.

4. For a discussion of the battle of Waterloo within the contexts of the novel, see Mary Hammond, “Thackeray’s Waterloo: History and War in *Vanity Fair*.”

5. As Dobbin befriended Osborne, when they were children in school, by

fighting the bully Cuff, and that friendship continued later into their adult lives, their relationship presents what Eve Sedgwick calls “homosocial bonding” (1-2). That male bonding is characterized, she explains, by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. Sedgwick’s theory makes sense here, because, as we shall see, Jos Sedley, whom neither Osborne nor Dobbin cares for, is depicted by Thackeray as effeminate. See Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*.

6. The next chapter of this study, based on Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, discusses the relationship between British imperialism and middle class missionaries, like St. John Rivers. See Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.

7. Robert Siegle remarks, “Though the puppet show of the preface may well contrast, then, with the realistic narrative within the main body of the novel, it also clearly marks the common closure of each within the transcendental teleology of Western culture’s central fiction” (33). For a discussion of the various narrative stances and the puppet show, see Robert Siegle, *The Politics of Reflexivity*.

8. In connection with Jos’s enormous wealth and influence, C. H. Philips explains that the power of the East India Company came from two sources: “first, the banking, shipping, and commercial interests of the City of London, which had invested money in the Company’s concerns; secondly, the returned Anglo-Indians or ‘Nabobs’, who acquired India Stock, either as a convenient form of investment yielding a sure dividend of 8 per cent., or as a means by which they could gain

influence, a Directorship, power and patronage in the Company” (2). See C. H. Philips, *The East India Company: 1784-1834*.

9. In his discussion of carnival laughter, Mikhail Bakhtin writes, “It is not an individual reaction to some isolated ‘comic’ event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival’s participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding” (11-12). See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

10. E.M. Collingham remarks, “Hunting on a grand scale allowed the nabob to take on the mantle of royalty. Company officials saw an invitation to accompany an Indian prince on a hunt as an opportunity to demonstrate the equal standing of the British and the Indian nobility” (30). So Jos’s stories about hunting tigers not only portray him as brave but also contribute to his self-image as a nobleman. See E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947*.

11. Collingham states, “The nabob was to a large extent a fictional figure whose creation in Britain was stimulated by a number of Company servants who returned from India with large fortunes and social aspirations, and by the trial of Warren Hastings (1788-95) during which the behavior of the East India Company’s government came under public scrutiny” (13-14).

12. According to Thackeray’s definition, the gentlemen at Vauxhall are snobs. Juliet McMaster explains that Thackeray appropriated of the word “snob”

and extended its meaning, after he observed middle-class students at Cambridge, who sneered at bargemen and shoemakers, calling them snobs, with a derogatory connotation. In Thackeray's extended meaning, the word redounds against the person who, believing that he is superior, uses it to deride another. As McMaster remarks, the author "put his finger on his culture's disastrous confusion of values. By Thackeray's definition, a snob is '*he who meanly admires mean things*': someone who subordinates all issues of ethics, aesthetics, even simple bodily pleasure, to the single barren criterion of social status" (319-320). See William Baker and Kenneth Womack, eds., *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, 319-328.

13. McMaster remarks, "The sympathetic attribute of the artists and students and other frequenters of Bohemia is laughter. Whether creating dolls to mimic the Miss Pinkertons, or joking with the students at the Elephant Inn in Pumpnickel, . . . Becky can laugh and enjoy herself" (326).

14. In this scene, Jos takes on characteristics of the clown or fool, a popular figure in the medieval culture of humor, as Bakhtin explains (8). Becky's mimicry, as she eats the sausage and drinks brandy, also suggests the hyperbolic "images of the material bodily life" that were present in Rabelais' German sources, the grobianists. In the context of the novel, Becky's mimicry, the sausages have an indecent connotation, as they did for the grobianists.

15. For a discussion of laissez-faire economics during this period and Britain's economic advantage over other European nations, due to its trade with India, see Hobsbawn.

16. For a thorough study of the elephant as a symbol of empire in British

novels, see Kurt Koenigsberger, *The Novel and the Menagerie*.

17. Corri Zoli discusses the symbolic significance, in the novel, of the Black Hole. It alludes to an historical event in 1756 in which British soldiers were incarcerated in a dungeon known as the “Black Hole.” Zoli remarks, “Thackeray offers a notion of ‘culture’ that gains its power and definition from international, not national coordinates, including a mass of imperial references which form this novel’s most consistent texture” (418-419). See Corri Zoli, “ ‘Black Holes’ of Calcutta and London: Internal Colonies in *Vanity Fair*.”

18. Although Vladimir Lenin’s term, “inter-imperialist,” was not current in Thackeray’s day, it applies here to England’s cultural and military rivalry, as well as to the “striving for annexations,” of which Karl Kautsky speaks, among European nations in the Victorian period. Lenin adds that Kautsky’s definition is incomplete, politically, because it does not include the violence that imperialism strives for, 4. See Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Part VII, “Imperialism As A Special Stage of Capitalism.” For the term “inter-imperialism,” see Part IX, “Critique of Imperialism,” 14-15.

19. For a discussion of Britain’s “feminine” empire, see Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj. The New Cambridge History of India III, 4*.

20. Joseph Sherman comments that Sambo’s behavior provides a “counterpoint to the behavior of his white superiors.” The scholar states that the novel “simultaneously both subverts and endorses stereotypes” (88). See Joseph Sherman, “Race and Racism as Narrative Strategies in ‘Vanity Fair.’”

21. Brantlinger remarks, “But more common than either idealistic or

realistic portrayals are stereotypic representations of Jews as an inferior, often criminal, sometimes even diabolical race” (1520). See Deirdre David, *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*.

22. For a discussion of spiritual purity, as associated with physical cleanliness, see Gertrude Himmelfarb’s essay, “In Defence of Victorians,” in *The Victorian Studies Reader*, Ed. Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam.

23. Ina Ferris comments, “For Thackeray the whole realm of money and finance is particularly dubious, as indicated by his persistent activation of the demeaning typology of race to characterize it: money-hungry Jews, untrustworthy Indians, flashy West Indians, and so on” (421). See Ina Ferris, “Thackeray and the Ideology of the Gentleman,” in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*.

24. Critical interpretations of Rhoda Swartz vary. Charles Helgar comments that Osborne rejects Miss Swartz because, despite her wealth, she is “too alien” for him (340). See Charles Helgar, “Rhoda Swartz in *Vanity Fair*: A Doll Without Admirers.” Sandy Morten Norley states that Miss Swartz “appears ridiculous precisely because she is a natural, unsophisticated native . . . in a foreign, European context” (127). Sherman remarks that Thackeray “consistently maintains as a narrative strategy a double standard whereby strong racial prejudices can be harboured at the same time that the extent to which they breed monstrous injustices is recognized” (80-81). Zoli comments that Thackeray uses Rhoda’s “excessive feeling to highlight the serious lack of feeling—his most scathing critique—in the race and class hypocrises of those around her” (424).

25. Jennifer DeVere Brody comments that Miss Swartz is “employed in the



text as an exaggerated half-wit who is excessively fond of her dear school friend, ‘Emmy,’ the true ‘heroine’ of the text” (31). See Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*.

26. Speaking about Thackeray’s drawing, entitled, “Miss Swartz rehearsing for the Drawing Room,” Brody comments, “The cross-hatching on the top half of her face signals her racial difference. Miss Swartz exemplifies the black caricatures in circulation during this period” (36).

27. In her biography of Thackeray, Ann Monsarrat explains that the author’s father, Richmond Makepeace, had an Indian mistress who gave birth to a “mixed-blood daughter in India” (250). See Ann Monsarrat, *An Uneasy Victorian: Thackeray the Man 1811-1863*.

28. For a discussion of climatic zones as related to the perception of racial differences, see Mark Harrison, *Climates & Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850*.

29. Thackeray’s view of racial Others as mere instruments of British power is suggested in his letter to the *Calcutta Star*, dated August 7, 1844. He condemns the government because its compassion for Pomare, the “Cocoa-nut Queen” of Tahiti, was, he believed, hypocritical. No sympathy was shown to her, he claims, until the English were slighted by the French. See Henry Summerfield, ed. “Letters from a Club Arm-Chair: William Makepeace Thackeray,” 210.

30. Sandy Morey Norton, for example, reads the passage that presents Jos working in the jungle as an expression of Thackeray’s “ambivalence” about British imperialism. See Sandy Morey Norton, “The Ex-Collector of Boggley-

Wollah: Colonialism in the Empire of *Vanity Fair*.” J. Russell Perkin, on the other hand, states that this passage merely reflects Jos’s ambivalence, not the author’s. See J. Russell Perkin, “Thackeray and Imperialism.” In another article that deals with the same passage, Norton disagrees with Perkin. See Sandy Morey Norton, “The Imperialism of Theory: A Response to Russell Perkin.”

31. For fluctuations in the narrative voice, see James Phelan, “*Vanity Fair*—Listening as a Rhetorician and a Feminist.” Phelan argues that the narrator, the “showman,” and the author are identical, and that Thackeray’s critique of patriarchy is not consistent (138-143).

32. Speaking of India’s agricultural resources, Timothy Parsons notes that by mid-century the East India Company derived almost forty percent of its revenue from land taxes, which amounted to eighteen million pounds, 40. See Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*.

33. In a letter that Thackeray sent to the *Calcutta Star* in 1845, he condemns those who use biblical law to put forward their political agendas: “I declare I see very little difference between the men who use His name now, and those who slew Him in old days” (233). See Summerfield.

34. For a discussion of William Wilberforce’s role in abolishing the slave trade, see David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century (1815-1914)*.

35. As Deborah Thomas explains, “During this period, many West Indian planters resided in England while reaping the benefit of their plantations in places like Jamaica, the Barbados, or St. Kitts. Some of these planters became members of Parliament, and Mr. Quadroon is apparently one of this group. Presumably, as a

member of the planter class, Mr. Quadroon would not favor either the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 or the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies in 1833 (effective in 1834). These are antislavery actions that Wilberforce supported. The West Indian lobby opposed them, however, so they were hotly debated in Parliament” (49). See Deborah Thomas, *Thackeray and Slavery*.

36. Susan Thorne discusses the concept of “sin” in early Victorian England as one that cuts across race and class: “That such comparisons [between ‘heathens’ of Africa and the so-called heathens of Britain] were even possible suggests, I think, that ‘race’ and ‘class’ were not yet the antithetical or even discrete axes of identity that they have since become” (243). See Fredrick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*.

37. As Brantlinger explains, abolitionists did not necessarily believe in the equality of Africans and Europeans. And their humanitarianism was often attacked by social critics such as William Cobbett and Thomas Carlyle, who held that to be more concerned about black slaves abroad than about white ‘wage slaves’ at home was hypocritical (154). See Deirdre David, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*.

38. For a discussion of separate spheres, see Lenore Davidoff’s and Catherine Hall’s essay, entitled “Separate Spheres,” in Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam, eds., *The Victorian Studies Reader*.

39. In *Bleak House* (1852-53), Dickens portrays Mrs. Jellyby as a female whose interest in the African natives of “Borrioboola-Gha” consumes all of her energies, so that she has no time for her children. In Chapter IV, entitled

“Telescopic Philanthropy,” Mrs. Jellyby says, “The African project at present employs my whole time. It involves me in correspondence with public bodies, and with private individuals anxious for the welfare of their species all over the country” (38). Later in the novel, we learn that the project to help the natives failed, because the King of Borrioboola-Gha wanted to “sell everybody who survived the climate—for Rum.” So Mrs. Jellyby takes up another mission, the “rights of women to sit in Parliament” (768). Dickens’s humorous portrayal of Mrs. Jellyby and his racist attitude toward the African king echo Thackeray’s satirical portrait of upper-class females and his caricatures of foreign Others.

40. For an analysis of the charades episode, with particular attention given to the significance of classical allusions and to solving the riddle that the charades present, see Maria DiBattista, “The Triumph of Clytemnestra: The Charades in *Vanity Fair*.”

41. For Western stereotypes of the Orient, see Edward Said, *Orientalism*. He defines Orientalism as the “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). Said’s use of the term “Orientalism” is not to be confused, of course, with the political policy of the British government, based on non-interference in religious practices and customs of the Indian people. That policy was held before 1813, before the advent of the Anglicism, headed by William Bentinck, Thomas Macaulay, and others. For a discussion of the shift in policy, in the 1830s and 1840s, from Orientalism to Anglicism, see Philip Lawson, *The East India Company, A History*.

42. Thackeray’s portrayal of Sands as a figure who manipulates the

audience through false representations of the East seems related to his view of authors whose fiction presents the Orient as sublime. Meg Armstrong remarks that Thackeray is “ridiculing the subliming of the exotic with Mr. Molony at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and in *Eastern Sketches*: “There Thackeray satirizes Alexander Kinglake’s attempt to play the poet in his travel book *Eothen* (1844) and mercilessly compares it to Byron’s wish to sublime the Orient in such works as the “The Giaour” and “The Corsair” (200). See Meg Armstrong, “ ‘A Jumble of Foreignness’: The Sublime Musayums of Nineteenth-Century Fairs and Expositions.”

43. In Thackeray’s *Loose Sketches* (1841), his story entitled “An Eastern Adventure of the Fat Contributor” contains several aspects of the romantic idealization of the East, such as throwing slave girls into the river, that we find in the first charade. In that sketch, the Fat Contributor attempts to profit from misrepresenting his experiences in the “exotic” Orient. At the end, his newspaper co-workers laugh at his comical farce, however, as we have seen how the public laughs at Jos. See W. M. Thackeray, *Loose Sketches: An Eastern Adventure. Etc.* London: Frank T. Sabin, 1841.

44. DiBattista comments on the first charade: “The icons of sexual imperialism that abound in this charade implicate the spectator-audience in the guilt, not of association, but of attitude, as Becky’s second appearance as Clytemnestra suggests. Thus the Nubian slave’s obeisant salaams to the Kislar Aga eerily recall and comment on the attitude of idolatrous and slavish Amelia, who, on her wedding night, prostrates herself before her master, George Osborne” (829).

45. On the relationship of the various narrative stances to the puppet show of the preface, see Robert Siegle, *The Politics of Reflexivity*.

46. The word “monster” resonates with ironic implications in the novel. The narrator refers to Napoleon as the “Corsican monster” and, following the charades, Becky sends a letter to Rawdon, while he is in jail, calling him, affectionately, her “*odious old monstre*.” The irony comes from the fact the Becky’s private campaigns, as they are metaphorically equated, in the novel, with Napoleon’s military adventures, turns out to be the hideous monster that upper-class males desire most. In “A Manifesto for Cyborgs,” Donna Haraway remarks, “Monsters have always defined by limits of community in Western imaginations. The Centaurs and Amazons of ancient Greece established the limits of the centered polis of the Greek male human by disruption of marriage and boundary pollution of the warrior with animality and woman” (2298). See Vincent B. Leitch, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.

47. Speaking of Lord Steyne, Thomas remarks, “[H]e plays the part of sultan in his relationships with those whom he perceives as weaker than himself. As sultan, Steyne wishes to obtain Becky as a slave” (65). Steyne admires Becky because he recognizes how adroitly she can manipulate others, including himself. Ironically, as the charades show, he turns out to be her slave.

48. Sudvendrini Perera comments, “Although the images of sexual subjugation and menace continue in the following charades with Becky prophetically figured as Clytemnestra, the troubling images of colonial unrest are successfully contained by the transforming cultural presence of Europe” (632). See

Sudvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire*.

49. For a discussion of the ending of the novel, regarded as ambiguous, see Lisa Jadwin, "Clytemnestra Rewarded: The Double Conclusions of *Vanity Fair*."

50. Speaking of Thackeray's tour of Ireland in 1843, Monsarrat notes that he was not as concerned with the political problem of Ireland as with the "people and the essence of the land . . . . The Irish, he thought, had a far superior basic intelligence to the rest of the British" (130). This fact accords with Thackeray's portrayal of the Irish O'Dowds.

## Savage Impulses and Degeneration in

### Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), we are somewhat surprised, near the end of the novel, when Jane, the central figure, relents and almost marries St. John Rivers.<sup>1</sup> The country parson, wanting to merge "all ambition in the glorious one of bettering [his] race," insists that she marry him and become his helpmeet as a missionary in India (329).<sup>2</sup> Even though Jane refuses on the grounds that they do not love each other, and on the grounds that she need not be his wife in order to do God's work in the colonies, she is moved by Rivers's gentleness. Pleading with her to think of her eternal soul, he says, "God give you strength to choose that better part which shall not be taken from you!"

He laid his hand on my head as he uttered the last words. He and spoken earnestly, mildly: his look was not, indeed, that of a lover beholding his mistress; but it was that of a pastor recalling his wandering sheep—or better, of a guardian angel watching the soul for which he is responsible. . . . I was tempted to cease struggling with him—to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence, and there lose my own. I felt veneration for St. John—veneration so strong that its impetus thrust me at once to the point I had so long shunned. . . . I was almost as hard beset by him now as I had been once before, in a different way, by another. I was a fool both times. . . .



I stood motionless under my hierophant's touch. My refusals were forgotten—my fears overcome—my wrestlings paralyzed. The impossible—i.e. my marriage with St. John—was fast becoming the Possible (368).

In this scene, Rivers appeals to Jane, not only through her faith in the Almighty, but also through the sympathy that a parent might give, the sort of affectionate guidance that, as an orphan, she has seldom known. Responding to Rivers's gentle touch and soft voice, Jane imagines surrendering to him, "rush[ing] down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence." The author's deep ambivalence is suggested by the fact that Jane almost accepts Rivers's proposal.<sup>3</sup> At this point, while she is on the brink of submitting to her "hierophant," she ponders whether it is actually God's will, or Rivers's, that she should marry him. Brontë presents this agonizing event as incited by her heroine's devotion, divided between Rivers and Edward Fairfax Rochester, a wealthy gentleman who once stood at the altar of marriage with Jane. Their brief happiness turned to anguish, however, when Mr. Briggs, solicitor for Richard Mason, brother of Rochester's secret wife, Bertha Mason, exposed him as a potential bigamist. Rochester married Bertha, the white Creole from Jamaica, before he met Jane. Here Rivers's gentle persuasion almost succeeds because, unlike his earlier attempts, based solely on logical appeals, he softens his argument with religious sentiment.<sup>4</sup> For Jane, the immediate crisis ends, however, when she hears Rochester's voice calling her name, a supernatural summons, a cry of pain from out of the wilderness.<sup>5</sup> After Rivers's plea that she accompany him to India, Jane responds to Rochester's

extraordinary call. She locates his abode, deep in the wood, where she discovers him in a forlorn condition, much deteriorated since the debacle of their wedding day. At Ferndean, he is physically maimed and spiritually fallen, withdrawn from society and alienated from himself. At that point, she revives his reason for living by giving him the confidence that she still cares for him. Providing the means of his regeneration, speaking from the pages of what Brontë presents as Jane's autobiography, she says, "Reader, I married him" (395).

Nonetheless, even though she ultimately reclaims Rochester from spiritual calamity, her relationship with Rivers presents contradictions and ambiguities that, according to some scholars, cannot be resolved. Parma Roy, for example, discusses the "immanent contradictions" of the text: "Jane ends up rather too well-adjusted and well-endowed for Brontë to carry through her radical convictions to the end . . . . She canonizes the self-mortifying and meek Helen Burns . . . ; she approves Rochester's summary and callous treatment of his West Indian wife; and she is manifestly enthusiastic about the exploitation of colonized peoples. She thus yields a furtive assent to the authoritative word of her culture, in matters socioeconomic as well as religious" (715). Other scholars, those who focus on the relationship between Rochester and Bertha Mason, give slight attention to Rivers.<sup>6</sup> However, when we consider the final paragraphs of the novel, the contradictory impulses behind Brontë's presentation are even more apparent. In her eulogy to Rivers, Jane likens him to the warrior Greatheart, the spiritual guide in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This comparison suggests how much she admires the evangelical clergyman, who later fulfills his missionary ambitions as he defies the

torrid Indian climate and rugged terrain in order to convert the “savage tribes” to Christianity. Speaking of Rivers, Jane says, “A more resolute, indefatigable pioneer never wrought amongst rocks and dangers. Firm, faithful, and devoted; full of energy, and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race” (398).

What I propose in this essay, then, is a reading of *Jane Eyre* that looks more closely at Brontë’s portrayal of Rivers, his sisters, and their ancestral heritage. Before she arrives at the ancient dwelling, Moor House, the home of Rivers’s father, Jane, the “secular pilgrim,” resides with three other domestic households.<sup>7</sup> Those groups, while assuming the role of her guardian, contribute to her moral growth. They are the Reed family at Gateshead, the religious community at Lowood School, and Rochester’s household at Thornfield Hall. My argument is that Brontë presents her heroine’s pilgrimage as a mechanism for overturning upper-class values. Jane’s spiritual journey reveals what the author regards as savage impulses that drive the ruling classes to worship property and privilege. Brontë shows how some Evangelical ministers emulate the behavior of the governing classes, their adoration of material wealth, while supporting their ambition to retain social, economic, and political power in England. She portrays the propertied elite as those wrapped up in idolatry associated with religious ceremony. The imagery of profane worship, as I will show, implies that an unholy alliance exists between corrupt Anglican clergymen and their wealthy patrons. In the narrative, the pursuit of power promotes predatory behaviors, the creation of social jungles, marked by vanity and artifice, within upper-class families. The author’s portrayal of that savage social territory shows us the sadistic impulses that

underlie romantic love. Those impulses reveal the corrupt foundation of Western marriage-- according to Brontë, an institution perpetuated for the purpose of strengthening political alliances within the upper classes. Jane's relationship with Rochester undoes sociopolitical ambition, however, as the primary impetus for marriage, and transfers moral authority to the middle classes. Brontë portrays middle-class gentility, which she identifies with Christian morality, as the apex of modern civilization. She presents Jane's progress symbolically as the historic march of civilization toward higher values ordained by God. Since the author critiques the upper classes by associating them with heathens, Indian tribes, her representation promotes the ideology of British imperialism, as I will show. Along with that, I discuss the perverse violence that is an inescapable spin-off of both imperialism and class antagonism. During the course of Jane's spiritual quest, though she sometimes feels secure, she never feels completely at home until providence leads her to Rivers's doorstep.<sup>8</sup> There she discovers a family with the middle-class gentility that, all along, she has been travelling toward (290-292).

At this point, I will turn to a discussion of Jane's experiences before she arrives at Moor House. While following the narrative of her travels, I will discuss Brontë's representation of class and race as they intersect with her heroine's spiritual quest. I will connect Jane's progress to Rivers's family as the author presents it in the fictional work that is Jane's spiritual autobiography.

#### I. Religion and the Upper Classes: Gateshead and Lowood School

In the opening chapter of the novel, when Jane, the older narrator, looks

back on her childhood, she explains how she was alienated within an upper-class British family. Cold-hearted and unjust, the Reeds, with the exception of the servant, Bessie, treated her with disdain. Aunt Reed and her children, John, Eliza, and Georgiana, made an outcast of her because Mrs. Reed resented having to care for a poor relation whose mother had been disinherited by the family patriarch, Jane's grandfather. From information told to Bessie by her maid, Miss Abbot, Jane learns that Mr. Reed, her grandfather, took that action because he was angry at his daughter's disobedience. Despite the disapproval of her friends, who "considered the match beneath her," Jane's mother had married a poor clergyman (21).<sup>9</sup> Jane also explains that before his death, her uncle, Mr. John Reed, exacted a promise from his wife to care for her. Nonetheless, Mrs. Reed treats the orphan differently than she treats her own children. In the opening scene of the novel, for example, Mrs. Reed forbids Jane to sit in the drawing room with the family. Her aunt explains that she must exclude her from "privileges intended only for contented, happy little children." When Jane questions that decision, she meets with a sharp rebuff from her aunt. So the child retreats to the breakfast room, where she sits on the window ledge, next to a bookcase located behind a red curtain, and begins to read Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds*. While she reads, Jane is fascinated by distant climes, mostly uninhabited Arctic wastelands, that Bewick presents.<sup>10</sup> She says, "Each picture told a story . . . profoundly interesting: as interesting as the tales Bessie sometimes narrated on winter evenings." When John, her fourteen-year-old cousin, comes searching for her, Jane prefers to remain concealed, but Eliza shows him her hiding place. After the orphan reluctantly steps from behind

the curtain, John gestures to her to stand near the arm chair where he is seated. At this point, Jane draws the reader's attention to his huge appetite and repulsive physical features: "He gorged himself habitually at the table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks." She also points out that John's mother excuses him from school, "for a month or two," by telling the schoolmaster that her son suffers from "over-application" to his studies and from homesickness (7). After Jane obeys John, he taunts her by thrusting out his tongue, and, seemingly without provocation, he strikes her in the face. So far, we can see that Mrs. Reed denies privileges to Jane on the basis of an arbitrary decision of the family patriarch. As Gayatri Spivak points out, in Brontë's representation of domestic space, Jane's location in the breakfast room, which adjoins the drawing room, represents her marginal status within the legal family of the Reeds (Belsey 178). In other words, she is denied the legal status, power, and privilege that the other children enjoy as their birthright. While Jane feels "humbled" because of her "physical inferiority," her bower behind the red curtain dramatizes her Otherness, the rebuke of social inferiority that she feels, as she sits "cross-legged, like a Turk" on the window ledge. A significant implication of this scene is the contrast that it establishes between Jane's penetrating imagination and John's autocratic disposition, as he sits in the arm chair and bullies her. From Bewick's "suggestion," she imagines Arctic landscapes and other "death-white realms" that stir within her child's mind some dim notion of her own mortality. Her rapt attention to Bessie's tales reveals, too, the vibrant power of her imagination. That intellectual faculty distinguishes her from her cousin, whose lack of interest in

school suggests that he possesses neither her natural curiosity nor her imaginative vitality. John behaves like a tyrant, partly because his mother caters to his whims and overlooks his faults. Everyone in the family is afraid to offend him. His poor health that comes from overeating and the lie that his mother invents in order to excuse him from school suggest the flabby moral condition of the Reed family. Even though Jane imagines herself, in the early chapters, quite melodramatically, as a victim of the Reed family, we can see how the author presents this incident as a critique of British upper-class values.

As the conflict between Jane and her male cousin escalates, Brontë amplifies the sense of moral depravity within the family. John condemns her with hollow accusations: she speaks to his mother disrespectfully; she hides behind curtains; and he does not like the look on her face. The absurdity of his complaints implies that John's animosity has a source that goes deeper than what he regards as Jane's unruly behavior. That source must be the repository of ancient patriarchal entitlements supported by the socio-economic, legal, and religious establishment of Britain. He despises Jane for no reason other than what he perceives as the stigma of her class background. He scolds her for invading what he considers his exclusive domain:

“You are a dependent, mamma says, you have no money: your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense. Now I'll teach you to rummage our book shelves: for they are mine: all the house

belongs to me . . . ” (8).

Since the actual basis of John’s resentment is his perception of Jane’s class origins—“you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen’s children”—his angry protest that she has no right to his books is merely an excuse to torment her. Since he has no interest in school, it is unlikely that he has any interest in the knowledge that the books contain. While Jane’s ambiguous status, as Spivak says, places her on the margins of the legal family, we can also view her behavior as a symbolic trespass on patriarchal grounds of male privilege, sanctioned by centuries of Anglo-Saxon legal and religious authority. Since that power was handed down from Jane’s grandfather to his son and endorsed by his wife, we can see how Jane’s presence is an insult to John, his feeling of superiority. Since her mother, before she was disinherited, had the same status in the family that Mrs. Reed had, we know that Jane has some moral claim to gentility. However, because she lives in a patriarchal society, one in which the rule of primogeniture declares that the eldest son is heir to his family’s estate, John feels empowered to intimidate her. The fact that he will receive his father’s property, while Jane possesses no inheritance from the Eyres, justifies, in his mind, his hostility toward her.

John’s ridiculous sense of superiority is doubly ironic, however, because, as we learn later, the Eyres do belong to the gentry. After Mrs. Reed sends Jane to Lowood School, Bessie comes to visit her. The servant tells Jane that her father’s family are gentlemen: “[T]hey are as much gentry as the Reeds are,” she says. From information that Bessie gains from the butler, and from her husband, Robert, she explains that Mr. Eyre, Jane’s uncle, is a gentleman, a wine-merchant from



Madeira. This was a Portugese colony, an island on the west coast of Africa (80-81). After seeing her uncle during a trip that he had taken to Gateshead, Robert believes that he was a gentleman. But Mrs. Reed abruptly turns him away, referring to him as a “sneaking trades- man.” Her response magnifies the collision of values, as Brontë presents them, between the upper classes, with their power and prestige based on ancestral privileges, and the rising middle classes, with their earned income and education that threatens those ancient entitlements.

From this conflict, we can see the ironic injustice of John’s assault. After insulting Jane, he throws a book at her, causing her to strike her head against the door. She begins to bleed. Using her knowledge of classical history, education that John, presumably, does not have, she retaliates by calling him a “slave driver,” comparing him to dissolute Roman emperors, Nero and Caligula. While Jane continues to portray herself, from a child’s perspective, as a victim of her environment, these remarks contribute to our perception of John, the sense that there are no bounds to his cruelty, that his moral corruption is bottomless. Then, as he shouts to his sisters, Eliza and Georgiana, pleading for help, John switches the blame to his cousin, portraying himself as a victim of her taunts. Afterward, a brawl breaks out between Jane and her tormentor: “[H]e had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer” (9). As the scene ends, what confirms the feeling that tyranny reigns unchecked within the family is the ironic turn that reveals the extent of Jane’s desperation. As everyone hurries to the staircase to witness the scuffle, she is accused of provoking John. Although the speaker’s identity is not certain, it appears that Miss Abbot says, “Dear! Dear!

What a fury to fly at Master John!” Because Brontë presents Bessie as a sympathetic figure, we can assume that Miss Abbot says that. As Miss Abbot’s name suggests, this event implies the complicity of religious hypocrites, as discussed below, with the political ambitions of the upper classes. The author also implies that the propertied classes rule society partly by disavowing social problems, putting them on the doorstep, so to speak, of the lower and middle classes. The scuffle between Jane and John anticipates, too, the perverse violence, based on class enmity, that emerges, full-bloom, later in the novel. When Mrs. Reed arrives, she orders the servants to lock Jane in the “red-room,” the bedroom that Mr. Reed occupied before his death.

After Jane is taken upstairs, the complicity of Miss Abbot with the Reeds in their efforts to ostracize her becomes even more apparent. In the red-room, Miss Abbot says, “What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress’s son! Your young master.” Jane retorts, “Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?” Miss Abbot answers sharply, “No; you are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep.” Miss Abbot responds sarcastically to Jane, stressing the fact that the child has no money or property and is entirely dependent on the Reeds, because she is offended by Jane’s comment about the relationship between servants and their masters. Without intending to do so, the child implies that she is superior to Miss Abbot, who is, of course, a family servant. Miss Abbot’s retort is ironic, because, by defending John, she actually endorses Jane’s comment about the lowly status of servants. After this heated exchange, when the defiant child argues that she does not need to be tied down, that she will

not run away, Bessie trusts her, but Miss Abbot does not: "I've told Missis often my opinion about the child, and Missis agreed with me. She's an underhand little thing. I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover." This comment matches Mrs. Reed's statement, afterward, when she speaks of Jane's uncle as a "sneaking tradesman." Since Miss Abbot stereotypes Jane's behavior as "underhand," it is clear that she perpetuates the animosity, based on false concepts, according to Brontë, that the propertied elite hold for the middle classes. As the older narrator looks back, she says that, upon hearing Miss Abbot's comment, Bessie "answered not." In this scene, even though Bessie helps to restrain Jane, it is evident that she does not agree with Miss Abbot's perception of the child as conniving. On the other hand, we can see that Miss Abbot flatters Mrs. Reed by agreeing with her that the child is deceitful. Here Brontë implies that the upper classes, supported by the opinions of some servants, perpetuate stereotypes that strengthen their hegemonic grip on the nation.

After Bessie reminds Jane that she should not run away because she would end up in the poor-house, she feels the reproach to her "dependence" but says nothing.<sup>11</sup> Even though, with Bessie acting as conciliator, it seems that the wrangling might end now, Miss Abbot keeps it going when she insults the child again: "And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Missis Reed and Master Reed . . . They will have a great deal of money, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble." Following this remark, Bessie tries to calm Jane, explaining that, by behaving in a "useful and pleasant" manner, she can have a good home in the Reed family. Still wanting to humiliate the child, however,

Miss Abbot lashes out: “God will punish her. He might strike her dead in the midst of her tantrums, and then where would she go? . . . I wouldn’t have her heart for anything. Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you are by yourself; for if you don’t repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney, and fetch you away” (9-10).<sup>12</sup> Since Evangelical Christianity is referred to as a “religion of the heart,” Miss Abbot’s statement that she would not have Jane’s heart establishes ironic distance, as we shall see, between the Reeds and the Rivers, the ideological difference in their views of organized religion.<sup>13</sup>

What Brontë dramatizes here, then, is a symbolic clash of social classes. From the Reeds’ standpoint, Jane cannot claim the status of gentility because she does not inherit property. From a moral perspective, however, she gains our sympathy as she is treated unjustly by her blood relatives. In the author’s representation, that sympathy goes to the rising middle classes, represented by Jane and her deceased parents--her mother, disinherited, her father, a poor parson--and her uncle, a merchant, whom Mrs. Reed denigrates as a dishonest tradesman.<sup>14</sup> Bessie also arouses sympathy for the middle classes. By the time, five years later, when she visits Lowood School and tells Jane that the Eyres are gentlemen, she has given birth to two children. She names the youngest child *Jane* (79). So the author sets Jane’s “family,” including Bessie and her children, over against the Reeds. Their treatment of the orphan, as the older narrator portrays it, is uncaring and undeserved. John’s behavior suggests the patriarchal power of the governing elite. His imperious manner and self-indulgence recalls that of King George IV, Britain’s monarch from 1820-1830.<sup>15</sup> Brontë shows us that other family members contribute

to the young gentleman's depravity and to his arrogance, swollen with patriarchal privilege. His mother feeds his lust for cruelty by remaining aloof while he bullies Jane. His sisters and Miss Abbot consent, as well, to his exaggerated portrayal of her as an unruly delinquent. Miss Abbot's verbal taunts suggest, too, that she takes sadistic satisfaction in antagonizing Jane and in compelling her, on Mrs. Reed's orders, to remain locked in the red-room.

The author's presentation of the red-room, the gothic terrors that it holds for Jane, symbolizes the unholy alliance between the British upper classes and religious hypocrites, as suggested by Miss Abbot's animosity toward the child. Inside the red-room, Jane says that the bed, "hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the center; . . . Out of these surrounding shades rose high, and glared white, the piled-up mattresses and pillows of the bed, spread with a snowy Marseilles counterpane." While evoking the material wealth of the Reed's mansion, the décor of the room magnifies the sense of social inferiority that Jane feels, as did the red curtain in the kitchen. But the red-room also implies the heritage of upper-class political power, enshrined and preserved through religious idolatry and patriarchal privileges.<sup>16</sup> Jane says that the arm-chair, with the footstool next it, looked like a "pale throne." She adds that Mrs. Reed kept "divers parchments, her jewel-casket, and a miniature of her deceased husband" in a secret drawer of the red-room. Jane adds further that a "sense of dreary consecration" had hung over the room ever since the day of Mr. Reed's death, nine years before. Through Mrs. Reed's transformation of the bedroom into a shrine in honor of her deceased husband, the author implies that the upper classes lack

genuine spirituality because they are caught up in the outward trappings of religious worship that sanctify and preserve the ancient heritage of male privilege.

While confined in the red-room, Jane reveals all of her pent-up resentments:

All John Reed's violent tyrannies, all his sisters' proud indifference, all his mother's aversion, all the servants' partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned? Why could I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one's favour? Eliza, who was headstrong and selfish, was respected.

Georgiana, who had a spoiled temper, a very acrid spite, a captious and insolent carriage, was universally indulged. Her beauty, her pink cheeks and golden curls, seemed to give delight to all who looked at her, and to purchase indemnity for every fault. John, no one thwarted, much less punished; though he twisted the necks of the pigeons, killed the little pea-chicks, set the dogs at the sheep, stripped the hot-house vines of their fruit, and broke the buds off the choicest plants in the conservatory: he called his mother 'old girl,' too; sometimes reviled her for her dark skin, similar to his own; bluntly disregarded her wishes; . . . and he was still 'her own darling' (11-12).

Here Brontë reveals her ideology of class, as well as race. The indignation that drives Jane to ask disturbing questions about her environment shows that she does not understand the meaning of class ranks, but she does recognize that the Reeds' superior attitude is morally unfounded. She is learning that the wealthy

retain power by denying Others, like herself, the rights that the wealthy claim to have been given at birth. Georgiana's features, for example, which match the cultural ideal of physical beauty, are a reproach to Jane. Earlier, she mentioned her own physical inferiority. Afterward, we learn that she is regarded as plain. Brontë translates Jane's plainness, not only her physical appearance but also her modesty, into moral high ground, something uniquely middle class and authentically English. By presenting Jane's aversion to Georgiana's "spoiled temper," the author begins to redefine British values. In this context, Georgiana's classical features are anything but admirable. Brontë shows us that upper-class materialism, as represented by Georgiana's culturally esteemed beauty, "pink cheeks and golden curls," and also by inherited property, can recoil viciously against both nature and humanity. We can see that backlash, for example, in the sadistic pleasure that John takes in ravishing nature, destroying his family's property, plants, and domesticated animals. Ironically, he also reviles his mother for having "dark skin" like his own.<sup>17</sup> As discussed below, Brontë presents skin complexion and other physical features symbolically, in order to suggest that the values of the Reeds are ideologically opposed to Jane's innate sense of right and wrong. That opposition explains why both John and his mother have dark complexions. From Jane's childhood, then, we can see that her spiritual pilgrimage begins with "half-comprehended notions" of human morality. But those vague sentiments, if they can be regarded as religious impulses, have nothing to do with the people, other than Bessie possibly, whom Jane deals with at Gateshead. We can see that what prevails in the Reed family, upper-class privilege, can only be sustained through hypocrisy and injustice.

In the next place, Lowood School, where Jane resides, Brontë shows us how the upper classes enlist institutional religion as an ally in the battle to retain their cultural hegemony. In order to get the rebellious child, as she regards Jane, off of her hands, Mrs. Reed sends her to Lowood School, where she endures further humiliation, as well as privations, at the hands of Reverend Brocklehurst. Jane, however, does not accept the authority of the “black marble clergyman,” as she calls him, because, when they meet at Gateshead, before she leaves, he intimates that she is “wicked.”<sup>18</sup> In order to propitiate his patron, he readily adopts Mrs. Reed’s opinion that Jane is deceitful. He threatens her by implying that she will “fall into that pit,” burn in hell forever. Brocklehurst follows that threat by asking Jane if she prays and studies her bible. Although she says that she does have those habits, she also shows that she will not submit to his authority. For example, she says that she does not like the book of Psalms, his favorite biblical text. After that exchange, in order to persuade her that she should read that chapter, the clergyman tells Jane a story about a child who was rewarded with nuts because he knew six Psalms by heart. She responds, “Psalms are not interesting.” The straightforward innocence of this remark, set against Brocklehurst’s puerile fable, opens a space for the reader to sympathize with her, the strength of her imagination, as opposed to the imposing religious authority of the dull clergyman. Brontë portrays both Brocklehurst and John as devoid of intellectual curiosity.<sup>19</sup> From their conversation, it is clear that the clergyman’s attempt to frighten Jane with biblical images, “burning with fire and brimstone,” does not intimidate her.<sup>20</sup> Further, she does not buy into the lesson of his anecdote, the idea that she should follow his instruction in



order to gain a reward (28). Brontë's portrayal of Brocklehurst, as revealed in Jane's attitude toward him, shows that he is complicit with the upper classes in keeping the middle classes subjugated. Brontë establishes a clear socio-economic alliance between him and Mrs. Reed that has nothing to do with genuine religious piety. The author reinforces that alliance symbolically through the use of color, as in John's scurrilous remark about his mother's dark complexion. Jane's perception of Brocklehurst as a pillar of "black marble" suggests that his rigid ideological views clash with her intuitive sense of what is right, what is natural. The color symbolism implies that a sort of heathen conspiracy exists between the Reeds and the clergyman, supposedly a devout Evangelical minister of the established Anglican Church. He serves the political interests of the Reeds by selling his seminary students on the fallacious idea that grace and salvation can be achieved through their submission to the propertied classes, who have a God-given mandate to oppress them.

The unholy pact of upper-class values and institutional religion, according to Brontë, is even more apparent when Brocklehurst, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, visits Lowood School to make a general inspection. Upon arriving, he notices that a student, Julia Severn, has curling hair. So he admonishes Miss Temple, the superintendent, for permitting Severn to "conform to the world so openly," in defiance of the rules of an "evangelical, charitable institution."<sup>21</sup> When Miss Temple explains that the girl's red hair curls naturally, he declares, "[W]e are not to conform to nature." After emphasizing that Severn's hair must be "arranged closely, modestly, plainly," he states that he will send a barber to cut it. He then

orders the girls of the first form, the older, academically advanced group, to turn their faces to the wall, apparently so that he can observe their hairstyles. As the girls scoff at this ploy, Brocklehurst “scrutiniz[es] the reverse of these living medals some five minutes.” Afterwards, he states that the top-knots of their hair must be cut off. When Miss Temple objects, he explains to her his duty to God: “[M]y mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh, to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair and costly apparel.”

Here Brocklehurst masks his own lusts, hiding them beneath the garb of moral righteousness. He undermines the spirit of Christianity through a perversely rigid application of biblical principles. The “worldly lusts” that he denigrates are, ironically, his own carnal appetites—not much different than John’s sadistic impulses—as he derives satisfaction in punishing the girls. In fact, for the purposes of satire, Brontë exaggerates the minister’s character traits so that, in comparison with Jane, Miss Temple, and Helen Burns, Jane’s intelligent and loving companion, he appears more monstrous than human.<sup>22</sup> Although Miss Temple is not fully convinced, he sells the teachers and students on the idea that God approves of their physical suffering and self-denial. Going beyond early nineteenth-century Evangelicals who believed that suffering and self-denial prepared them for the next world, that “God smites terrestrially those whom he most loves,” Brocklehurst plays God, assumes his power, by inflicting pain and privation on the girls (Hilton 11). They are undernourished, their water is sometimes frozen, and they are made to take long marches in cold weather to hear his Sunday sermons. In practice,

Brocklehurst's application of the Evangelical belief in self-denial is actually a cover for his greed as he pockets the tuition fees, money that should be spent for the upkeep of the school and the health of its students. The clergyman's covert avarice and his callous treatment of his students positions the reader to have even more sympathy for the middle classes. His behavior undermines Miss Abbot's remark that Jane was "underhand" and Mrs. Reed's comment that Uncle John was "sneaking."

When Brocklehurst's wife and two daughters arrive at the school, the extent to which they have adopted his hypocritical values, the ideology of the upper classes as the author presents it, is apparent. As the clergyman is telling Miss Temple about his putatively lofty Christian goals, his family of three "ladies" enters the classroom. Jane says,

They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk, and furs. The two younger of the trio (fine girls of sixteen and seventeen) had grey beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes, and from under the brim of this graceful head-dress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled; the elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls (56).

From this portrayal of Brocklehurst's family, we can see how his moral edicts, supposedly intended to censure worldliness, do not apply to his wife and

daughters. The clergyman's family, brilliantly adorned with furs and ostrich plumes, ironically embody the savage impulses that the Anglican minister ascribes, afterward, to heathens who worship idols.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the author's metonymy associates Brocklehurst's family with the killing of wildlife. That imagery links them with John's sadistic slaughter of God's creatures so as to make it appear that the upper classes, as Brontë regards them, are true savages who worship false gods of property and privilege. What the author presents as wanton vanity, a "profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled," is an image that contrasts with Severn's red hair, its natural wave, as well as with the disavowal of worldly appetites that Brocklehurst demands of his pupils. That contrast is ironic in the sense that plain Jane, the untutored and undisciplined child, as she is viewed by the Reeds and the clergyman, genuinely embodies the Christian virtues of humility and modesty that he advocates, hypocritically, as principles to govern his students' lives. With the reference to a "false front of French curls," the author emphasizes that the clergyman's wife has much in common with Georgiana, who represents the epitome of female beauty, upper-class fashion. The French curls also carry connotations of Miss Abbott and the red-room, with its musty odor, so to speak, of ancestral privilege and idolatry akin to popery. In other words, when Jane arrives at Lowood School, Brontë's narrative continues to evoke the whole atmosphere of victimization that she had dramatized earlier at Gateshead. The older narrator's melodramatic narrative of her childhood implies that both the upper classes and their religious advocates exist within a kind of childhood fantasy that allows them to retreat from realities, political problems, and social upheavals, such as the

French Revolution.

After the Brocklehurst females walk into the classroom, Jane accidentally drops her slate. She explains how Brocklehurst regards the trivial incident as an intentional disruption of his conversation with Miss Temple. Since he does not know who made the noise, he demands that the culprit reveal herself by stepping forward. Protective of Jane, Miss Temple whispers to her that she will not be punished. Jane, however, thinks that the superintendent will despise her because she does not have her friend's, Helen Burns's, capacity for self-renunciation. She says, "[A]n impulse of fury against Reed, Brocklehurst, and Co. bounded in my pulses at the conviction. I was no Helen Burns." Brontë naturalizes Jane's instincts by differentiating them from Brocklehurst's callous inhumanity and from Burns's almost angelic power of self-denial. Jane's impulses represent those of the middle classes, sympathies that are, within the author's representation, more in line with the venial sins of common humanity than with the venal desires of the propertied elite. Even further, those impulses do not admit the sort of martyrdom, based on socio-economic inequalities, that Evangelicals like Brocklehurst espouse in order to marginalize Others.

While Brocklehurst's wife and daughters are still in the room, he gives an order that Jane must be been lifted onto a stool, where everyone can see her positioned near his nose. At this point, his daughters' garments wave beneath her: "[A] spread of shot orange and purple silk pelisses, and a cloud of silvery plumage waved below [her]." Through the effrontery of the clergyman's daughters, Brontë establishes a moral dichotomy between the upper classes, whose material values

and propensity for sexual exploitation--Brocklehurst's "nose" is a phallic symbol here--contrast with plain Jane's middle-class morality. This scene clearly aligns Brocklehurst's so-called Christian family with the moral depravity of the Reeds. The "black marble clergyman" shows how that corruption exists within the Anglican Church. While Jane feels the eyes of the spectators, "directed like burning glasses against [her] scorched skin," he begins to pontificate. He suggests that she serves Satan, the "Evil One." Of course, Brocklehurst's public humiliation of a child, with echoes of Puritan witch trials in seventeenth-century America, plays off of the reader's sense of genuine Christian piety so that he, not Jane, comes across as the satanic figure. When Brocklehurst castigates her even further, calling her a "little castaway," an "interloper," and an "alien," these words continue to evoke Jane's experience at Gateshead. When the clergyman goes so far as to compare Jane with Indians and their religion, he is indicted by his own racist comparison. Brontë presents this as outrageous because it is so extravagantly inappropriate to Jane's alleged offence, thus showing us the injustice of her treatment as an Other. During his oration, he cautions the students and teachers, telling them that, if there is any hope of saving Jane's soul, they must "scrutinize her actions": "[F]or this little girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl—is a liar!" (58).<sup>24</sup> This comment completes the ironic inversion of Brocklehurst's "Christian" character. In other words, in order to amplify the idea that it is actually Brocklehurst's values, in keeping with those of the upper classes, that are non-English, Brontë uses Indian race and religion as markers to establish ideological

differences within the class hierarchy of Britain. Those markers raise Jane's middle-class values above those of the Reeds and Brocklehurst.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to the savage impulses that drive the Brocklehursts, the author presents Miss Temple as a middle-class lady whom Jane admires and strives to emulate. For example, later that evening, after Jane comes down from the "pedestal of infamy" where the clergyman has ordered her to stand, the superintendent comforts both her and Helen Burns, who is dying from a "chest pain," probably consumption.<sup>26</sup> Jane says that, as Miss Temple kisses her, she derives a "child's pleasure from the contemplation of her face, her dress, her one or two ornaments, her white forehead, her clustered and shining curls, and beaming dark eyes" (62). Miss Temple's admirable character is figured, not only in the tactful attire that she chooses, the near absence of adornment in her dress, but also in the natural beauty of her hair and eyes. She contrasts sharply with the Brocklehurst females, their love of decorations that call attention to their bodies. Even further, in her description of Miss Temple's "white forehead," Brontë combines symbolic color and Victorian phrenology in order to distinguish the superintendent's values from those of the "black marble clergyman," Brocklehurst.<sup>27</sup> While trying to console Jane for the humiliation that he put her through, Miss Temple leads her and Burns to her room upstairs where she gives them a seed-cake from her own stores. She does that because the housekeeper, Mrs. Harden, a "woman after Mr. Brocklehurst's own heart," refused the superintendent's request to give them enough food. That kind act makes a strong impression on Jane. While she is deeply moved by Miss Temple's generosity, a genuinely Christian, middle-class virtue as Brontë presents

it, she also admires the highly learned conversation about books and nations that the superintendent carries on with Burns. Jane is amazed at Burns's ability to read and translate Latin from the work of an author from classical antiquity, Virgil (64). In this scene, Brontë promotes the ideology of the middle classes by portraying Miss Temple as an icon of European cultural development, a person who possesses the attributes of a true lady that Jane hopes to acquire. Her name, *Miss Maria Temple*, implies, in fact, the sort of highly developed Christian culture that she represents.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time that Jane is inspired by Miss Temple's and Burns's educational accomplishments and knowledge about different cultures, she is shocked by one of the seminary teacher's, Miss Scatcherd's, humiliation of Burns. That public embarrassment parallels her own degradation by Brocklehurst. Because Burns forgets to organize her clothes, the teacher forces her to wear a sign with the word "Slattern" on her "large, mild, intelligent, and benign-looking forehead." Again, we see that the author employs phrenology as race science that supports her ideological views.<sup>29</sup> Jane is not only outraged by the punishment but also aghast that Burns accepts it as a reproach that she deserves. The author portrays Jane as a figure who rebels against injustices, especially those based on stereotypes, such as dishonesty, laziness, lack of order, and lack of cleanliness, that the upper classes use to keep the middle classes in thrall. In Jane's view, Burns's willingness to accept her punishment only perpetuates those destructive stereotypes. To counteract that submission the author carves out a space for middle-class morality that erases those false concepts.



After Jane tears the sign from Burns's forehead, angrily throwing it in the fire, she begins to change, to develop along the lines that the superintendent, as an exemplar of moral education, sets for her. Miss Temple clears Jane's reputation, marred by Brocklehurst, who had called her a liar. The superintendent writes to Mr. Lloyd, the Reeds' doctor, who corroborates her account that she had been mistreated by them. As a result, the teachers and students accept Jane into their circle so that she feels "relieved of a grievous load." She then works hard to accomplish her academic goals. After she reaches the top of her class, Miss Temple promises her that if she continues to make progress that she will teach her drawing and allow her to learn French (59). Inspired by the superintendent's person and promise, Jane works diligently for two months. She is then promoted and allowed instruction in French and drawing. Thus, Miss Temple fulfills a promise that gives significant shape and meaning to the child's outlook on life. By learning refinements that a Victorian lady is supposed to possess, Jane shows that she is on the path to becoming another Miss Temple, so to speak. What Jane learns at Lowood School, then, is that heart-felt compassion and diligent study, rather than frightening images and pious platitudes, are the lifeblood of true religion. Although she is not convinced, as Burns is, that there is "such a place as heaven" where "our souls can get to when we die," she does have faith in Christian principles as represented by Miss Temple's middle-class morality (71).

Much later in the novel, when Jane, now almost twenty years old, is working as a governess for Rochester, Robert arrives at Thornfield Hall with news from Gateshead. He tells Jane that John has died in London. When she asks the

coachman about Mrs. Reed's response to her son's death, rather than answering that question, he explains that John had run wild for three years, that he had ruined his health while associating with knaves. Robert explains that John's companions took advantage of him, so that he acquired debts and was taken to jail. Even though Mrs. Reed gave him the money that he needed to get out of prison, he returned to his companions and to his profligate habits. On the final occasion, when John asked his mother to "give up all" to him, she refused. After that, Robert says, "How he died, God knows!--they say he killed himself" (194). Here, in John's suicide, we can see how perverse violence is an avoidable feature of class conflict. The coachman then explains that Mrs. Reed's health suffered due to her fear of poverty. After hearing of her son's sudden death, she suffered a stroke that impaired her ability to speak. From her interview with Robert, Jane learns of her aunt's request to see her, so she leaves Thornfield Hall and Rochester for a few weeks. Soon after returning to Gateshead, Jane, with a "strong yearning to forgive and forget," has a brief talk with her aunt. But the interview does not turn out as she had hoped. Even though Jane kisses her, Mrs. Reed turns away, refusing Jane's offer of reconciliation.

Mrs. Reed does explain, however, the root cause of her dislike for Jane. She says that her husband pitied her as an infant, and noticed her, "as if [Jane] had been his own, more indeed than he ever noticed his own at that age." Mrs. Reed explains that her husband was angry with his own children for not befriending the child, and that, during his "last illness, he had [the child] brought continually to his bedside." During this dialogue, it is clear that Mrs. Reed is tormented, not only by physical

dementia but also by psychological agony. Besides the degeneration that comes from harboring, over time, a resentment against Jane, refusing to let go of that, she cannot grasp the fact that her son has killed himself.<sup>30</sup> She tells Jane that John is nothing like his father, that he is like her family, the Gibsons. She says, too, that he tortures her with letters asking for money, and that he threatened her with his own death. We can see, then, that Mrs. Reed already inhabits a sort of earthly hell, the consequence of her own jealous rancor and narcissistic fantasy of Gibson family blood.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to Mrs. Reed's present condition, materially, physically, and psychologically diminished since the opening chapters, we find that Jane's status, while living at Thornfield Hall, has risen. She has changed from a "heterogeneous thing" to a dignified young lady.

While revisiting Gateshead, Jane's admirable character attributes trump those of the two upper-class females, Georgiana and Eliza, who waste their time and energies engaged in self-interested pursuits that flatter their vanity. For example, instead of taking care of her dying mother, the "indolent" Georgiana is consumed with thoughts of London social life, her "titled conquest," her ambition to marry a nobleman. From her observations, Jane says that Georgiana, besides "chattering nonsense to her canary bird," always reverted, in conversation, to the same subject, "herself, her loves, and her woes. It was strange that she never adverted to either her mother's illness, or her brother's death, or the present gloomy state of the family prospects. Her mind seemed wholly taken up with reminiscences of past gaiety, and aspirations after dissipations to come. She passed about five minutes each day in her mother's sick room and no more" (206). Brontë's portrait

of Georgiana accentuates the absence of any meaningful use of her mind's energy as she prattles nonsense to her canary and fantasizes about her social ambitions. Her self-absorption produces a callous unconcern for her dying mother. In contrast to Georgiana, the author presents Jane's refined accomplishments as evidence that she, rather than the upper-class Reeds, is the true lady. For example, not long after arriving at Gateshead, Jane draws a portrait, a "faithful representation" of a gentleman, Rochester. This is a skill that she learned at Lowood by following Miss Temple's pedagogy. The fact that Eliza admires Jane's artistic ability, a genteel accomplishment that neither she nor her sister possesses, helps to elevate the morality of the governess above that of the Reed daughters. Beautiful Georgiana notices that the figure represented in the sketch is an "ugly" man, so that observation contributes as well to the imaginative reshaping of upper-class values. In comparison with Georgiana's inane vanity, Rochester's ugly likeness comes across as salubrious moral substance. From her drawing of the gentleman, Jane's middle-class values gather force in the narrative.

As Jane continues her narrative of the Reeds' downward spiral, we find that Eliza's self-absorption matches that of her sister. Jane says, "I never saw a busier person than she seemed to be: yet it was difficult to say what she did or to discover any result of her diligence." Eliza, like Georgiana, is consumed with self-interests that isolate her from others, eliminating the chance that a meaningful family relationship might develop. Recalling Brocklehurst, his unyielding misapplication of Christian principles, Eliza insulates herself within a regime of daily business affairs—reading the Rubric of the Common Prayer-book, writing in her diary,

managing her financial accounts—that keep her distanced from grief that, naturally, she ought to feel. While the family around her falls apart, she secures her own future, saving money and planning to leave as soon as her mother dies. Those plans do not include her sister, however. Eliza openly denigrates Georgiana, calling her a “vain and absurd animal.” Even further, according to Georgiana, Eliza jealously destroyed her chances of marrying a nobleman. As soon as their mother is dead, Eliza plans to disown her sister. In Brontë’s view, then, upper-class privilege creates enmity between family members that severs natural bonds of affection based on blood relation, on biological kinship (208). This is the reverse of the strong bond of affection that developed among Jane, Miss Temple, and Burns at Lowood School, especially as presented in the scene in which the superintendent gave food to her two pupils out of her private provisions.

Since both of the Reed daughters are “idle,” absorbed in their own affairs, Jane assumes their responsibilities. She behaves, ironically, as a loving daughter toward the woman who once treated her as an outcast and still despises her. Jane displays what the author presents as qualities of an authentic lady: middle-class Christian virtues such as industry, humility, compassion, and forgiveness. Partly because she did not succumb to Brocklehurst’s threats of hellfire, Jane’s religious belief found fertile soil for growth at Lowood Institution. Miss Temple’s compassionate guidance and Helen Burns’s faith were nurturing influences for her. Before Jane enters her aunt’s bedroom for the second time, she remarks, “I thought of Helen Burns, recalled her dying words—her faith—her doctrine of the equality of disembodied souls” (208). In other words, Jane’s attempt to reconcile with her

dying aunt, though unsuccessful, strengthens her religious faith. Thinking that she might be reviving, Jane goes to her bedside for the second time. During their conversation, Mrs. Reed tells Jane that she had wronged her twice. The first wrong was that she did not keep the promise that she made to her husband to raise her as she did her own children. The second wrong was keeping undisclosed, for three years, a letter written to Jane from her uncle in Madeira. When Mrs. Reed shows the letter to her, it reveals his plan to bequeath his property to her. As Mrs. Reed knows, the fact that Jane, upon her uncle's death, will receive an inheritance restores to her the status of gentility that she had been denied as a child (203). In different words, John Eyre's earned income supplants the ancestral property that was taken from Jane's mother when she was disinherited.<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Reed's confession that she disliked Jane "too fixedly and thoroughly ever to lend a hand in lifting [her] to prosperity" establishes even further, by contrast, what we might call middle-class gentility. The contrast between Mrs. Reed's perfidy and Miss Temple's loyalty provides a foundation for the morality of the nascent middle class.<sup>33</sup>

Rather than social status and biological kinship, however, that emergent gentility is based on morality. For example, with Christian kindness, Jane forgives her aunt for not keeping her promise and for deceiving her about her uncle's note. Afterward, she kisses the dying woman and asks for her forgiveness in return. The fact that Mrs. Reed lacks the human capacity to forgive Jane throws off, in Brontë's representation, the moral authority of the upper classes. Brontë shows the progress of middle-class gentility, too, when she says that, after Mrs. Reed died, neither Jane

nor Eliza dropped a tear. Fitting Brontë's moral paradigm, this scenario illustrates the consequences of adhering to the socio-economic, political, and religious values of the upper classes. John and Mrs. Reed arrogantly set themselves above both nature and humanity, as we see in their hostility toward Jane, and in John's despoiling of nature, and so, by contrast, John's suicide and Mrs. Reed's stroke serve to reinforce the grounds of middle-class morality.

Brontë accentuates the moral and pragmatic void of upper-class values when, after their mother's death, both Georgiana and Eliza ask Jane to stay longer at Gateshead to help in their departure. Showing the middle-class virtue of industry, she does Georgiana's sewing and packing for her. Upon reflection, however, she thinks that, if they lived together, she would handle things differently: "I should assign [her her] share of labour, and compel [her] to accomplish it, or else it should be left undone." Besides industry, the idea that the individual should assume responsibility for her own affairs, for her own upkeep, is a value that lifts Jane's moral stature to that of a dignified lady. She also helps Eliza, who purposely remains confined in her room while preparing to leave. Quite in keeping with her reclusive character, she plans to enter a French convent as a nun. Jane says, "She wished me to look after the house, to see callers, and answer notes of condolence" (212). Brontë presents Jane's, the governess's, practical ability to complete necessary tasks and to superintend household affairs as a middle-class virtue that dismantles the foundation of upper-class privilege, the self-serving, self-righteous idolatry of material wealth and social status.

## II. Race and the Upper Classes: Thornfield Hall

Let us shift back in the narrative now to Jane's final days at Lowood School. She tells us that she has risen from student to teacher at that institution, and that she is contented there for a while. However, when she sees Miss Temple step into a post-chaise, shortly after her wedding, dressed for travel with her new husband, she yearns for life beyond the gates of Lowood (73-74). Answering a news advertisement, she travels to Thornfield Hall and secures a position there as governess. In this central part of the novel, we can see how the author uses Christian morality and racial Others to displace the values of the propertied classes. Brontë's portrayal of upper-class figures who visit Thornfield Hall during the time that Rochester entertains several well-to-do families reveals a pattern of images, symbolic markers of racial difference, that started with Mrs. Reed and John, their dark skin, and his "thick lips" (79).<sup>34</sup> While awaiting Rochester's return from an unknown destination, Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, cautions Jane that she should not settle her affections on him: "[K]eep to your caste," she says, "and be too self-respecting to lavish the love of the whole heart, soul, and strength, where such a gift is not wanted and would be despised" (142).<sup>35</sup> Even though Jane thinks of leaving Thornfield, it is too late for her to follow the house-keeper's advice since she has already fallen in love with Rochester. After Mrs. Fairfax receives a letter from him, ordering her to make preparations to entertain a group of ladies and gentlemen, Jane is sitting in the "sanctum of the schoolroom," her refuge from trouble, as she calls it. Incited by the servant's news that the guests are arriving, she goes to the window where she notices carriages coming up the drive: "Fluttering



veils and waving plumes filled the vehicles.” She then sees Rochester, in front, riding his black horse, Mesrour. Jane also sees “rich raven ringlets” shining through the veil of a lady riding beside him (145).<sup>36</sup> Here Brontë is setting the stage for the scene that follows, the entrance of the elite company into the mansion, with Oriental flourishes, symbolic marks of heathen idolatry. The splendid array of veils and plumes recalls Brocklehurst’s family, the exotic plumage of their apparel, while Rochester’s black horse, named after a figure, an executioner, from the *Arabian Nights*, as well as the raven tresses of the lady beside him, imply that savage impulses course through the veins of the ruling classes.

During the festivities of the next scene, Jane shows much interest in Blanche Ingram, the lady who was riding next to Rochester. While keeping care of Adèle, his misbegotten child from a demeaning affair with a French actress, Céline Varens, on the Continent, the governess watches as the ladies enter the drawing room. Noting differences among them, she prefers Mrs. Colonel Dent. Dressed in modest apparel, she is “less showy” and more “ladylike” than the other guests. Brontë’s portrait of Mrs. Dent helps instate the virtue of modesty, middle-class plainness, that the author elevates in the narrative. Next Jane notices the “most distinguished” of the group, the Dowager Lady Ingram and her two daughters, Blanche and Mary. One feature that marks them as exceptional is their height. All three are of the “loftiest stature of women.” Lady Ingram’s physical features, in particular, set her apart. Though middle-aged, she retains her youthful shape, her black hair, and her “apparently perfect” teeth. The author’s emphasis on somatic attributes, especially the tall stature of all three Ingram ladies, suggests that

some aboriginal tribe, a band of female Amazonian warriors perhaps, has entered the room.<sup>37</sup> Brontë develops that analogy afterward. For example, after asking Jane what she thought of Blanche, his potential bride, Rochester says: “A strapper—a real strapper, Jane: big, brown, and buxom; with hair just such as the ladies of Carthage must have had” (193). This allusion to the females of Carthage, an ancient city in Africa destroyed by imperial Romans during the Punic Wars, reinforces the author’s portrayal of Blanche and her mother as “savage” persons.<sup>38</sup> Rochester’s mention of Blanche’s African-looking hair, in particular, links the Ingrams to Mrs. Reed’s hardy, almost masculine, physical features. Earlier, at Gateshead, Jane said that her aunt possessed a “robust frame” and was “strong-limbed.” She added that her “brow was low” and that her “skin was dark and opaque, her hair nearly flaxen” (30). Brontë repeats the analogy between heathen tribes and upper-class females later when Rochester, after purchasing a carriage for his prospective wedding with Blanche, tells Jane that his new bride will look like Queen Boadicea (215). She was the queen of the Iceni, an ancient British tribe, who led a revolt against the Romans in 61 A. D.<sup>39</sup> This allusion reinforces the image of upper-class savages, in headlong career, that we saw earlier when Rochester and Blanche were riding horses in front of the carriages.

Let us return to Jane’s observation of Rochester’s guests as they enter the drawing room. She says that most people would regard Lady Ingram as a splendid woman. But the governess notices other features that are inconsistent with that judgment:

[T]here was an expression of almost insupportable haughtiness

in her bearing and countenance. She had Roman features and a double chin, disappearing into a throat like a pillar: these features appeared to me not only inflated and darkened, but even furrowed with pride. . . . She had, likewise, a fierce and hard eye: it reminded me of Mrs. Reed's. . . . A crimson velvet robe, and a shawl turban of some gold-wrought Indian fabric, invested her (I suppose she thought) with a truly imperial dignity (151).

Brontë portrays both Lady Ingram and Blanche as social predators with voracious appetites for wealth and power. Lady Ingram's "Roman features," for example, connect her with the cruelty and arrogance of slave driving Roman emperors whom Jane spoke of at Gateshead. In fact, Lady Ingram's "inflated and darkened double chin" aligns her with Mrs. Reed's and John's symbolic Otherness, the moral sloth signified by their dark complexions. The word "pillar" has connotations, too, of Brocklehurst's perverse moral rigidity. Even further, while Lady Ingram's "fierce and hard eye" reminds Jane of Mrs. Reed, Brontë associates her with the natives of India.<sup>40</sup> The author does that through the presentation of what Jane perceives as heathen raiment, the shawl turban, woven from "gold-wrought Indian fabric." The connection with Indian tribes, like Brocklehurst's allusion to the Juggernaut idol, is a racist marker that places the values of the Ingram family in opposition to those of Jane. We can see, then, how Brontë critiques the upper classes by assigning markers of racial difference—historical allusions, anatomical features, skin complexion, and exotic apparel—to figures who represent Anglo-Saxon political, social, and economic power. The racial markers

equate the propertied classes with indigenous peoples of the empire, who were considered inferior to their British rulers.<sup>41</sup> From the imagery of racial difference that the author presents in order to overthrow upper-class gentility, we can see how her representation equates middle-class values with British imperialism. In other words, Anglo-Saxon superiority reaches beyond the British Isles, as Rivers's missionary ambitions illustrate, to convert indigenous peoples, heathens, to Christianity. The historic progress of Christian civilization, discussed below, means that British imperialism is sanctioned by God as an economically moral endeavor.

At this point, Jane takes much interest in Blanche in order to determine how well suited she is as a potential wife for Rochester and how much genuine affection, if any, he has for the lady. Although Jane loves Rochester, she acquiesces, at first, with Mrs. Fairfax's judgment that she ought to stick to her own social rank. But Brontë overcomes the obstacle that class poses for Jane and for Rochester through her portrayal of Blanche.<sup>42</sup> Her behavior elevates, through contrast, Jane's Christian morality and middle-class values. Even though Blanche, according to Victorian standards, is far more suited to be a spouse for Rochester than a governess is, Jane proves, ultimately, that she is a better match for him. From her account, we learn that Blanche possesses classical features, "like a Dian," similar to those of Georgiana. But that admired beauty contains a defect, as the author presents it, that is not perceived as such by the group. When comparing Blanche with her mother, Jane notices that they both have a low brow, a feature that links them with Mrs. Reed. From that anatomical feature, the author draws on Victorian pseudo-science, phrenology, to show that the upper classes lack innate

moral and intellectual qualities, the sort signified by Miss Temple's white forehead.<sup>43</sup> The low forehead is a marker that degrades the Ingrams because it casts them, as did Mrs. Reed's fierce features, as Jane's antagonists. Despite similarities, Blanche is more gregarious than her mother is. Although she possesses Lady Ingram's haughtiness, she is more aggressive than her mother is in the pursuit of power. Blanche looks for opportunities to stage the superiority that she assumes.<sup>44</sup> Her satirical laugh, which Jane called the "habitual expression of her arched and haughty lip," reveals her patronizing attitude. For example, Jane says that Blanche "trail[s]" the "gentle Mrs. Dent." She means that Blanche promotes the image of herself as an intelligent lady, conversant with science, by exploiting, through conversation, the kindness of Mrs. Dent, playing off of her ignorance of botany (151). Jane's comment on Blanche's predatory "*trailing*" is that, while it might be "clever," it certainly is not "good-natured." The fact that Mrs. Dent is the wife of an officer in the British military, sworn to uphold the principles of the English nation, contributes even further to the author's representation of Blanche's upper-class savagery as something opposed to authentic middle-class values.<sup>45</sup>

The author presents Blanche's social aggression as callous behavior, an extremity on one end of a spectrum of perverse habits and attitudes.<sup>46</sup> Mary Ingram and her brother, Lord Ingram, represent the other extreme. Brontë presents both of these figures as "deficient in life." Unlike Blanche, Mary takes a seat during the social event, withdrawing from notice. She remains "fixed like a statue in its niche," recalling Brocklehurst, his column-like appearance, while anticipating Eliza Reed's detachment from her family. Jane says that Lord Ingram "shares Mary's

apathetic and listless look. He seems to have more length of limb than vivacity of blood or vigour of brain” (152). Even though Brontë presents what looks like contrasting portraits of the Ingrams, Lady Ingram and Blanche on one side, Mary and Lord Ingram on the other, they represent the old adage, as Jane says later, that extremes meet (167). In other words, together they present a unified image of upper-class moral deviance, one that goes outside the pale of humanity, to borrow a phrase from Elsie Michie.<sup>47</sup>

Jane’s primary complaint against Blanche, in fact, is that she is deficient in qualities that constitute human nature. Through Jane’s comment that “Miss Ingram is as dark as a Spaniard,” Brontë marks her as essentially savage. Even though Blanche displays the refined accomplishments that a Victorian lady was supposed to possess, such as playing the piano or speaking French, she has other traits that make her unsuited, in Jane’s eyes, for Rochester’s wife. For example, the author presents Blanche’s dislike of children as an aberration opposed to Jane’s maternal instincts. From the time that Mr. Rochester hired her as governess, Jane is the caretaker of Adèle. She tutors the frolicsome child, training her to become the sort of lady, like Miss Temple, whom she admires. Anticipating the arrival of the guests, Adèle wanted to dress stylishly, however, so that she would look like those upper-class women. Even though Jane disapproved of what she considered the child’s undue regard for fashionable attire, she gave her a rose and permitted her, for the occasion, to dress stylishly (149-150). When the guests enter the drawing room, Adèle, with “stately reverence,” greets them in French, her native tongue: “Bon jour, mesdames.” Blanche, while addressing those nearby, ridicules the child

with a “mocking air”: “Oh, what a little puppet.” Her comment satirically undercuts the moral foundation of her identity as a lady of great significance. Given Adèle’s eager innocence, her unqualified admiration of the ladies, Blanche’s comment, because it is entirely inappropriate, redounds against her. It implies that she, rather than the child, is sort of a puppet whose upper-class gentility lacks moral fabric. Her remark not only suggests that Blanche has little regard for Adèle’s feelings but also points to the sham aspects of her own behavior. Later, the Dowager Lady Ingram and her companion, the Dowager Mrs. Lynn, while gossiping, mirror one another’s attitude: “[T]hey nodded their two turbans at each other . . . like a pair of magnified puppets” (165). Since both of these females are widows, and Blanche does not like children, we can see how the author presents mimicry as a kind of sterile reproduction that empties upper-class gentility of genuine moral substance and vitality. Brontë ties that sterility to the upper classes by presenting the turban as a mark of racial Otherness. Here the author’s portrayal of Blanche owes something to William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, particularly his use of the puppet metaphor.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Blanche, several of the other ladies are quite taken with Adèle. Mrs. Dent holds her hand and kisses her, while other ladies cry out, “What a love of a child.” Jane says that several of the guests “spoil” Adèle to her “heart’s content.” The spontaneous affection that the other females show the child lends an even more satiric edge to the remark that Blanche makes afterward. She asks Rochester where he “pick[ed] [Adèle] up,” as though she were a filthy street urchin (155). Here Brontë inverts the human and the sub-human, as in her portrayal of Brocklehurst, so that upper-class values take the fall. The fact that Blanche lacks spontaneity, that

she is incapable, not only of genuine affection but also of “originality,” proves to Jane that she has savage propensities, so that she cannot possibly be a suitable mate for Rochester.

While Blanche wants to impress the guests with her genteel qualities, her behavior clashes, at times, with our sense of social decorum. That is certainly the case when, with callous condescension, she and her mother disparage governesses, in Jane’s presence, as the “anathematised race.” Priding herself as a judge of physiognomy, Lady Ingram says that she sees in Jane “all the faults of her race.” When Rochester asks what those faults are, she “wags her turban three times with portentous significance.” For a verbal answer, however, she refers him to Blanche. She states that the “whole tribe” of governesses is a “nuisance.” Here, again, the author attaches racist signifiers, the turban and the word *tribe*, to females of the upper class. In fact, the phrase “anathematized race” redounds against the Ingrams as a register of their own barbarism. The fact that Rochester questions Lady Ingram about Jane’s shortcomings shows that he is not sold entirely on the sort of gentility that she espouses. His uncertainty provides a space for Jane’s values, ultimately, to gain ascendance. After that exchange, Blanche, for the audience whom she wants to impress, relates anecdotes that ridicule several governesses who had supervised her during her childhood. She includes a story about a tutor, a parson named Mr. Vining, who fell in love with the governess, Miss Wilson. At the time of that affair, Lady Ingram’s comment was that that kind of behavior showed an “immoral tendency” on the part of governesses. Blanche’s account of the parson recalls the Reeds’ view of the marriage of Jane’s mother to a poor parson as being degrading.



From this anecdote, and the others that Blanche relates in order to disparage governesses, the author begins to redefine romantic love. She presents it as a constituent feature of middle-class morality, a natural passion, a “vining” that contrasts with the savage and sadistic impulses of the upper classes.

In order to overthrow upper-class values even further, Brontë presents Blanche’s passion for violence as a savage impulse, especially as embodied in romantic rogues like James Hepburn, fourth Earl of Bothwell. He was a Renaissance scoundrel whose amorous adventures turned bloody. After Blanche suggests that she and Rochester entertain the guests by singing and playing the piano, he responds, “Who would not be the Rizzio of so divine a Mary?” This allusion compares Blanche to Mary, Queen of Scots, and Rochester to David Rizzio, an Italian singer. He was entangled with the queen in a lovers’ scandal and assassinated by her husband, Lord Darnley. After that event, Bothwell became the queen’s lover and had Lord Darnley murdered. Blanche responds to Rochester by saying that she prefers Bothwell to Rizzio: “[T]o my mind a man is nothing without a spice of the devil in him; and history may say what it will of James Hepburn, but I have a notion that he was just the sort of wild, fierce, bandit hero whom I could have consented to gift with my hand.” The Bothwell allusion provides an historic frame for Blanche’s and Rochester’s relationship as it evolves.<sup>49</sup> Their affair, based on sensual allure rather than on spiritual equality--the kind presented at the end of the novel when Jane hears his supernatural call--contains the seeds of infidelity, violence, even murder. Brontë sets this scene, with Blanche seated at the piano and Rochester about to sing, so that the conventions of romantic love provide a veil that

thinly disguises the sadistic impulses lurking within their affair. Since chivalric romance imagines the male as the female's vassal, obedient to every command of his paramour, Rochester, in his feigned subservience to Blanche, parodies that tradition. While he willingly plays along with this amusement, a performance that pokes fun at the ritual of courtship that he and Blanche are actually going through, Brontë clearly accentuates Blanche's quest for power, the urge to dominate her lover. After Jane remarks that Blanche is on her "high-horse," the lady gives a speech that lays bare her true feelings about love and marriage. "Whenever I marry," she says,

"I am resolved my husband shall not be a rival, but a foil to me. I will suffer no competitor near the throne; I shall exact an undivided homage; his devotions shall not be shared between me and the shape he sees in his mirror. Mr. Rochester, now sing, and I will play for you."

As the performance begins, Blanche compares herself to a Victorian monarch, who, like Mary, Queen of Scots, exacts homage from her husbands. But Blanche's playful analogy reveals her narcissism, the self-love that gives her a sense of power over Rochester, whose physical appearance is not admired socially, as hers is. In French, the word *blanc* means either the color white or blank, the absence of color. From the latter, Blanche's name suggests the insipid, amoral vacuum of her vanity. In keeping with symbolic colors already discussed, Brocklehurst's blackness, for instance, the name has ironic implications. It implies the feigned superiority of upper-class Anglo-Saxons who view themselves on a

scale of civilization above Others of both race and class.<sup>50</sup> The fact that Blanche has a French name contributes as well to the idea that she does not represent what Brontë regards as authentically English values. Blanche's empty narcissism contrasts, too, with the moral substance of Jane's plainness. That virtue is figured here, not only through her ordinary physical appearance, but also through her modesty. By presenting Jane as self-effacing, a mere observer of the entertainment, the author captures her modesty, a "dignified sedateness of deportment," as Mary Wollstonecraft defines that quality.<sup>51</sup>

Rochester continues:

"I am all obedience," was the response.

"Here then is a Corsair-song. Know that I doat on Corsairs; and for that reason, sing it 'con spirito.'"

"Commands from Miss Ingram's lips would put spirit into a mug of milk and water."

"Take care, then; if you don't please me I shall shame you by showing how such thing *should* be done."

"That is offering a premium on incapacity; I shall now endeavor to fail."

"Gardez-vous en bien! If you err willfully, I shall devise a proportionate punishment."

"Miss Ingram ought to be clement, for she has it in her power to inflict a chastisement beyond mortal endurance."

"Ha! explain! commanded the lady."

“Pardon me, madam; no need of explanation; your own fine sense must inform you that one of your frowns would be sufficient substitute for capital punishment” (158).

The reference to “corsairs” suggests the swashbuckling exploits of heroes in poems with images of the East, such as Lord Byron’s “The Giaour.” From Blanche’s remark that she “doat[s] on corsairs,” the scene has slight overtones of the East, sultans, harems, and slaves, the West’s stereotypical image of the Orient.<sup>52</sup> From her attitude and behavior, however, it is clear that Blanche’s view of Western “love” is merely Oriental despotism, male dominance turned on its head as female power.<sup>53</sup> That reversal of gender relations works in tandem with the French phrase, “Gardez-vous en bien,” to imply the power struggle between Rochester and Blanche. While her French expressions showcase the badinage that a refined lady was supposed to possess, they are also packed with inimical tensions. They call up England’s political and religious rival, France, and must remind Rochester of his sordid liaison with Céline Varens.

That affair, and two others of equally undignified magnitude, took place after Rochester tried to escape the infamy of his marriage to Bertha Mason, his “Indian Messalina,” as he called her, by locking her in his mansion and by fleeing to the Continent. Messalina was the promiscuous wife of the Roman emperor, Claudius, whose conquering legions expanded the empire greatly.<sup>54</sup> The allusion to Messalina, as it compares Rochester to Claudius, plays on the flattering notion of the English gentleman as a powerful ruler, with ever increasing colonies and riches. However, since the marriage of Claudius and Messalina ended tragically, Bertha’s

pet name also connotes Rochester's dissolute downfall, represented not only by his marriage to Bertha but also by a series of romantic affairs on the Continent. After caging Bertha, so to speak, he had degrading relationships with three women: Varens, a French actress, Giacinta, an Italian, and Clara, a German (274). Those liaisons suggest the imperialist European competitions—in 1917 Lenin calls them “inter-imperialist” rivalries-- that were taking place at mid-century.<sup>55</sup> Since Rochester is duped by Varens and a young French soldier, “brainless and vicious,” who was making love to her on the sly while the English gentleman was showering her with expensive gifts, wasting his family's fortune, the incident suggests how Brontë regards French culture and society as inferior, immoral, hypocritical, and demeaning (126-127). The child, Adèle, that Rochester, in all likelihood, fathered during his affair with Varens is a constant reminder of the degradation that he experienced on the Continent. His liaisons took place, of course, before he met Jane, but they are related to the offer he makes to her to live as his mistress in Marseilles. Jane rejects his offer because, as his mistress, she would be degraded, set on a social plane that was the moral equivalent of the women with whom Rochester had formed unsavory romantic attachments. Bertha's pet name, as it couples the word “Indian” with the word “Messalina,” also suggests the foreign Otherness that Brontë associates with Britain's imperial rivals through the train of degrading attachments that followed on the heels of the English gentleman's marriage to a Creole. By rejecting Rochester's offer, Jane not only retains her moral stature but also suggests, metaphorically, the superiority of English civilization in the inter-imperialist political rivalry among European nations.

So Blanche, as she plays the piano, brings back, through innuendo, a painful part of Rochester's past that he wanted to forget. At the same time, as suggested by her name and her use of French expressions to playfully put Rochester on his guard, she implicates herself, symbolically, in the inter-imperialist rivalry between France and England. In doing so, she places herself alongside Varens, metaphorically, as a vain and shallow theatrical performer, in other words, a duplicitous lover, who is only after Rochester's property. The amusing parody of courtship, then, has a dark underside that mocks the European institution of marriage. The repartee that engages the two actors is not so lighthearted after all. Western love, as Brontë implies here, is based on savage "chastisement," the infliction of physical and psychological pain that Rochester likens to "capital punishment." Those punishments, as we shall see, degrade and dehumanize those who make such unholy alliances, nuptial contracts made primarily for political reasons, "interest and connexions," as Jane says later (164).<sup>56</sup> It is ironic, too, that the author condemns the violence, as she regards it, associated with upper class marriage, but feels comfortable, apparently, with the violence that class warfare perpetuates.

In the charades episode that follows this scene, the author makes that she presents distinct markers of racial Otherness in order to identify as heathen the European institution of marriage as ritualized and perpetuated by the upper classes. For instance, during preparations for a game of charades, the guests split into two groups, one headed by Rochester, the other by Mrs. Dent's husband, Colonel Dent. While Rochester's group performs first, Jane watches as she had

done before during the entertainment at the piano.<sup>57</sup> Even though a guest, Mr. Eshton, the magistrate, invites her to play the game, she declines his offer. Blanche remarks that Jane is “too stupid” to participate (160). In the first charade, a “pantomime of marriage,” the dominant color is white, as suits a European wedding. Sir George Lynn, Louisa Eshton, and Mrs. Dent, are all dressed in white. While those ladies kneel behind Rochester and Blanche, who is also “clad in white,” a “large book lies open on the table.” During the enactment, Adèle drops flowers from a basket onto the stage. From this representation, Colonel Dent’s party easily solves the riddle. They correctly guess the word “Bride.” In the second charade, Rochester is dressed in Oriental robes: “Mr. Rochester, costumed in shawls, with a turban on his head. His dark eyes and swarth skin and Paynim features suited the costume exactly: he looked the very model of an Eastern emir; an agent or victim of the bowstring. Presently advanced into view Miss Ingram. She, too, was attired in Oriental fashion.” In the same charade scene, the second, after Blanche, looking like an “Israelitish princess of the patriarchal days,” gives Rochester a drink of water, he places a casket, packed with jewels, at her feet. Then, in the last theatrical presentation, Rochester appears on his knees in a “sordid scene.” Jane says, “I knew Mr. Rochester; though the begrimed face, the disordered dress (his coat hanging loose from one arm, as if it had been almost torn from his back in a scuffle), the desperate and scowling countenance, the rough, bristling hair might have disguised him. As he moved a chain clanked; to his wrists were attached fetters.”

As in the piano performance, Jane is an onlooker, an outsider, who merely

relates what happens during the entertainment. That position makes her appear as an objective observer, even though she is deeply invested in all of Rochester's activities. Blanche's comment that Jane is not smart enough to play the game also establishes ironic distance for her observations so that the charade tableaux look frozen in time, disconnected, rather than tied together through Jane's subjective consciousness.<sup>58</sup> In the overall sequence of charade entablatures, the color scheme begins with white, not only representing the drapery of a European wedding but also symbolizing the racial identity of the players. The colors then change to dark, the distinguishing marks of the East, Oriental despotism. That change complements the downward path of the imagery as it slides from the blithe tone of a wedding celebration to dark pathos, the tone of brutal captivity. The transformation in Rochester, as he moves from a willing marriage partner to an Eastern despot, to a biblical servant, to slavish imprisonment, shows how Brontë removes Jane from the institution of upper-class marriage and the downward career of its corrupt morality. The author distances her from the traditional values of the genteel players. After the charades are finished, Colonel Dent announces the answer to the riddle of the whole game, the word "Bridewell" that his party figures out. The solution is an ironic comment on the transformation of the bridegroom, Rochester, from human to beast. The answer to the riddle suggests the name of a London prison, Bridewell, with its inmates in fetters. But the answer also implies that the bride has done well in reducing her partner to utter brutality. As in her portrayal of Mrs. Dent, Brontë presents Colonel Dent as an admirable figure, somewhat at odds with the values of the other upper-class figures.<sup>59</sup> The author chose him to announce the answer to the



riddle, not only because he is the leader of his party, but also because, as a military gentleman, he occupies ambiguous social ground. He is a highly respected representative of the British nation, but he has not necessarily inherited property as most of the other genteel guests have.

Of course, the downward trajectory of the charades' tableaux represents the possible consequences of Rochester's actual marriage to Blanche as she has the power to strip all traces of humanity from him. Because Rochester, from a traditional standpoint, is a good match for Blanche, she is capable of imprisoning him within the socio-political, religious, economic, and psychological chains of marriage, a heathen institution, as suggested by his Eastern markings—his turban, his "swarth skin and Paynim features,"-- and Blanche's Oriental costume. In this theatrical performance, cupid's bowstring represents the sadistic / masochistic power struggle that lies behind the Western myth of romantic love, a gender battle that Brontë associates with Oriental despotism and with Old Testament patriarchy. Participants in that conflict may be either "agent or victim of the bowstring." According to Richard J. Dunn, the biblical scene, Blanche dressed as an "Israelitish princess" and Rochester portrayed as a servant, is based on the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, the "courtship of Rebekah by a servant acting as Isaac" (161). In that Bible story, Abraham, Isaac's father, lives in the land of the Canaanites, people whom the Israelites regard as inferiors. The biblical patriarch sends a servant to Israel to find a spouse for his son. The servant, because he is acting as suitor for another, is already in an awkward situation. The fact that he came from a land of foreigners, inferiors, makes his task even more difficult. In order to

facilitate the marriage of his master's son, Isaac, the servant gives Rebekah much jewelry, silver, and gold (Nelson 9-10). The biblical story parallels Rochester's situation, compromised, not only by his degrading experience in Jamaica, but also by knowledge of his marriage to a Creole that he is withholding from society. The charade scene suggests, then, how patriarchal rule, Oriental despotism, can get turned on its head as female power. Said another way, it does not make much difference which party, male or female, rules, or which party incites the conflict. The point is that, either way, within the ideological bounds of romantic love and marriage, within the upper classes, both individuals suffer. The charades symbolize what happens to those who marry for "political reasons," for property, rank, and privilege, as the servant's, Rochester's, gift of treasure, "overflowing a casket," implies. The treasure trove suggests that nuptial alliances, arranged by the propertied classes on an unstable foundation of material worth and social prominence, have dire consequences (163). Afterward, Blanche says that she liked Rochester most of all in the final scene. This remark implies that she lacks any trace of human nature, as Jane regards it: spontaneity, originality, the "sensations of sympathy and pity" that, in Brontë's ideology, a middle-class husband and wife ought to share (163).

As the parallel relationships between Jane / Rochester and Blanche / Rochester develop in the narrative, the author presents a pattern of images that show Rochester's movement away from savage social impulses and toward plain Jane's middle-class morality. During the festivities at Thornfield, there is a lull in the entertainment, for example, because Rochester is called away on business. So

the group proposes a trip to Hay Common to see the gypsy camp.<sup>60</sup> Before that can happen, however, Richard Mason shows up unexpectedly. When the gentleman, a stranger to Jane, arrives, she notices that, even though he is cordial and “fashionably dressed,” he is “too relaxed.” At the same time, she is struck by the “vacant life” reflected in his wandering eye. When she speaks of his physiognomy, his features are even more striking:

“For a handsome and not unamiable-looking man, he repel[s] me exceedingly. There [is] no power in that smooth-skinned face of a fully oval shape; no firmness in that aquiline nose, and a small cherry mouth; there [is] no thought on the low, even forehead; no command in the blank, brown eye” (167).

After remarking that the difference between this man and Rochester, the “fierce falcon,” as she calls him, could not have been greater, Jane also notices that other ladies, Mary Ingram and Louisa Eshton, admire Mason. With a response that is exactly the opposite of Jane’s, they regard him as a “beautiful man.” Mary points out his “pretty little mouth, and nice nose,” while Louisa mentions his “sweet-tempered forehead” and “placid eye.”<sup>61</sup> After learning that his name is Mason, Jane surmises that the reason his “face [is] sallow,” and that he is seated so near the fire, is that he comes from some “hot country.” Afterward, she hears that he has arrived from Spanish Town near Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>62</sup>

As the nuances of Brontë’s character portraits radiate among the figures, Lord Ingram’s “languid elegance” throws light on Mason, the son of a wealthy

merchant and planter from the West Indies. The “listless apathy,” the absence of “vigour” in Lord Ingram’s “blood,” reinforces the portrait of Mason as a gentleman who is racially and culturally repellant.<sup>63</sup> From Brontë’s ideological perspective, he is an example of the physical, psychological, and moral enervation that infects the blood of those identified with foreign lands. This was the perilous situation that the elder Mr. Rochester created when, for economic and political reasons, he arranged for his son to marry the daughter of a West Indian planter. From her father, Bertha Mason inherited thirty thousand pounds (268). While, according to Victorian science, the hot climate where Mason comes from induces lassitude and sexual promiscuity, Brontë presents his lack of vigor as a somatic sign of his moral dilapidation.<sup>64</sup> His inertia represents degeneration that saps his energies and produces moral torpor. In the author’s imagination, since both Mason and his sister are white Creoles, that is, born in Jamaica as members of the planter class, they represent deformities of nature as they reverse traditional “male” and “female” gender roles. Mason’s lassitude, his “sinful insouciance,” admired by the young upper-class females, is exactly the opposite of Rochester’s robust vitality and almost ugly facial features.<sup>65</sup> Brontë uses that misplaced admiration, like Georgiana’s and Eliza’s self-absorbed vanity, to overturn upper-class values.

The planter’s “low, even forehead,” in fact, places him alongside the Reeds and the Ingram females as morally and intellectually deficient. The author contrasts Mason’s effeminate features, such as his “pretty little mouth and nose,” with Bertha’s untamed ferocity, her bellicose masculinity. Later, when he is attacked on the third floor, where Rochester has restrained his wife, like an animal in a cage, it

is clear that he is frightened, far more than Rochester is, by her savagery: “‘She bit me,’ he murmured. ‘She worried me like a *tigress*, when Rochester got the knife from her’” (186). This incident exemplifies the sort of violence that crops up in family relationships based on property and political power, according to Brontë, rather than on spiritual compatibility. The fact that both of the Masons could not be further removed from what the author regards as natural, as indicative of human drives and passions, is evidenced by Richard Mason’s statement to Rochester after the attack: “She sucked the blood: she said she’d drain my heart” (187). The author presents this attack as a vampire-like perversion of human nature that reverses gender roles. The masculinized Bertha viciously assaults her feminized brother. Brontë’s portrayal of the Mason siblings thus reinforces her characterization of Lady Ingram and Blanche. In fact, when Rochester confesses to Jane about his experiences in the West Indies, he says that he found Bertha much in the “style of Blanche Ingram; tall, dark, and majestic. Her family wished to secure me because I was of a good race” (268). While Richard Mason undoes what is natural by taking on female attributes, the Ingram females exhibit social behaviors, on a scale of cruelty proportionate to Bertha Mason’s bloody tantrums, that are savagely masculine, as I have discussed. Understandably, then, Jane has a strong aversion to Mason, a specimen of racial contagion, as Brontë portrays him, who embodies everything that runs counter to her own nature.<sup>66</sup> The perverse behavior the author presents in her portrayal of the Masons shows how violence is inextricably linked with class antagonism.

Following Mason’s arrival, Brontë dramatizes Rochester’s movement

toward Jane's values. In that event, Sam, the footman, informs Mr. Eshton that there is a bothersome old gypsy woman waiting at the door. She wants to tell the "quality," the gentry, their fortunes. Although the magistrate instructs Sam to turn her out, Colonel Dent, recalling the proposal, earlier, for a trip to Hay Common, refers the matter to the ladies. Knowledge of the gypsy's presence incites both consternation and controversy among the guests. While Lady Ingram does not want to admit a "low imposter" into the company, Sam's statement that she is "black as a crock" provokes even more discussion. Mrs. Lynn's two sons, thinking that the gypsy might be a "real sorceress," want to see her. On the other hand, Mrs. Lynn, in agreement with Lady Ingram, disapproves of the idea. The footman is also opposed to bringing the gypsy before the guests because of her rough appearance. Even so, Blanche's insistence on having her fortune told wins the approval of the younger members of the group. When the gypsy demands that she talk to the guests in private, Blanche orders Sam to conduct her to the library, where the soothsayer's supposed necromancy takes place. Although Colonel Dent wants to talk with the gypsy right away, she says that she will only speak with young single females. So Blanche is the first to have her fortune told. When she returns, she is quite disappointed and refuses to divulge any details of the session. She obviously believes the gypsy's forecast. Since Mary Ingram, Amy Eshton, and her sister, Louisa, are too frightened to speak with the gypsy alone, they go as a group to see her. However, upon returning, they are giggling. They are convinced that the sorceress is real because she knew so many facts about their private lives and could even "divine their thoughts," as Jane says. Since she did not expect to participate,

as in the previous amusements, Jane is surprised when the fortune-teller asks to see the other “single young lady” in the room.

Of course, the gypsy is actually Rochester in disguise. He had returned on the sly from his business trip. From the start, he had calculated the entertainment as a ruse to determine Jane’s feelings about him. The anxiety, the controversy, and the sort of thrilling fear that is awakened among the guests when the supposed sorceress arrives suggest that this event presents racial difference as a means of threatening the cultural border between classes. As discussed in the next chapter of this study, both Jane Austen and Emily Brontë use the foreign Otherness of the gypsy in order to threaten the enclosed ranks of the upper classes. Here Charlotte Brontë sets the scene in the library in order to suggest Rochester’s movement away from upper-class values and toward Jane’s middle-class morality based on education and self-improvement. While pretending to tell her fortune, Rochester questions Jane, but, in a sense, he reverses roles with her, because he is searching for predictions about his own future as well as hers. This is shown by the fact that he analyzes her facial features rather than reading her palm. Even though Jane believes, up until the point that Rochester reveals his true identity, that he is an actual gypsy, she has “no faith,” as the other ladies do, that the old woman can foresee events. Jane’s skeptical attitude creates a space for middle-class virtues to emerge so that Rochester’s attempt to elicit her feelings turns into a quasi-religious ceremony. For example, Jane, wanting to have her palm read, gives the sorceress a shilling. She says, “Destiny is not written there.” When Jane agrees, the gypsy responds that it was written, instead, “in the face; on the forehead, about the eyes,

in the eyes themselves, in the lines of the mouth.” Then the supposed soothsayer commands Jane to kneel and lift up her head. Kneeling, she says, “I shall begin to put some faith in [the gypsy] presently.” In other words, Brontë presents this incident symbolically, as a sacred ritual suggested by Jane’s kneeling, as in the act of prayer, and in her use of the word “faith.” Jane’s response shows the convergence of Rochester’s values with her own, suggesting that money has no power to purchase innate character traits, virtues and intellect, the sort that are written “in the face.” Rochester’s statement about destiny confirms what Jane had noticed before in the racial physiognomy of upper-class figures such as Mrs. Reed, Lady Ingram, and Richard Mason, people deficient in cultural attributes that Jane’s Maker gave to her.

While she kneels, Rochester, still disguised, asks Jane what her hopes for the future are. She answers that she wants to “save enough money out of [her] earnings to set-up a school someday in a little house rented by [her]self.” As discussed below, Jane fulfills that aspiration, somewhat, when she becomes a teacher in Morton. In that sense, she is the authentic fortune-teller who possesses the magical power to transform society. When the gypsy replies that that is “mean nutriment for the spirit to exist on,” meaning her small income, Rochester is probing the foundation of Jane’s values. He then reveals that he knows about her habit of sitting in the window-seat at Thornfield. He received that information, he later explained, from Grace Poole. She is the servant from the Grimsby Retreat whom he hired to look after Bertha Mason, degenerated into lunacy and confined to the third floor of his mansion (272). At the time of the fortune-telling, however, the



gypsy's knowledge of Poole makes Jane suspicious. She says that there may be some "diablerie in the business." These allusions establish further the religious implications of the event, especially as the reference to the window-seat recalls Jane's childhood. Seated on the window ledge at Gateshead, reading Bewick's book, she was intrigued by a picture of Satan, the "black horned thing," sitting on a rock (6). Since then, she has travelled a great distance, physically, psychologically, educationally, and spiritually. That distance is signified by the passage that she made from the window-seat of ignominy at Gateshead to the library at Thornfield, as she barter, albeit unknowingly, with Rochester for revitalized values to govern his life. His reference to Grace Poole, along with Jane's mention of the devil's business, "diablerie," implies that Rochester, though he strayed from God's laws while living in the West Indies and afterward, could now choose to regain God's grace.<sup>67</sup> The fact that Rochester appears in this scene disguised as a gypsy suggests that he is on the border, vacillating in a sense, between the white male privilege of the propertied classes and the virtue, as Brontë presents it, of the middle classes. Given the fact that the author regards the Anglo-Saxon race as superior to foreign Others, as discussed below, it seems contradictory for her to use the gypsy figure, even in disguise, as a means of unsettling class ranks. We know, however, that throughout the novel, Rochester's dark complexion, his "swarth skin and paynim features," is clearly part of his allure for Jane, and she marries him rather than Rivers. So this scene suggests some ambivalence about race on Brontë's part.

When Rochester, still dressed as a gypsy, attempts to determine Jane's true feelings, he wants to know how much time she spent watching him, especially his

conversations with the guests, during the previous amusements. Though Jane does not reveal how much she cares for him, through his probing questions, he brings up the subject of marriage. She professes that she is not interested in that topic. Even so, this dialogue leads to talk of Rochester's possible marriage to Blanche, the prospect of his chances for happiness as her husband. Rochester tells Jane that even if Blanche does not love his "person," she will love his "purse." He also says that he would advise Blanche's "blackaviced suitor," meaning himself of course, "to look out: if another comes with a longer, or clearer rentroll,--he's dished--" (176).<sup>68</sup> Rochester adds that he told Blanche something in the earlier palmistry session that made her "wondrous grave." As we learn afterward, the information, a rumor that he allowed to spread in order to determine if Blanche really loved him, is that the material worth of his estate is much less than what she had assumed (223). This explains why she was so disappointed after her interview with the fortune-teller. What we see taking place here, then, is a transformation within Rochester. He begins to turn away from material values toward spiritual concerns, away from judging others by their ancestral property, or lack of it, toward consideration of their moral qualities. The fact that Rochester describes himself as "blackaviced," dark-skinned, shows that, up to this point, he has been in the same camp as other upper-class figures whose primary concern is the fortunes that they hope to inherit. In other words, Brontë uses racial difference, as suggested by Rochester's dark complexion, to show that his values are not yet fully human, fully middle-class.

When Jane objects to this line of questions, because they focus more on the gypsy's fortunes than on her own, Rochester again tells her to kneel. As he reads

Jane's fortune by analyzing her facial features, he says that they are contradictory. He points out that Jane's physiognomy presents favorable aspects, but that she is not as happy as she ought to be. When he looks at her eye, he says that an "unconscious lassitude weighs on the lid." Even so, he ends by saying that the "eye is favourable." Similarly, Rochester points to Jane's loneliness and frustrated desires when he says that the mouth is "never intended to be compressed in the eternal silence of solitude." Still, he says that the mouth is a "propitious" feature. According to the gentleman/gypsy, the only facial feature that does not appear as a sign favorable to Jane's future is her forehead:

"I see no enemy to a fortunate issue but in the brow; and that brow professes to say,--'I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me to do so. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss. I have an inward treasure born with me, which can keep me alive if all extraneous delights should be withheld; or offered at a price I cannot afford to give.' The forehead declares, reason sits firm and hold the reins, and she will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms. The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are; and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things: but judgment shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision. Strong wind, earth-shock, and fire may pass by: but I shall follow the guiding of that still small voice which interprets the dictates of conscience"

(177).<sup>69</sup>

As suggested by phrases such as “forehead declares” and “casting vote,” this passage presents a kind of formal declaration, a sociopolitical, religious pact, that undoes the unholy alliance between the upper classes and institutional religion, between the Reeds and Brocklehurst. In Rochester’s view, Jane’s forehead is not a good sign of his possible marriage to her because it suggests that she cannot be persuaded to marry him out of a desire, or a need, for his property. Because of her inborn character qualities, she can survive independently. She is not like members of the upper class, whose physiognomies, as we have discussed, suggest the physical, intellectual, psychological, and moral atrophy that loyalty to the traditions of upper-class gentility brings about. When Rochester pretends that Jane’s forehead speaks to him, saying that she refuses to “sell [her] soul, to buy bliss,” his statement contradicts the values of his own family, the ancestral traditions that produced his unhealthy entanglement with his West Indian wife. While Rochester admires Jane’s “inward treasure,” as proven by her facial features, his interpretation shows that he acknowledges the superiority of her moral principles. “Reason” and the “dictates of conscience,” he can see, should control the riot of heathen passions that have imprisoned him so far, condemning him to a life of unhappiness, infamy and secrecy, as he keeps his West Indian wife under lock and key.

Brontë presents the final moments of this scene, when Jane begins to recognize who her interlocutor actually is, as a kind of magical reinvention that coincides with the dynamic realignment of Rochester’s values. After the governess notices that certain features of the fortune-teller are inconsistent with attributes of an old woman, Rochester tries to take off his red cloak, the predominant color of

the furnishings at Gateshead, but is frustrated in the attempt because the string holding it is knotted. The fact that Jane helps him to untie it, so that he “step[s] out of his disguise,” reiterates the point that she had assisted him, from the time of their first acquaintance, when he fell off of his horse, Mesrour, in reconstituting his values along middle-class lines (98). In fact, the disclosure of Rochester’s gypsy masquerade suggests that, all along, as his relationship with Jane developed, he had been wearing the psychological regalia of the upper classes, dressed in traditions of the British gentry that had kept his essence, his true identity, concealed. By removing the disguise, Rochester implies that he is no longer the “blackaviced” suitor, with savage sociopolitical ambitions, that he once was. Since Jane is the only single female who, after meeting with the gypsy, does not believe that she possesses supernatural powers, that disbelief helps to break down the barrier between classes, too, because it suggests that she is more perceptive, more intelligent, than the genteel ladies of the upper classes are.

Even though Rochester, in the gypsy masquerade, could see that Jane’s middle-class values were superior to his own, the fact that he was already married presented a moral, as well as a practical, obstacle that stood in the path of his happiness and hers. However, as Spivak discusses, Brontë uses Bertha Mason’s racial identity as a means of promoting Jane’s agency, her English womanhood, so that she can pass into Rochester’s “family-in-law” (Belsey 181). We can see that happen through the spiritual progress that Jane makes after she returns from the Reeds. During this time, she accepts Rochester’s proposal of marriage, but she receives divine signals that warn her against doing so. Ultimately, Jane’s “faith” is

strengthened through religious experiences in which God speaks to her from outside the holy temple of the Anglican Church. She does not hear Him at first, however. Before Rochester's proposal, for example, having just returned from a long visit to Gateshead, Jane is overjoyed to reunite with her Thornfield family, Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, the servants, and Rochester, of course. However, she does not know yet that he loves her, as she does him, so she is self-conscious in his presence. On the evening of his marriage proposal, Adèle, who had been picking wild strawberries, goes to bed, so Jane decides to stroll through the garden. The mid-summer twilight is beautiful. The extraordinary beauty of nature recalls to her mind a verse of poetry: "Day its fervid fires had wasted." This is a line from Thomas Campbell's poem, "The Turkish Lady" (217). As Jane wanders about the garden, she goes into the enclosed orchard where the ancient horse-chestnut tree stands at the end of the path. She chooses not to follow it, however, because the smell of Rochester's cigar draws her attention. As she tries to leave, unnoticed, she sees him enter the "Eden-like" garden, so she hides in the ivy recess nearby. Thinking that he is unaware of her presence, she notices that he is admiring the voluptuous vegetation. At that moment, a moth flies past Jane and lands near Rochester's foot. Assuming that he is preoccupied with the insect, she attempts to sneak out of the garden. But he perceives her, apparently, as she crosses his shadow. With his back turned, he tells her to come and look at the moth. Surprised, Jane says, "[H]e had not eyes behind--could his shadow feel?" Rochester then points out the moth's striking features: "He reminds me rather of a West Indian insect; one does not often see so large and gay a night-rover in England."

So far, we can see that Brontë presents a scene that echoes the Garden of Eden, not only its wondrous beauty but also the temptation that it harbors amidst its bountiful greenery. In fact, Jane, happy to be home and enamored of Rochester, does not register signs intended to warn her about his upcoming proposal of marriage. Campbell's verse suggests that she is vulnerable in this situation. The lyric poem is about an Eastern lady who falls in love with a Christian warrior, an English knight held captive by heathen adversaries. The poem emphasizes the depravity of the Orient. When the Turkish lady asks the knight why his enemies have taken him where he cannot hear the "Sabbath bell," he responds, "Twas on Transylvania's Bannat, / When the Crescent shone afar / Like a pale disastrous planet / Oer the purple tide of war--." While the reference to Transylvania may suggest the folklore myth of vampires, possibly an oblique reminder of Bertha Mason's perverse attack on her brother, the imagery of imprisonment in the poem contrasts sharply with the idyllic profusion of trees and flowers in Rochester's garden. Victorian readers would have been alerted to the fact that something was awry in this verdant paradise. Jane is so infatuated with him, however, that she fails to hear the still, small voice of conscience, spoken of earlier by the gypsy, Rochester, that shields her from the tumult of heathen passions. Like the Christian warrior in the poem, taken captive by infidels, Jane cannot hear the Sabbath bells, God's voice calling her, warning her not to accept Rochester's proposal. In fact, his instincts, knowing, even though his back turned to her, that she is nearby, highlights the fact that she is not responding to her own intuitions. By the same token, the moth, a gay "night-rover," seldom seen in England, should have

suggested to her that something was not right about the garden of romantic love, with all of its earthly delights, that he was about to promise her.

The cautionary signals that God sends to Jane through nature gain force as the time of Rochester's proposal draws near. After the moth flies away, he and Jane engage in a long dialogue about his marriage, apparently imminent, to Blanche. During their conversation, he makes it clear that both Jane and Adèle must leave Thornfield, even though she had grown quite fond of the foolish child. Blanche demanded that they do so (220). He tells Jane, too, that he will probably never see her again as he has arranged for her to take a position in Ireland as governess. While the idea of the vast seas that would separate them if that happened brings tears to Jane's eyes, the couple walks to the horse-chestnut tree, where they sit on a bench. After that, they talk about his intended marriage. Jane tells him that she is better than he is because she would not marry someone whom she did not love. Even though, at this point, he makes a sincere offer of marriage to her, Jane does not believe it and accuses him of playing a farce. This word recalls his entertainment with Blanche at the piano, the sham aspects of that romantic affair, as well as his gypsy masquerade. Then, as he attempts to persuade her to accept the proposal, Jane says, "A waft of wind came sweeping down the laurel walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut." After that, their passionate dialogue brings out the fact that Rochester never loved Blanche, and that she never loved him (223-224). His intention to marry her was never serious. However, he misrepresented his plans to Jane because he wanted to bring her feelings into the open. The success of that manipulation suggests that he is still entrapped by the customs of upper-class



society, based, in the author's view, on deception. After their discussion removes Blanche as an obstacle to their happiness, Rochester proposes again. She remarks, "And if I loved him less I should have thought his accent and look of exultation savage; but, sitting by, roused from the nightmare of parting—called to the paradise of union—I thought only of the bliss given me to drink in so abundant a flow."

This comment shows that Jane has some inkling that she has made a mistake. She is so caught up in the delirium of Rochester's passionate urging of her happiness, however, that she has no will to resist him. The next moment, the chestnut tree "writhe[s] and groan[s]," and the lovely weather turns into a thunderstorm. Jane says that the following morning Adèle told her that lightning had struck the ancient horse-chestnut tree, that "half of it [had] split away" (225).<sup>70</sup> The destruction of the tree was a message sent from the heavens, tangible evidence that confirmed the cautions implied by the poem, by the moth, and by the messenger, Adèle. Jane ought to have listened to her sympathetically, with an instinctive, rather than purely intellectual, grasp of what she was saying. Even though Jane did not respond to those divine intimations, however, they ultimately strengthened her religious faith. This effect is shown in her firm decision to leave Rochester after Mr. Briggs interrupts her wedding with the announcement that her betrothed is already married (255). In other words, Jane's decision to leave Rochester is not based solely on the biblical injunction against adultery. The decision is also inspired by a divine voice, warnings that she does not respond to until she is face to face with the truth of Rochester's immorality. Speaking with Jane through nature, God warned her against marrying a man who had already

disobeyed divine laws through his alliance with a West Indian Creole, a savage, according to Brontë, not only by race but also by place. Jane's agency comes about, then, through the author's portrayal of her as a female supernaturally inspired to abandon a male who had committed a sin by consorting with a heathen.

Jane's progress, the growing strength of her religious faith from outside the institution of the Church, is also shown when she travels to Moor House after leaving Rochester. During that time, she sleeps under the stars and observes God's creation. She senses His ubiquity, "His Presence," within the cosmos, and she wishes for death: "I wished but this—that my Maker had that night thought good to require my soul of me while I slept" (286). This comment shows that Jane's faith has developed beyond, and outside of, her experiences at Lowood School so that, through unmediated knowledge, intuitive apprehension, she comes to believe in the afterlife.<sup>71</sup> The growth of Jane's religious belief is confirmed by the fact that she inscribes the word "Resurgam," meaning "I shall rise again," on Burns's tombstone fifteen years later. The author to whom *Jane Eyre* is dedicated, Thackeray, uses the same word in his portrayal of Rose Dawson, Sir Pitt Crawley's first wife, as a means of satirizing the British upper classes, as I discussed in the first chapter of this study.<sup>72</sup> In Jane's use, too, despite its difference from Thackeray's, the upper classes are symbolically degraded.

### III. Middle-Class Gentility: Marsh End and Ferndean

Now I will turn to the later chapters of the novel in order to discuss how Jane's spiritual progress brings her to the family with the middle-class values that

she has been journeying toward from the beginning of the novel. Her travels and the tribulations that accompany them are a metaphor for the inner struggles that have forged her values over time. She travelled from the upper-class Reed family, to Lowood School, to Thornfield Hall, and on to the open fields where, lost and starving, she wished for her own death. Following her weary trek from Thornfield Hall to Marsh End, providence leads Jane to Moor House, the home of Rivers's father, Mr. Rivers, who, like Mrs. Reed, has died from a stroke. After she follows a light that shines from the window of Mr. Rivers's home, she arrives at his doorstep, shuddering from the cold rain and starving. As Jane lies there, peering through the aperture, she observes a domestic scene that magnifies, through contrast, her own destitute condition. She notices, first, that the kitchen is filled with authentic vestiges of rural life: "I could see clearly a room with a sanded floor, clean scoured, a dresser of walnut, with pewter plates, ranged in rows, reflecting the redness and radiance of a glowing peat fire. I could see a clock, a white deal table, some chairs." Jane's vision then shifts from material objects to the people who inhabit the home. A "rough-looking" elderly woman sits next to a candle. She is "scrupulously clean, like about her." Next, Jane sees two young ladies seated near the hearth:

Two young, graceful women—ladies in every point—sat, one in a low rocking-chair, the other on a lower stool; both wore deep mourning of crape and bombazeen, which somber garb singularly set off very fair necks and faces: a large old pointer dog rested its massive head on the knee of one girl—

in the lap of the other was cushioned a black cat (292).

In this scene, Brontë portrays the older woman, Hannah, as a surrogate parent whose presence comforts the two younger females, Rivers's sisters, Mary and Diana, while they mourn for their father. As we learn afterward, Hannah has been a loyal servant for thirty years, having nursed all three children. Since she knew Mr. Rivers well, she is familiar with the family history (301). Hannah embodies the sense of cleanliness, order, and industry that suffuses the room, like the fire from the hearth, with a comfortable feeling.<sup>73</sup> Her knitting reinforces the moral valence of work done by hand, the scoured floor, for example, or the arrangement of pewter plates. The housekeeper's physical labor presents an image that admonishes the idleness, the solipsism, represented by families of the upper classes and also by the Brocklehursts, who emulate and sanction their behavior. This image of "deep mourning," as Jane calls it, evokes a sense of family solidarity that contrasts sharply with the author's portrayal of the Reeds, the dislike of the daughters for one another, and Mrs. Reed's physical, moral, and psychological collapse. Unlike Mrs. Reed's death, which revealed the gulf of antipathy separating Eliza from Georgiana, Mr. Rivers's death brings out the affection, the strength of the kinship bond, between the sisters. They experience their father's death as a natural, seamless passing from the earth, quite different from the convulsive fit of Mrs. Reed's mortal demise. Mary and Diana share their grief openly, but the author does not emphasize the sense of sorrow as much as the sense of the responsibility that they share. Now that their father is gone, they must sustain the family, its values and traditions, as reflected in material objects—the pewter plates, the clock,

the walnut dresser, the deal table—that surround them. A reverent atmosphere pervades the room as the two females, “ladies in every point,” sit before the hearth, comforting their pets. The dog and the cat contribute to the image of domestic peace. The sisters’ affection for family pets contrasts with John’s senseless killing of animals, so that we can see, once again, the perversity of upper-class values.

What makes Brontë’s ideology of the middle class even more compelling is that she portrays Mary and Diana engaged in useful education, learning that has both moral and pragmatic value. The look of serious study, intent purpose, on their faces matches Jane’s plain features, implying their moral kinship with her: “I would not call them handsome--they were too pale and grave for the word. As they each bent over a book, they looked thoughtful, almost to severity.” Still on the doorstep looking inside, Jane watches as the young women translate a text from German into English. From a bourgeois perspective, this academic study is economically moral, because “self-help,” as Boyd Hilton remarks, “is the only means to salvation, both spiritually and economically” (16). After one sister explains to Hannah that they can neither speak nor read German, Hannah asks what good it does them. The answer is that they plan to use the knowledge that they acquire to teach grammar: “We mean to teach it sometime—or at least the elements, as they say; and then we shall get more money than we do now” (293). Here Brontë emphasizes the middle-class virtue of self-help based on education and earned livelihood. The sisters’ intellectual labors, like Hannah’s physical work, expose the moral vacancy of upper-class vanity. Even further, the humble kitchen, the domestic space occupied by the three females, gives an ironic edge to the image. In

contrast to the breakfast room at Gateshead, where the red curtain signaled Jane's mortification, the author imagines the kitchen as a haven of compassion and respect, with the feel of a family reunion. In fact, when Rivers finds her on his doorstep, he brushes aside Hannah's distrust, based on her suspicion that Jane is a vagrant, and orders her to "rise" under her own power. Even though drained of vital energies, she walks, unaided, into the house. That act symbolically prefigures the independence that she will achieve in the small village with values radically different from those of the places she has left behind for good. The fact that she travelled to Moor House blindly, not knowing where her final destination lay, suggests that the degrading experience she suffered afterward, having to beg and scavenge for food, was part of God's design. From Christian belief, she deserved that because she did not listen to God's voice in Rochester's garden.

As Brontë imagines it, the middle-class world that Jane enters contains the vitality, the moral substance, that is missing in the social jungles of the upper classes. The author replaces that savagery with robust Christian virtues, genuine charity and compassion in this case, of Rivers's family.<sup>74</sup> While Hannah, protective of the "childers," as she calls Mr. Rivers's three children, wants to turn Jane away, thinking that she is a beggar, or a robber possibly, both Rivers and his sisters trust her. After Diana and Mary put her in bed and watch over her, Rivers, speaking of Jane in her still emaciated condition, says, "[R]ather an unusual physiognomy; certainly not indicative of vulgarity or degradation" (298). In other words, Brontë again dramatizes Jane's plainness, except that now she sets her morality in a space that distinguishes it from lower-class vulgarity.<sup>75</sup> As the acceptance of Jane by

Rivers's family unfolds, the author presents self-help as a characteristic that cordons off the middle classes, portraying them as superior, not only to upper-class privilege but also to lower-class degradation.

Later, in the kitchen, as Jane talks with Hannah about Rivers's ancestors, she insists on helping prepare the meal. Like her unaided entrance into the cottage, this act anticipates the self-help that she achieves later as a schoolmistress in Morton. After she arrives on Rivers's doorstep, begging, the kitchen scene that follows raises her, morally, above the working classes. While helping the servant, Jane also admonishes her for her lack of understanding of Christian principles. When Hannah asks that Jane not "think too hardly of [her]" for assuming, before, that she was a vagrant, she replies, "But I do think hardly of you . . . because you just now made it a species of reproach that I had no 'brass,' and no house. Some of the best people that ever lived have been as destitute as I am; and if you are a Christian, you ought not to consider poverty a crime" (301). Unlike Hannah, Jane regards the possession of material wealth as distinct from human identity.

In relation to the ideology of self-help, however, the idea that the possession material wealth is distinct from one's identity looks contradictory. In Evangelical doctrine, paradoxes of that kind are resolved through the belief that God's purpose is not evident from appearances, from superficial observation of people and things.<sup>76</sup> The fact that Hannah is mistaken about Jane, that she is not a vagrant, advances middle-class ideology because it takes property, "brass," out of the equation for gentility. As the narrative develops, Jane's insistence on self-help is the middle-class value that usurps property in the paradigm of gentility. After

Hannah agrees with Jane, since her belief accords with Rivers's teachings, she forgives the housekeeper, and they become friends. There is a parallel here between Jane's forgiveness of Hannah and her forgiveness of Mrs. Reed. When she forgives the housekeeper, that act symbolically raises Christian morality above the working classes, their lack of education about Christian faith. When she forgave her aunt, that act lifted Jane's values above upper-class idleness, so that, in Brontë's view, middle-class values are superior to both.

At this point, the history that Hannah relates to Jane shows that Rivers's family is descended from English gentry. Brontë gives moral substance to their genteel blood, making it appear authentic, through her portrayal of family solidarity over time:

Old Mr. Rivers, she said, was a plain man enough; but a gentleman, and of as ancient a family as could be found. Marsh End had belonged to the Rivers' ever since it was a house: and it was, she affirmed 'aboon two hundred year old—for all it looked but a small, humble place, naught to compare wi' Mr. Oliver's grand hall down i' Morton Vale. But she could remember Bill Oliver's father, a journeyman needle-maker; and th' Rivers' wor gentry i' thi' owd days o' th' Henrys, as onybody might see by looking into th' registers i' Morton Church vestry.' Still, she allowed, 'the owd maister was like other folk—naught mich out o' t' common way: stark mad o' shooting, and farming, and sich like.' The mistress was different. She was a great reader,



and studied a deal; and the ‘bairns’ had taken after her. There was nothing like them in these parts, nor ever had been; they had liked learning, all three, almost from the time they could speak; and they had always been ‘of a mak’ of their own.’ Mr. St. John, when he grew up, would go to college and be a parson; and the girls, as soon as they left school, would seek places as governesses: for they had told her their father had some years ago lost a great deal of money by a man he had trusted turning bankrupt; and as he was now not rich enough to give them fortunes, they must provide for themselves. . . . They had been in London, and many other grand towns; but they always said there was no place like home; and then they were so agreeable with each other—never fell out nor ‘threaped.’ She did not know where there was such a family for being united (301-302).

Hannah’s native dialect gives to her family history a rich texture of authenticity that complements the rustic atmosphere of Rivers’s quaint home. From that, we can see how Brontë shapes her ideology of middle-class gentility. The housekeeper’s narrative bears out her opening remark that Old Mr. Rivers was a “plain man.” One aspect of that plainness is humility, a virtue given material shape and substance through the patriarch’s legacy.<sup>77</sup> His “small, humble house” has remained just as it is for two hundred years, so that its unassuming, unchanging features resonate across time, back to the King Henrys, as Hannah says. The humble family dwelling retains a sort of antique spirituality that is ingrained in the

moral fabric of those who have lived there for generations. Another part of Mr. Rivers's plainness, his genteel blood, is a desire for self-improvement that is both secular and religious. We can see that, for example, in Hannah's comparison of Mr. Rivers's apparent misfortune with Bill Oliver's social and economic rise. Born a gentleman, Mr. Rivers took a financial risk and lost the family fortune. Bill Oliver's father, on the other hand, was not born a gentleman. Still, he rose from a tradesman to become the elite property owner of Morton Vale. That reversal of fortunes for both families opens a space, in Brontë's ideology, for self-improvement to usurp inherited wealth as the right instrument of God's universe. Even so, as we see afterward, it is clear that Bill Oliver's daughter, beautiful Rosamund, though she inherits a fortune, does not possess genteel blood. When Jane teases Rivers by drawing a portrait of the "rather thoughtless" Rosamund, suggesting that he should marry her, he protests, arguing that she is not suitable for a missionary's wife. Even though he languishes, playfully, in Rosamund's sensual beauty, as represented in Jane's drawing, he knows beforehand that such an alliance would force him to give up his ambition to rank among God's elect. So he refutes Jane's suggestion: "Relinquish! What! my vocation? My great work? My foundation laid on earth for a mansion in heaven? . . . Must I relinquish that? It is dearer than the blood in my veins" (329). Rivers chooses not to marry Rosamund because she has neither the blood nor the moral virtue, humility, nor the intellectual acumen of Mary and Diana, or of Jane, whom he pleads with, afterward, her to marry him. afterward. The "plainness" of the Rivers family, their genteel blood, is defined, then, by birth origins, humility, and self-reliance, but not by property.

Even before Mr. Rivers, the “owd maister,” lost the family fortune, he was “common” in the sense that his passions, hunting and farming, cut across distinctions of rank and privilege. He passed down that identity, a sense of connection with common folk, to his children. They cleave to the country while eschewing the temptations of vanity and greed present in the towns.<sup>78</sup> As Brontë presents it, the fact that Mr. Rivers’s children, due to their father’s misplaced trust, must fend for themselves is, ironically, a blessing in disguise. They travelled to London and other “grand towns,” but they came back to their home at Marsh End. Jane, in sense, did the same as she travelled from enclaves of upper-class sin and corruption, Gateshead and Thornfield Hall, to the “purity” of the countryside. In Brontë’s ideology, the glens and dells, moors and rivers, nourish rural folk, providing them with authentic spiritual sustenance that is absent in urban settings.<sup>79</sup> The author presents Mr. Rivers’s loss of property, paradoxically, as good fortune because that event allowed his children to inherit, instead, middle-class values—industry, integrity, charity, humility, and desire for education, as we see in Mr. Rivers’s wife, the “mistress,” as Hannah calls her. To her “bairns,” she passed down her love of learning, her penchant for reading, for “study.” Educational training, both secular and religious, is the foundation of the ideology of self-improvement that the author presents. Rivers attended college so that he could become a parson, and his sisters are training to be governesses like Jane. From this moral viewpoint, the meaning of wealth changes from something inherited, property and privilege, without the investments of time and energy, to something earned, primarily through industry, academic knowledge, and spiritual cleanliness

achieved through God's grace.

From Jane's entrance into Rivers's family, we can see how Brontë imagines both religion and race as cultural foundations that valorize middle-class morality. Shortly after Hannah's discourse, when Diana, Mary, and Rivers return from a walk, the sisters are surprised to find Jane, fairly revived, sitting in the kitchen with Hannah. The names of the two sisters imply the union of classical myth and Christian faith that work together, symbolically, to revive Jane. The name *Diana* suggests the huntress of Greek fable, so that her assertive manner matches the mythological figure she is named after. On the other hand, the name *Mary*, with its connotations of Christian motherhood, coincides with Mary's temperament. She is less commanding than her sister. Comparing them, Jane says that Mary is "more reserved, and her manners, though gentle, [are] more distant." This combination of character traits casts light on the figure of Rivers. In fact, the country parson's complex character admits both features, willful self-assertion and distant reserve, that distinguish Diana from Mary. Upon Diana's urging, Jane leaves the kitchen and enters the parlor, where she finds Rivers absorbed in reading. The "plainly furnished" room possesses the same sort of authentic feel, "well-worn and well-saved," that the kitchen has. At this point, the first time that Jane looks closely at Rivers's physical attributes, the author presents his physiognomy so that it marks his racial superiority. Jane says, "Had he been a statue instead of a man, he could not have been easier" to describe.<sup>80</sup>

He was young—perhaps twenty-eight to thirty—tall and slender; his face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline: quite

a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin. It is seldom, indeed, an English face comes so near the antique models as did his. He might well be a little shocked at the irregularity of my lineaments, his being so harmonious. His eyes were large and blue, with brown lashes; his high forehead, colorless as ivory, was partially streaked over by careless locks of fair hair (303).

Brontë's emphasis on the "pure" outline of Rivers's face, the "classic nose," the "Athenian mouth," suggests the rich sources of cultural vitality of the West. While his blue eyes, likewise, imply the dominance of Northern Europe's Anglo-Saxon males over racial Others, his "high forehead, colorless as ivory," also marks his intellectual and moral superiority. Rivers's high forehead contrasts with the "low brow" of upper-class figures, the Reeds, the Ingrams, Richard Mason, that we have discussed. That distinctive feature reveals that he, like Miss Temple, represents the pinnacle of modern civilization. From Brontë's color symbolism and phrenology, we can see that Rivers represents the superiority of the West, its Christian civilization and racial purity. But that superiority is not located in the drawing rooms of the propertied classes, as the author presents it. It is located, instead, in humble cottages and village churches across Britain. The author presents Rivers so that he stands in sharp contrast to Brocklehurst, another "statue" figure. The movement in Jane's travels from one pillar to the next, from Brocklehurst's corruption, to the Christian symbol called "Whitcross" that she meets with on the journey that ends at the Rivers's doorstep, to Rivers's purity suggests historical progress, the advancing march of the Anglo-Saxon race from barbarism to higher

civilization over time.<sup>81</sup>

From the comparison of Rivers and Brocklehurst, opposing “pillars” of the Anglican Church, we can see that the “irregularity” of Jane’s “lineaments” signifies spiritual faith that goes outside of Victorian culture.<sup>82</sup> In other words, Jane arrives at her middle-class morality not only through Miss Temple’s and Rivers’s teachings but also through the teachings of nature. The irregularity of Jane’s brow, in comparison with Rivers’s “purity,” implies that she is ruled less by cultural imperatives, social convention and religious doctrines, than he is. Jane’s irregular facial features imply that her secular Christian faith is not limited by sectarian differences based on religious doctrine. While she accepts Rivers’s Christian teachings, the ambivalence of Brontë’s portrait of him comes partly from the fact that his notion of God is based upon Calvinist doctrines, the original depravity of human kind primarily.<sup>83</sup> Her faith, on the other hand, is a hybrid union of institutional religion and knowledge of God from outside the Church. Although Jane does not love him, Rivers is willing to marry her so that, as husband and wife, they can best convert indigenous people to Christianity. But while matrimony would sanction that arrangement, Christian ritual does not mean as much to Jane as the voice of her own conscience. It has a stronger call than that of the Church, its teachings, so that later she must regenerate Rochester. In fact, the primary reason that Jane does not marry Rivers and travel to India as his missionary wife is that she does not love him spiritually as she does her former master. From this portrait of Rivers, however, we can see why Jane’s “organ of veneration,” as she calls it, is aroused afterward when he pleads with her, gently, to marry him. She fervently

admires the middle-class gentleman, a parson whose physiognomy suggests that he is superior not only to members of other social classes in Britain but also to racial Others in the British empire.<sup>84</sup>

Rivers's family history displaces the traditional paradigm of upper-class privilege, so that Jane's virtue of self-improvement, as it has developed, and continues to do so, since she left Rochester, eventually allows her to merge, by custom and by blood, with the parson's modest, genteel family. Later, Jane establishes her independence by surviving on her own, by successfully teaching a group of country children in Morton.<sup>85</sup> This is a position that Rivers found for her. She says, "I must not forget that these coarsely-clad little peasants are of flesh and blood as good as the scions of gentlest genealogy; and that the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are likely to exist in their hearts as in those of the best born" (315-316). Jane's sentiment that the country children have qualities as good as those of the "best born" is democratic, but her attitude toward the "peasants," whom she finds physically unappealing, is ambivalent.<sup>86</sup> Her narrative describes middle-class virtues passed down through Mr. Rivers's blood, but those "refinement[s]" must be inculcated into the children of commoners. Even though she praises their innate goodness, Jane finds that tutoring ill-bred, ill-behaved country paupers is difficult. In fact, she admonishes herself for feeling degraded in her duties as a schoolmistress: "I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard around me."

Jane's experience in the village school is a thematic extension of the earlier scene, helping Hannah in the kitchen, because it shows that she can survive on her

own without depending on the resources that a male, either Rivers or Rochester, might provide. On the one hand, that independent spirit points to the unconventional side of her character. On the other hand, we can see Jane's ambivalence when she thinks back on Mr. Rochester, remembers how much he loved her, and considers whether or not she should have accepted his offer to live in France as his mistress: "Whether it is better, I ask to be a slave in a fool's paradise at Marseilles—fevered with delusive bliss one hour—suffocating with the bitterest tears of remorse and shame the next—or to be a village schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England?" Even though Jane knows that she has made the right choice in leaving Rochester, her question goes to the central tension of the narrative, her desire, on the one hand, for happiness in the secular world, and her ambition, on the other, to fulfill her Christian duties, as she does while teaching the country children. Jane's reflection suggests that she still yearns for gentility, as she did when she accepted Rochester's proposal, but without the dependence of a female of the upper classes. So, in order to resolve that problem, the author carves out a middle space, in the "healthy heart of England," that removes, through self-improvement, education, and the assumption of racial superiority over foreign Others, the taint of commonness ascribed to the middle classes by the governing elite.

The revelation of Jane's actual identity as a member of Rivers's family comes afterward, when Rivers, in a snowstorm, comes to visit her in her cottage. He tells Jane that he learned her true name when she unintentionally scribbled the words *Jane Eyre*, in Indian ink, on a slip of paper. Up to this point, while living at



Marsh End, she had been using an alias, Jane Elliott, because she wanted to start anew, to sever her ties with the past. Rivers also explains that he found out, through correspondence with Mr. Briggs, that her Uncle John in Madeira had died, leaving her an inheritance. Of course, she had learned of her uncle's intention to adopt her and bequeath his property to her, earlier, through her interview with Mrs. Reed. While Jane thinks that it is a "fine thing" to be "lifted from indigence to wealth," she responds, not so much with elation, as with a sense of the responsibilities that go with the behest: "On a base of steady satisfaction," she says, "rise certain grave cares—and we . . . brood over our bliss with a solemn brow" (336). Even though Jane receives an inheritance that looks like upper-class privilege, she values the property, not for the status and power that it can bestow, but rather for the middle-class independence, accompanied by responsibility, that it will afford her. In fact, her only real surprise is the enormous size of the legacy, twenty thousand pounds. From Rivers's information about the amount of the inheritance, Jane urges him to give more details concerning how he gathered his knowledge of her past. Though hesitant at first, he divulges other facts that he deduced from learning her real name and from his correspondence with Mr. Briggs. Rivers explains that he and Jane are blood relatives, cousins. Unlike her "grave" response, focused on her uncle's death rather than on his legacy, to the news that she has inherited property, Jane is overjoyed when she learns of her new family:

The two girls on whom, kneeling down on the wet ground,  
and looking through the low, latticed window of Moor House  
kitchen, I gazed with so bitter a mixture of interest and despair,

were my near kinswomen; and the young and stately gentleman who had found me almost dying at this threshold was my blood relation. Glorious discovery to a lonely wretch. This was wealth indeed!—wealth to the heart—a mine of pure genial affections. This was a blessing, bright, vivid and exhilarating;—not like the ponderous gift of gold: rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight. I now clapped my hands in sudden joy—my pulse pounded, my veins thrilled (339).

While some critics have pointed out that Jane's windfall inheritance is inconsistent with her spirit of rebellion, it is consistent with the religious logic of her narrative. Symbolically, it restores to her the family that she lost when her mother was disinherited and when her parents died. Although the property does provide her with the financial freedom to care for Rochester later, she has difficulty in convincing Rivers of the true importance of the legacy. When she decides to divide the inheritance equally among her new siblings, as she regards them—Rivers as her "brother," Diana and Mary as her sisters—he objects. He views her decision as hasty, "contrary to custom," and wants her to reconsider it (341-342). Jane insists, however, on dividing the funds. The real significance of the inheritance is that it is God's "blessing," divine intervention that puts right the injustice done to Jane as a child. That corrective complements the punitive justice that the Reeds received by living contrary to nature. In other words, according to Brontë, blood and spiritual kinship, not property or romantic love, should be the foundation of family values. Jane's inheritance is a sacred seal proving that she

possesses the plainness, the spiritual vitality, passed down to her, symbolically, from Old Mr. Rivers.

After Rivers gives Jane news of her inheritance, she says that her first ambition is to “*clean down* (do you comprehend the full force of the expression?) to *clean down* Moor House from chamber to cellar”(343). Her desire to clean the family dwelling, something that she actually does afterward, looks back to her arrival at Moor House when she first observed the order and cleanliness of Mr. Rivers’s kitchen. Her need to “*clean down*” the house shows the depth of her spiritual affinity with the family. It also suggests the spiritual cleanliness, self-improvement, that she has accomplished through living independently, doing God’s work at home educating “coarsely-clad little peasants.” After receiving the news that she is their cousin, Jane assumes the full cultural purity that his family possesses. The fact that she is literally a blood relation reinforces the point that, from various perspectives, biological, moral, economic, socio-political, and legal, she is a natural member of Rivers’s family. Those perspectives signify her true identity. The generosity that she shows when she insists on sharing the inheritance with her cousins, although it looks like philanthropy, is actually further evidence of God’s justice. Like Jane, Rivers’s sisters lost the inheritance that they should have had when Old Mr. Rivers had a “quarrel” with John, Jane’s uncle from Madeira (338). Since the money that they received provided them with the independence that they wanted, Jane’s equal division of the property gives divine sanction to their philosophy of self-help, with its moral underpinnings.

The ending of the novel, then, is less a choice that Jane makes between

Rochester and Rivers, than a space that she creates for spiritual love to exist on earth. While Rivers goes out to India where he “labours for his race,” Jane does likewise in England, where class defines race. When she finds Rochester in misanthropic seclusion at Ferndean, after his West Indian wife has burned his mansion to the ground, his gentility decimated by a marriage based on politics and property, she regenerates him with Old Mr. Rivers’s plain morality.<sup>87</sup> His blood makes room for spontaneous affection. When Jane takes Adèle out of the school where Rochester had placed her, the child greets her with “frantic joy.” Jane says, “Beholding her again moved me much.” Her decision to place Adèle in a different school corrects her “French defects,” providing her with a “sound English education,” so that, in later life, they become dear companions (396). The change that Jane makes for the child illuminates her reclamation of Rochester. Previously, he regarded his child, conceived out of wedlock, as “foolish,” a reminder of his shameful past. At the end of the novel, she is a child of English gentility that is superior, in the author’s estimation, in race and in religion, to other European nations, to the lower and the upper classes, and to indigenous tribes of the British empire. The former governess revitalizes her husband by awakening his paternal instincts, kindling his capacity for sympathy, for spontaneous affection. His response to their firstborn child, with “large, brilliant, black” eyes, like his father’s, suggests as much (397). But the fact that the novel ends with a panegyric to Rivers suggests that the author’s deepest sympathies accord with the evangelical parson, his middle-class virtues. The name *Ferndean* joins the word “fern,” as in an evergreen tree, to the word “dean,” meaning either a church authority or a secular

official. The union of the two words, *fern* and *dean*, implies Brontë's ideological grafting, the spirit of God in nature reanimating religious belief that is both institutional and secular.<sup>88</sup> In what might be called the spiritual and organic unity in this novel, then, we see the ideological violence at work in Brontë's conceptions of spirituality, nature, and unity. Within her representation of class, for example, John's bullying of Jane implies the violence that comes from class antagonisms, social relationships based on power. John's destruction of nature and the author's portrayal of upper-class ladies as savage social predators, female warriors, also implies that violence is an unavoidable aspect of class conflict. Even though Jane's journey overthrows the hegemony of the upper classes, giving her the female independence that she desires, her spiritual pilgrimage reveals violence as an inherent feature of the change she brings about. While she does not feel spiritually complete until she reunites with Rochester, their reunion and his reclamation can only occur because his mansion burns down, and he is maimed during the conflagration. The contradiction is that those events, including Bertha's suicide when she leaps from the burning roof, threaten the viability of the higher moral principles that the author espouses. In other words, in order for Jane, a middle-class governess, to marry Rochester, an upper-class gentleman, the author presents Bertha's violent rage as the plot device that brings them together. Jane's marriage to Rochester is based on much higher moral ground, supposedly, than that of either the upper classes or the working classes. But their spiritual convergence comes about through violence at odds with Jane's supposed Christian principles. This contradiction undermines the sense of organic unity that the ending of the novel,

especially, is designed to give us.

Brontë's presentation of race, the ambiguity and ambivalence connected with that cultural phenomenon, also implies violence within her ideological representation. The ambiguity in her portrayal of Rochester, for example, comes from the fact that, during the time that he and Jane are getting to know one another, he harbors the secret of his marriage to a racial Other. He guards his reputation by keeping Bertha hidden from society, though her outbursts threaten, at times, to reveal his scheme. After returning to England, Rochester attempts to conceal his experience in Jamaica, to distance himself from his degrading misalliance, as the author presents it, from Bertha's "pigmy intellect" and debauchery. The fact that he keeps her secretly locked up, caged as though she were an animal, creates an ambiguity, however, that not even England's bracing Northern climate, the "antipodes of the Creole," as he calls it, can undo. After the debacle of their wedding day, when Rochester confesses his crime to Jane, Brontë portrays Bertha, in contradictory terms, as hot tempered, hedonistic, sexually overdriven, "intemperate and unchaste," and irrational, yet shrewdly alluring, clever enough to "flatter" the gentleman so that he marries her (268-270). This stereotype presents what Homi K. Bhabha calls the "ambivalence of desire": "For the stereotype is at once a substitute and a shadow. But acceding to the wildest fantasies (in the popular sense) of the colonizer, the stereotyped other reveals something of the fantasy (as desire, defence) of that position of mastery" (Bhabha, "The Other Question" 170). To say it differently, Brontë's fantasy turns on a stereotype that is ambivalent, as it simultaneously reveals Rochester's "desire" for Bertha, the

foreign Other, and his “defence” of his putative Anglo-Saxon superiority. We can see the same sort of ambivalence in Jane’s desire for Rochester. Even though the author presents his skin complexion as a means of associating him with the so-called savagery of the upper classes, and he is not portrayed as a handsome man, there is some tension in the narrative that comes from his physical allure, associated with his dark skin, primarily.

Even though, in Brontë’s representation, Jane reclaims Rochester, making it appear that his unfortunate marriage to a Creole caused his downfall, the violence that the author associates with racial Others has its roots in the imperial venture that his father initiated in order to provide his second son enough wealth to sustain his gentility. That is, from the standpoint of social ambition, the author does not condemn Rochester for engaging in an imperial venture that caused his misalliance with a foreign Other. But she does blame racial Others for the violence that naturally accompanies relationships based on power. The Masons were born in Jamaica, so the violence Brontë attaches to them looks alien to middle-class values, as if it originates in, and is indigenous to, a country remote from England’s white cliffs. But the author cannot “clean down” the middle classes, morally, without implicating them in the violence of imperial endeavors. The Masons’ presumable ownership of slaves in the West Indies, for example, coupled with Bertha’s suicide, appears to extinguish in England the madness associated with the institution of slavery. The contradiction, however, is that John, Jane’s uncle, presumably makes money from the labor of slaves living in another European colony, Madeira. Yet the author does not suggest that slavery in that colony is immoral. She omits the

connection with violence there, because Uncle John provides the money that gives Jane the independence that she wants. Another contradiction concerns Rivers's missionary work, as he "labours for his race" in India. Much like the torrid heat of the West Indies, the climate there, according to Victorian science, is morally enervating. Yet Brontë presents the parson heroically, as if he were immune to that influence, while racial Others, the Masons, degenerate from the climate in Jamaica. We can see, then, that the author ascribes violence to particular peoples and places of empire on an arbitrary basis that accords with her ideological views.

Brontë's representation of the higher values of middle-class Anglo-Saxons is marked by contradictions that carry the implication of violence beneath the banner of the British nation. She projects violence onto racial Others, white Creoles, in order to give preeminence of race and of class to Anglo-Saxons of the British middle classes. While the author certainly does not portray Rivers as a violent man, her portrayal of Brocklehurst, his corrupt counterpart in the Anglican Church, insinuates that institutional religion can behave as the incubator of cultural violence directed against Others whose traditions, customs, attitudes, or religious beliefs clash with the ideology of the middle class. The clergyman punishes the seminary students and castigates Jane, while comparing her, derogatorily, with Indians, the same foreign group that Rivers, in his missionary travels, hopes to convert to Christianity. Even though the author presents Brocklehurst as an absurd hypocrite in order to critique the upper classes, the connection that she makes between his animosity and supposedly inferior Indian tribes suggests that violence is an inescapable feature of British imperialism. Despite its happy ending, then,



*Jane Eyre* implies that violence is an inextricable component of relationships based on power, the assumption of the superiority of middle-class Anglo-Saxons over Others, both foreign and domestic.

## Notes

1. All references to the text come from Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre: An Authoritative Text, Background, Criticism*. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971.

2. Brian Stanley remarks, "The missionary awakening had relatively little to do with the expansion of British imperial power, but it had everything to do with the shaking of the foundations of the old order in Europe caused by the French Revolution." See Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, England: Apollo, 1990), 61.

3. Several scholars have noted ambivalent features of the novel. John Maynard, for example, remarks, "The novel inscribes this central ambivalence about Christianity and religious *men* on its final page, as Jane tells us, in language that may be, or may not be taken as ironic." See *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. Heather Glen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 204. J. Jeffrey Franklin states, "St. John is the character about whom Jane (and Charlotte Brontë) is most ambivalent, and it is this ambivalence that makes him, after Jane, the most complex character in the novel." See Franklin, "The Merging of Spiritualities: *Jane Eyre* as Missionary of Love" 466. Susan Meyer also points to the ambivalent ending: "The ending of the novel betrays Brontë's uneasiness about her own figurative tactics, about the way in which her metaphorical use of race involves erasing the humanity of other races." See Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University

Press, 1996), 93.

4. Rivers's persuasive appeal accords with the Evangelical view of Christianity as a "vital religion." Boyd Hilton states, "Indeed, the fervent aspects of the 'religion of the heart', its stress on conversion and grace as against the dry rationalism of the eighteenth-century, are most frequently stressed, but, for all that, most evangelicals stood inside and partly depended on the rationalistic and mechanistic tradition of eighteenth-century natural theology." See Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1795-1865*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 8.

5. Ruth Bernard Yeazell argues that Rochester's "mysterious summons" of Jane signals a change in her. Her progress is complete, her identity achieved. She can now be equal with him. The summons, the critic remarks, unites the inner and outer worlds of the novel. See Yeazell, "More True than Real: Jane Eyre's 'Mysterious Summons.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 29.2 (September 1974): 127-143.

6. The ambiguous racial identity of Bertha Mason has fuelled much discussion among critics. In a landmark essay, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress," Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar interpret Mason as Jane's "darkest double." They regard her as essentially white. See Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 360. Meyer regards Mason as a white woman who figuratively turns black, "Bertha-become-black," due to her portrayal as the "incarnation of the desire for revenge on the part

of colonized peoples” 69. Parsing the term *Creole* with four different meanings, Sue Thomas regards Mason as a white Creole who keeps her white racial identity. However, owing to the tropical climate, she goes morally insane. See Thomas, “The Tropical Extravagance of Bertha Mason.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27.1 (1999): 1-17. Carolyn Vellenga Berman argues that Brontë, by purposely leaving Mason’s racial identity ambiguous, captures a broad swath of political anxieties about race. Historicizing the terms “licentiousness” and “intemperance,” she states that these words “apply indifferently to Creole whites, Creole mulattos, black and even English women who chose black mates.” See Berman, “Undomesticating the Domestic Novel: Creole Madness in *Jane Eyre*.” *Genre* XXXII (Fall 1999): 275. More recently, Patricia McKee discusses Bertha Mason’s identity as presented by Brontë in cultural, rather than in biological, terms: “None of these descriptions quite assigns Bertha a biological blackness. But they assign her grades of cultural, emotional, and intellectual development deemed primitive on Victorian scales of civilization.” See McKee, “Racial Strategies in *Jane Eyre*.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37 (2009): 70.

7. Barry Qualls uses the phrase “Secular Pilgrims” in the title of his book that contains his essay entitled “The Terrible Beauty of Charlotte Brontë’s ‘Natural Supernaturalism’.” Qualls remarks, “Brontë’s novels are thus English Bildungsromane, novels of the self’s development—radically different from other spiritual biographies of the period.” See Qualls, *The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction: The Novel as a Book of Life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 50.

8. For a discussion of the workings of Providence in Charlotte Brontë's novels, see Thomas Vargish, *The Providential Aesthetic in Victorian Fiction* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985).

9. For a discussion of the father's, Patrick Brontë's, social, economic, and political struggles as a poor country parson, see Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

10. Jen Hill argues that Brontë relocates the masculine discourse of arctic exploration onto England where Jane becomes a brave, female explorer. Hill lines up with critics who see the text as removing the taint of slavery from Britain's past. See Hill, "A Pale Blank of Mist and Cloud" in *White Horizon: The Arctic in the Nineteenth-Century British Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

11. Susan Thorne explains that missionaries of the Dissenting middle class wanted to reform the Poor Law of 1834. She states, "Designed to distinguish between the undeserving able-bodied and those rendered dependent through no moral failing of their own, the reformed Poor Law had the effect instead of stigmatizing poverty across the board, associating it in the Dissenting middle class's eyes with the increasingly negatively charged condition of heathen pauperism." See Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of An Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 87.

12. Miss Abbott's treatment of Jane is related to what Robin Gilmour calls "spiritual bullying." See Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and*

*Cultural Context Of English Literature: 1830-1890* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 74.

13. For a discussion of Evangelical religion as portrayed in the Victorian novel, see Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

14. Speaking of the “ideal of the gentleman in mid-Victorian political culture,” Gilmour comments, “Not being the preserve of a single caste, it was open to negotiation and therefore appropriation from below.” See Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890*. (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 167.

15. For a brief overview of the career of King George IV, see John Beales, *From Castlereagh to Gladstone 1815-1885* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969).

16. Kathleen Vejvoda states, “Since the Reformation, Protestant theologians and writers have emphatically linked idolatry to Roman Catholicism, arguing that its excessive emphasis on external forms of worship obscures God.” See Vejvoda, “Idolatry in *Jane Eyre*.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31.1 (2003): 241.

17. Thomas R. Trautmann explains, “In British eyes India presented the spectacle of a dark-skinned people who were evidently civilized, and as such it constituted the central problem for Victorian anthropology, whose project it was to achieve classifications of human variety consistent with the master idea of the opposition of the dark-skinned savage and the fair-skinned civilized European.” See Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California

Press, 1997), 3.

18. Brontë seems to use statue and pillar imagery, as in her portrayal of Brocklehurst, with the same purpose as we find in Robert Southey's epic poems. Javeed Majeed points out that "fluvial imagery" in Southey's narrative poems, *Thalaba the Destroyer* and *The Curse of Kehama*, illustrates his "belief in history as progress." The scholar explains that Southey presents "statue" images that show "lifeless figures coming to life, or living figures being deprived of it." In *The Curse of Kehama*, for example, when Kailyal "accompanies Juggernaut on his chariot as his bride, she seems like a 'bridal statue.'" See Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 78.

19. Marianne Thormählen places Brocklehurst in the category of "monster." She comments that his "obtuseness over the Psalms and the ginger-nuts is too ridiculous for credibility." While Brocklehurst's character is highly repugnant, I think that his talk with Jane is believable because he is attempting to manipulate her for his own ends. His hypocrisy and sadism are also credible as part of the author's satire on corrupt Calvinist Evangelicals. See Thormählen. *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 183-85.

20. Gauri Viswanathan remarks, "As various missionary publications point out endlessly, the power of the Bible lies in its imagery. . . . The horrors of sin and damnation were not to be understood through reasons but through images that give the reader a 'shocking spectre of his own deformity and haunt him even in his sleep'." See Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule*

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 55.

21. Speaking of Evangelical principles of the 1830's and 1840's, Hilton remarks, "[E]vangelicalism's distinctive middle-class piety fostered new concepts of public probity and national honour, based on ideals of œconomy, frugality, professionalism, and financial rectitude" 7.

22. For a discussion of early Victorian satire, see Tim Fulford's essay in *The Satiric Eye: Forms of Satire in the Romantic Period*, ed. Stephen E. Jones (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

23. In her discussion of West Indian missionaries, Mary Turner notes that various religious denominations maintained discipline through the "expulsion of backsliders": "From time to time the bejeweled free colored women were disciplined for their love of ornament." See Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 83.

24. Speaking of the annual festival at the Hindu Temple of Jagannath, Stanley remarks, "Evangelical opinion tended to identify India as the chief stronghold of idolatry, unique in the extent of its apostasy from the worship of the true God" 101.

25. In "The Juggernaut Roles in England: The Idol of Patriarchal Authority in *Jane Eyre* and *The Egotist*," Timothy L. Carens explains that novelists used the Juggernaut image as a rhetorical device to "analyze domestic problems involving various forms of destructive force and vain self-sacrifice," as Thackeray does in *The Book of Snobs*. See *Outlandish English Subjects in the Victorian Domestic*



*Novel*. ed. Timothy L. Carens (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 51.

26. Barker explains that Brontë, in a note to her editor, said that her portrait of Helen Burns was based on the experience of her sister, Maria, who died from consumption while attending the Clergy Daughters' School in Cowan Bridge, 135.

27. In his discussion of British phrenology, Robert A. Nye, showing August Comte's debt to Franz Joseph Gall, remarks, "[T]he 'frontal' part of the brain, wherein reside the analytical and reasoning powers, has shown the greatest degree of growth and has exerted an increasing and beneficent influence over human nature." See *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* ed. Edward J. Chamberlain and Sander L. Gilman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 53.

28. Brontë's choice of the word "Temple" for the superintendent's name may be connected to the Victorian concept of organic evolution. J. E. Chamberlain explains that in the 1870's T.H. Green and William Wallace encouraged their students to interpret texts according to Hegel's view: "Organic evolution . . . tended to be likened more often to the design of a temple or cathedral than to the growth of a tree, while the ideologies of "imperium" and "dominium" depended in large measure on the acceptance of a sense of purpose, of manifest destiny, of grand design." See J. E. Chamberlain, "An Anatomy of Cultural Melancholy." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42:4 (1981), 702.

29. Stephen Jay Gould explains how Victorian phrenologists imposed their subjective views on scientific data: "Most of these subsidiary criteria can be reduced to a single formula: front is better. Broca and his colleagues believed that the higher mental functions were localized in anterior regions of the cortex, and that

posterior regions busied themselves with the more mundane, though crucial roles of involuntary movement, sensation, and emotion.” See Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981): 97.

30. Nye remarks, “[S]ociologists throughout the nineteenth century found degeneration theory indispensable in their work. It effectively accounted for the terrible human costs of modernization, expressed in the perceived growth of ‘urban’ diseases, of alcoholism, crime, insanity, suicide, and various sexual perversions” 67.

31. Hilton states, “God had instituted a permanent moral law on earth, a ‘natural’ and predictable built-in system of rewards and punishments appropriate to good and bad behavior” 14.

32. As P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins explain, “Capitalists could remain (or become) gentlemen if they derived incomes from agriculture or urban property or if they were rentiers drawing on other types of investment, whether public or private.” See “Gentlemanly Capitalism” in *The Victorian Studies Reader* ed. Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 88.

33. Speaking of the “idea of the gentleman (and lady),” Gilmour explains, “Reformers could develop both the potential for ‘gentleness’ and ‘manliness’ in the concept: the first in civilisation of domestic life, the second in promoting an ideal of conduct for young men which was decent, generous, open, of the world but not worldly, and brave without the recklessness and licentiousness of aristocracy” 20.

34. In *Types of Mankind* (1854), J. C. Nott, in his racial taxonomy, delineates “African Types” with peculiar physiological features. Nott, quoting

from “Dr. Rüppell’s very scientific account of the races inhabiting the province of Dongola,” states, “[A]n attentive inquiry will still enable us to distinguish among them the old national physiognomy, . . . . A long oval countenance; a beautifully curved nose, . . . proportionally thick lips, but not protruding excessively; a remarkably beautiful figure, generally of middle size, and a brown color, are the characteristics of the genuine Dongalawi.” See J. C. Nott and Geo. R. Glidden, *Types of Mankind: Ethnological Research, Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and Upon Their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854), 198.

35. Trautmann notes, “There is yet the word *varna*, which is critical to the theory that caste is race. The ordinary meaning of the word is ‘color,’ but it is also the word for the four main castes or estates of the Indian social system: *Brāhmana* (‘priest’), *Ksatriya* (‘warrior’) *Vaisya* (‘yeoman farmer’ or merchant), and *Sudra* (‘dependent laborer’)” 210.

36. Dunn notes that Mesrour was the “executioner at the court of Harun al-Raschid, in the *Arabian Nights*” 145.

37. In his discussion of the Victorian “Sexology and Psychoanalysis,” Sander L. Gilman remarks, “Within this seemingly linear movement of history are ambiguous eddies, such as the violence of the Amazon, labeled by Bachofen as ‘savage degeneration.’ The state of the Amazon, the cruel and unnatural domination of the male by the woman warrior, was a sign of an aberrant but necessary stage in human development.” See Chamberlain and Gilman 75.

38. In “Race and the Victorians,” Christine Bolt explains: “During the 1790’s, abolitionism had suffered in the political reaction provoked by the French Revolution and the successful slave revolt in St. Domingue. These shocks in turn helped to replace the Enlightenment view of the ‘savage’ as a rational but antithetical indictment of civilization, with the Romantic conception of children of nature, marked by their sensibilities but enslaved to passion and all the cruel, slothful features of the natural world. When the anti-slavery cause recovered from the doldrums, its Evangelical exponents on both sides of the Atlantic helped to popularise this derogatory image of ‘primitive’ peoples.” See *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* ed. C.C. Eldridge (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 127.

39. Dunn’s footnotes provide historical context for Brontë’s allusion to Carthage and to the Iceni warriors.

40. In his discussion of phrenology, Robert M. Young states that the Gall’s “psycho-physiology” began with his childhood observation of playmates with “large prominent eyes.” Young discusses Gall’s belief that the brain was the “organ of the mind,” and that the “moral and intellectual faculties are innate.” See Young, *Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century: Cerebral Localization and its Biological Context from Gall to Ferrier*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 13.

41. For a discussion of Charles Grant’s view of the “depravity in Hindu society,” and how, in his “Observations on the . . . Asiatic subjects of Great Britain,” (1796), he links skin color with “moral complexion,” see Trautmann 103.

42. Gilman remarks, “Both Morel and Gobineau saw the analogy between class and race as a valid one. Class mobility was perceived as almost as dangerous as ‘hybridization,’ or, to the use the mid-nineteenth-century term, of American racial pseudoscience, ‘miscegenation’” 77.

43. In her discussion of racial strategies in the novel, Meyer points out the significance of the “low brow” in Brontë’s representation of race.

44. Hilton notes that evangelicals, “Craving spontaneity . . . condemned all behavior which threatened the autonomy of self, like acting, or impersonation, or speaking in tongues” 18-19.

45. John R. Reed states, “Officers were gentlemen and therefore professionals. Officers for both services were recruited from the aristocracy, the gentry, and the middle classes.” See *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture* ed. Herbert F. Tucker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999): 183.

46. On race science, Trautmann comments “Thus, part one of the program of race science, so to say, was to define the extremes, and its activities lay completely outside India—in Europe on the one hand, and, on the other, in Africa, Australia, Tasmania, or wherever the elusive missing link between humans and animals might be sought” 182.

47. Elsie Michie argues that both Charlotte and Emily Brontë draw on “stereotypes of racial difference”: “When oppressed, both [Rochester and Heathcliff] are linked to the images of the simianized Irish. When dominant, both are described as Chinese princes or sultans, thus as ‘oriental despots.’” See Michie, “The Yahoo, Not the Demon”: Heathcliff, Rochester, and the Simianization of the

Irish” in *Outside the Pale: Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference, and the Victorian Woman Writer* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 60.

48. For her presentation of this scene, Brontë seems to draw on metaphors and allusions from Thackeray, her “literary hero,” as Barker says. Besides the fact that she dedicated the second edition of *Jane Eyre* to him, her puppet metaphor recalls the Manager of the Performance in “Before the Curtain.” The narrator says, “He [the stage manager] is proud to think that his Puppets have given satisfaction to the very best company in the empire.” Those puppets, characters, mock the pretensions of the upper classes in *Vanity Fair*, as I have shown. Even further, Brontë’s portrait of Lady Ingram and Blanche echoes Thackeray’s satiric portrait of Miss Pinkerton, the “Semiramis of Hammersmith,” whom Becky Sharpe belittles in Chapter 1. Miss Swartz, the “rich woolly-haired mulatto from St. Kitts,” reminds us, too, of Brontë’s portraits of Bertha Mason and Blanche Ingram. See Barker for a discussion of the embarrassment that her Preface to the second edition of *Jane Eyre* caused Brontë, 541.

49. For this allusion, see Dunn’s footnote, 157.

50. Trautmann explains that for James Mill there was a “scale of civilization”: “By this he intends the idea of a staircase or progressive series of stages of development from rudeness, savagery, or barbarism, and ignorance to order, regularity, knowledge and civilization” 121.

51. Brontë’s portrayal of Jane’s modesty goes beyond the fact that she is self-effacing in this scene. Through the contrast between Jane and Blanche, the author captures Mary Wollstonecraft’s sense of modesty as she defines it in

*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft remarks, “A modest man is steady, an humble man timid, and a vain one presumptuous. . . . Jesus Christ was modest, Moses was humble, and Peter vain.” She adds that, from her reflections, “those women who have improved their reason must have the most modesty—though a dignified sedateness of deportment may have succeeded the playful, bewitching bashfulness of youth.” See Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. ed. Carol H. Poston, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 122-23.

52. As Barker explains, the Brontë children were familiar with Lord Byron’s works. In “High Life in Verdopolis,” Charlotte quotes from “The Giaour.” See Barker’s note, 876.

53. In speaking of Montesquieu’s “idea of despotism” Homi K. Bhabha remarks, “It is this image of India as a primordial fixity—as narcissistic inverted other—that satisfies the self-fulfilling prophecy of Western progress and stills, for a while, the supplementary signifier of colonial discourse.” See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 139.

54. For biographical facts about Claudius and Messalina, see Christopher Scarre, *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors: the Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers of Imperial Rome*.

55. The author’s representation of France as a decadent nation must be related to the political and economic rivalries among European nations at mid-century. Lenin argues that the “inter-imperialist” alliances and rivalries of the European nations, based on the export of finance capital to foreign lands, cannot possibly have the benefits, especially for the working classes, that Karl Kautsky

envisions. Lenin, who considers imperialism to be the “highest stage of capitalism,” argues that it cannot lead to peace among nations: “Therefore, in the realities of the capitalist system, and not in the banal philistine fantasies of English parsons, or of the German ‘Marxist’, Kautsky, ‘inter-imperialist’ or ‘ultra-imperialist’ alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably nothing* more than a ‘truce’ in periods between wars. See Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

56. For a brief discussion of the landed elite, “personal loyalties and family connexions,” of the early Victorian era, see Cain and Hopkins.

57. As Hilton explains, evangelicals distinguished feeling from mere sensation: “Thus theatre was condemned because, like Roman Catholicism, it took hold of the senses, whereas true religion ‘appeals to the reason and conscience’”  
20.

58. Jane’s observation of the charade entablatures captures the modern sense of time as broken by historic epochs. Peter Hughes states, “From the Enlightenment to the present, the renewal of history and the birth of anthropology have depended on a sense of a sudden disruption in the temporal order, not just or only in the sense of a new cycle, or ‘revolution of the times,’ but in the more drastic sense of a sudden break with the past—time seen as a broken pillar.” See Hughes, “Ruins of Time: Estranging History and Ethnology in the Enlightenment and After” in *Time: Histories and Ethnologies* ed. Diane Owen and Thomas R. Trautmann (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 270.



59. Cain and Hopkins remark, “The higher reaches of the law, the upper echelons of the Church, and the officer class of the armed services all offered opportunities for attaining a gentlemanly lifestyle” 88.

60. Barker mentions that there was a tradition of astrology in Haworth, the village where the Brontë children grew up. Branwell Brontë took his friend, Francis Grundy, to visit a fortune-teller there, 369.

61. Brontë’s portrayal of Richard Mason may be based, in part, on her relationship with the curate of Haworth, William Weightman. Barker explains that the author referred to him as “Miss Celia Amelia.” The scholar surmises that Brontë’s “deliberate emasculation” of Weightman was prompted by her infatuation with the flirtatious young man. She assigned feminine characteristics to him, Barker claims, so that he could be admitted into her company often “without impropriety” 327.

62. Mark Harrison states, “To climate was attributed both the scientific and economic achievements of Europe and what Europeans perceived as the stagnation and corruption of the East. India and other tropical countries became synonymous with lethargy, effeminacy, and decay.” Harrison adds, “India’s sensuality was therefore linked in the European mind to the apparently fatalistic attitude of its inhabitants.” See Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59 and 101.

63. In “An Anatomy of Cultural Melancholy,” J. E. Chamberlain, in his discussion of analogies between science and culture, comments, “In the nineteenth

century the health of an organism was routinely judged (in an Aristotelian manner) by the energy it displayed, and this energy in the higher forms of life was associated with a particular kind of deliberate vitality and purpose” 702. From Chamberlain’s statement, since Mason displays little, if any, energy, this implies that he is an unhealthy organism.

64. For a discussion of the continual clash between the British government and the wealthy planters in Jamaica, as well as an account of the licentiousness of the planters, see Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Speaking of absentee owners, such as Rochester, Holt remarks, “The deleterious effect of absenteeism was assumed to derive from the lack of permanent interest on the part of the would-be absentee owner, who was concerned with getting rich quick and returning home” 89.

65. Hilton remarks, “We can see why moderate evangelicals, anxious to redeem mankind, often fretted more over sinful insouciance than over outright wickedness” 12-13.

66. Nancy Stepan explains that racial biology was a “science of boundaries between groups and the degeneration that threatened when those boundaries were transgressed.” The scholar states, “Peoples out of their proper climactic spaces also degenerated.” See Stepan’s essay, “Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places,” in *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*. ed. Edward J. Chamberlain and Sander L. Gilman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 98 and 113.

67. Turner remarks, “But the grace of God was continually necessary to

save the convert from falling into sinful words and sinful works; the chief means of grace were the sacraments, prayer night and morning, both publically and privately, daily searching of the scripture, and meditation on it at all times” 72.

68. As Cain and Hopkins explain, “The division between gentlemanly and ungentlemanly occupations and forms of wealth is similar to Weber’s distinction between ‘propertied’ wealth on the one hand and ‘acquisitive’ or ‘entrepreneurial’ wealth on the other. The first implies a rentier interest, not just in land but in other forms of property, while the second involves active participation in the market and in the creation of goods and services” 88.

69. Hilton explains that it is important to stress the rational aspects of evangelicalism, if only because many accounts . . . exaggerate its irrational aspects” 20.

70. Hilton notes, “[T]hose who held an interventionist view of providence, who saw God as constantly directing earthly affairs by special warnings and judgments, also believed that governments on earth should take an interventionist approach to social problems” 15.

71. Thormählen states, “Brontë heroines tend to receive Divine assistance in the open air, far away from God’s own houses. No leading Brontë character experiences a moment of Heaven-sent illumination attending church; indeed, all three sisters satirise unsatisfactory services” 68.

72. In Chapter 14 of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray uses the word “Resurgam” in a context that implies the ascension of the middle classes over the ruling classes, as in Brontë’s portrayal of Helen Burns. Thackeray portrays Rose Dawson as the

daughter of an industrial magnate, an iron-monger, who gave away her soul, so to speak, to marry Sir Pitt Crawley. Referring to Dawson's early death, due to Crawley's mistreatment of her, the narrator says, "Sir Pitt was a widower again. The arms quartered on the shield along with his own were not, to be sure, poor Rose's. She had no arms. But the cherubs painted on the scutcheon answered as well for her as for Pitt's mother, and *Resurgam* was written under the coat, flanked by the Crawley Dove and Serpent. Arm and Hatchments, Resurgam.—Here is an opportunity for moralizing!" (Thackeray 140).

73. For a brief discussion of working class morality, particularly as related to the cultural concept of cleanliness, see Gertrude Himmelfarb's essay, "In Defence of Victorians," in *The Victorian Reader* ed. Kelly Boyd and Rohan McWilliam (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

74. In his discussion of charity organizations, Brian Dickey notes that the Mendicity Society, established in 1818, "was pragmatic, utilitarian and hostile to unthinking acts of charity." See Dickey, "'Going About and Doing Good' Evangelicals and Poverty c.1815-1870" in *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* ed. John Wolfe (London: SPCK, Holy Trinity Church, 1995), 48.

75. Speaking of petitions made to Parliament, between 1797 and 1818, in support of universal male suffrage, Majeed remarks, "To speak or write vulgar language demonstrated the vulgarity of one's class, and so one's moral and intellectual inability to participate in political culture. . . . Vulgar language was limited to the expression of sensations and passions" 150.

76. Hilton remarks, “[T]he moderate evangelicalism which developed after 1789 represented a shift in natural religion from *evidences* to *paradoxes*, that is, from examples of benign contrivance in the natural world to demonstrations of how superficial misery may work inner improvement. Those who found it impossible to point to the obvious harmonies of nature as evidence of the goodness and good sense of the deity had to argue instead that *apparent* nastiness, like war and famine, was—to those who understood the divine economy—a blessing in disguise” 21-22.

77. Thorne notes, “The relative egalitarianism of missionary discourse in this period endorsed the virtue of humility, particularly when juxtaposed with other of the colonial discourses to which its audience would have been exposed, especially the hugely popular travel literature, in which the targets of missionary operations abroad were portrayed as wildly exotic, primitive, and inferior” 75-76.

78. Dickey notes that among the bewildering array of charitable organizations of London during the early nineteenth century was the “Society for Returning Young Women to Their Friends in the Country” 47.

79. Gilman states, “The city, as opposed to the image of the garden, is yet another image of the fall from grace. The city—an icon of the rejection of redemption, of Abraham’s failure in Sodom and Gomorrah, of the Jerusalem of Herod—permeates the image of civilization and is represented as the breeding ground of perverse and unnatural sexuality” 88.

80. Some critics regard Rivers’s statue-like appearance as evidence that he is emotionally cold and phallic. Their interpretations imply that he has character attributes similar to Brocklehurst. Franklin, for example, states, “Finally, then, he

[Rivers] is guilty of the very hypocrisy by which the novel condemns Brocklehurst. He truly is the 'cold cumbrous column' that twins Brocklehurst's equally phallic 'black pillar'" 469.

81. I suggest that Brontë presents pillar/statue imagery, as Southey does, to represent historical progress. See endnote 18.

82. Himmelfarb, speaking of Victorian "irregularities" such as extramarital affairs, unconsummated marriages, or homosexual relationships, explains, "[T]hose caught up in such an irregularity tried, as far as humanly possible, to 'regularize' it, to contain it within conventional limits, to domesticate and normalize it" 211.

83. Hilton comments, "His [God's] creatures are all in a state of natural depravity, weighed down by original sin, and life is effectively an 'arena of moral trial', an ethical obstacle course on which men are tempted, tested, and ultimately sorted into saints and sinners in readiness of the Day of Judgment" 8.

84. Thorne comments on education for the lower classes: "I want to suggest that missions were a distinctively middle-class alternative to gentry modes of authority, a means of controlling the lower orders at home as well as abroad that was in direct opposition to traditional or gentry forms of rule" 39.

85. It seems likely that Brontë agreed with Robert Southey's support for a program of national education that, he believed, would retain the loyalty of the lower classes. Discussing Southey's view of education, Majeed states, "National education is 'the base upon which everything must rest'" 70.

86. Speaking of the ambivalence of writers of this period, Saree Makdishi

states,

[W]hat I am delimiting here is a fundamental political and epistemic shift from an Enlightenment ‘discourse’ of otherness to a more properly modern and evolutionary one: a rupture symbolically marked by the contrast between, on the one hand, Burke and Jones, and, on the other hand, Mill and Macaulay. . . . This transition, in part, contributes towards the ambivalence, anxiety, and uneasiness of some writers of this period, in very similar ways, to those in which it contributes toward the realignment of British colonial and imperial policies, fantasies, and ideologies.

See Makdishi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 117.

87. Viswanathan remarks, “If, in the context of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, an innately depraved self could hope for regeneration through the transformative, moral action of literary instruction, Utilitarian formulations attached a different value to Western literary education as providing the means for the exercise of reason, moral will, and critical understanding” 19.

88. Commenting on the features of religion found in early Victorian fiction, Hempton describes one characteristic as the “attempt to recover an organic society in which religion would once again act as a cohesive force” 183.

Violence and Regeneration in  
Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the character of Heathcliff, the central figure, is so compelling that scholars are drawn, again and again, to rethink the author's portrayal of him, whether human or unhuman, man or demon.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of how, or how many, critics have analyzed his character, at once sympathetic, due to the degradation he suffers as a child, and repugnant, due to his violent acts, they have not been able to pin down his wayward and paradoxical features.<sup>2</sup> Any attempt to do so, however, must begin with another look at how Brontë brings him into the ancient family of landed gentry, the Earnshaws, from a port city, Liverpool, rife with people of different races and cultural backgrounds.<sup>3</sup> Of all the events in the novel, perhaps the most striking is the behavior of old Earnshaw, the family patriarch.<sup>4</sup> He suddenly leaves his wife and children behind, walks sixty miles from the moors of Yorkshire to Liverpool, and returns, unaccountably, with the orphan, Heathcliff, whom he presents to his family as a gift from God. While Mrs. Earnshaw regards the child as a "gypsy brat" and wants to fling "it" out of the house, the children view him as an alien, unwashed and unkempt. They are disappointed because they did not receive the Christmas presents that their father had promised them, a violin for his son, Hindley, and a horse whip for his daughter, Cathy. The child is so foreign to the family that Nelly Dean, who later becomes the housekeeper, even sets him on the landing outside, hoping that he will disappear. Ever capricious, however, Heathcliff crawls to Earnshaw's door, where the master finds him the next morning.



In this early incident, the author presents the physical space between the moors and Liverpool-- dramatically expanded by the imagined geographic distance and the disparate physical environments--as an unknown frontier, a borderland where she can amplify Heathcliff's Otherness. The distance between Liverpool and the Heights, the ancient ancestral dwelling of the Earnshaw family, is both geographic and cultural. While Liverpool is within walking distance of the moors, it is an industrialized, seaport city, full of vagrants and interlopers, where, as the family patriarch claims, he discovered Heathcliff, "starving and homeless."<sup>5</sup> Brontë presents the city as a remote, foreign environment through her rendering of old Earnshaw's physical exertion, his struggle to cover the sixty miles, each way, on foot. When Nelly relates his adventure to Lockwood, a tourist visiting the moors, she says, "It seemed a long while for us all—the three days of his absence and often did little Cathy ask when he would be home." On the third evening of his absence, Nelly explains, Mrs. Earnshaw expected her husband by suppertime. However, since he had not arrived, she put off preparing the meal. Since it was getting dark, and the children were tired of running to the gate to look for their father, she thought of sending them to bed. They pleaded with her, however, so she allowed them to stay up, to continue waiting. When Earnshaw finally entered the house, after sunset, exhausted from the journey, Nelly says, "He threw himself onto a chair, laughing and groaning, and bid them all stand off, for he was nearly killed—he would not have another such walk for the three kingdoms" (51). One significant aspect of this event is that it suggests the freedom to transgress boundaries based on ancient customs and traditions. We can see that because the ground that Earnshaw

covers is an imaginative landscape, populated with foreign peoples and influences, and also because the origins of the child that he brings home and presents to his family are unknown. In other words, the author presents characters and situations, charged with cultural significance, that remain open to speculation throughout the novel. Those events prompt us to imagine scenarios that cut across the boundaries of race, class, and gender, traditional foundations of English civilization. Brontë presents an imaginative dark space, somewhat like Earnshaw's trip to Liverpool, again later, after Heathcliff feels the smart of rebuff from Catherine. (Nelly calls her Cathy, but, in order to avoid confusing her with her daughter, I will refer to her as *Catherine* and to her daughter as *Cathy*.) Catherine is Heathcliff's sister and sweetheart, although the author leaves the precise nature of their kinship, whether half-sister and half-brother, or biologically unrelated, uncertain.<sup>6</sup> After Heathcliff leaves the Heights and returns to the moors from a three years' sojourn, what he experienced while gone also remains open to question. We only have Nelly's comment that his appearance had changed and her surmise that he may have been a soldier as clues for our speculations (96). What we do know is that Heathcliff, like Earnshaw, emerges from what the author presents as a dark, symbolic landscape, even more expansive than the three kingdoms that the father speaks of when he sits down, exhausted, after his trip to Liverpool. That imaginative terrain has the power to displace traditional values of British culture. In *Myths of Power*, Terry Eagleton remarks, "As a waif and orphan, Heathcliff is inserted into the close-knit family structure as an alien; he emerges from that ambivalent domain of darkness which is the 'outside' of the tightly defined domestic system. That darkness is ambivalent

because it is at once fearful and fertilizing, as Heathcliff himself is both gift and threat” (102). The fact that Earnshaw presents Heathcliff as a replacement for the Christmas gifts that he promised his children implies that nature has the power to overturn and reanimate established traditions, the celebration of Christ’s birth in this case.<sup>7</sup> The violin that Earnshaw promised Hindley gets crushed beneath his overcoat, and he loses the horse whip that he promised Catherine. Since, according to traditional gender roles, we would expect that the father would give the violin, a symbol of refinement for young ladies, to his daughter, and the horse whip, a symbol of male power, to his son, that reversal of expectations contributes to the sense of transgression, the idea that nature can undo the foundation of assumptions at work within a culture.<sup>8</sup>

This early scene has the potential to reshape our view of Heathcliff, then, because it places as much emphasis on what the author purposely elides as on the known facts of his history. Those events are related to us by Nelly, for the most part, as she presents the tale to Lockwood. Sometimes he narrates and participates directly in the action, particularly at the beginning and the end of the novel. That double frame of narration contributes even more to the subjective, ambiguous aspects of Heathcliff’s history. In this essay, I will begin by discussing his primitive vitality, associated with his racial identity, that of a gypsy, as he is regarded, when he first arrives at the Heights. That vitality shows his potential for unseating ancient customs and beliefs based on hierarchies of class, race, and gender. Afterwards, I will discuss Heathcliff’s violent revenge, how he interrogates traditional values of the landed gentry, removing unwholesome ideologies from it, both before and after

he returns. Finally, I will explain how he regenerates ancestral traditions and passes those renewed values down to the younger generation.

### I. Heathcliff's Gypsy Otherness and Primitive Vitality

Upon arriving at the Heights, Lockwood, a misanthropic voyeur, refers to Heathcliff, the landlord, as a “dark skinned gypsy, in aspect, in dress and manners, a gentleman, that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire” (27).<sup>9</sup> Lockwood's reference, as it comes early in the narrative, though late in Heathcliff's career, is the first of many that contribute to the reader's sense of his ambiguous identity, an English gentleman but also a racial Other. In the mid-Victorian era, gypsies were a wandering population, disconnected from familiar religious, social, and economic institutions. According to George K. Behlmer, gypsies were intriguing to both social reformers and philologists alike because they were thought to possess extraordinary natural instincts that endowed them with animal vitality: “To the philologists, Gypsy life offered clear proof that the animal in the human being was strong, and that English civilization had gone too far toward repressing healthy animal instincts” (Behlmer 251). At the same time, gypsies were feared by the bourgeoisie because, as vagrants, they “were not deterred by the workhouse regimen from pursuing a free course” (321). The governing classes, Behlmer explains, worried about the possibility that gypsies would encourage the natural wanderlust of the more respectable workers. Whether or not gypsies deserved their reputation for lawlessness is “difficult to judge,” he remarks. Speaking of the enduring image of the gypsy in the popular imagination, Katie Trumpener

comments,

Gypsy life remains in the popular imagination as a carefree, defiant, disruptive alternative to a Western culture at once humanized by its history and restrained by the discipline of its own civilization. Moving through civil society, the Gypsies apparently remain beyond reach of everything that constitutes Western identity. . . . outside of historical record and historical time, outside of Western law, the Western nation state, and Western economic orders, outside of writing and discursivity itself (Appiah and Gates 355).

Brontë's portrayal of Heathcliff plays off of the popular fascination with a itinerant race of ethnologically obscure, potentially dangerous people, who exist on the margins of society—that is, both within and outside the geographic borders of the British Isles, but outside what are considered to be the bounds of European civilization. We can see how another novelist of the early Victorian period plays, much as Brontë does, on the ambiguous ground inhabited by the figure of the gypsy in the popular mind. In *Emma* (1816), Jane Austen draws on the image of wandering gypsies in order to magnify the vicious aspects of the class structure in England. In her representation, the presence of a gypsy camp, just outside the town of Highbury, creates a public disturbance. Emma, the novel's central figure, has a protégé, the seventeen-year-old Harriet Smith, a girl of "doubtful birth," who goes for a walk with her and another companion, Miss Bickerton, through a deeply shaded, remote stretch of highway. By chance, the females are suddenly accosted

by a gypsy child who begs them for money. Frightened, Miss Bickerton flees, but Harriet, having leg cramps, cannot run away and soon finds herself “assailed by half a dozen children.” Hoping to satisfy them, she gives a shilling to a gypsy woman and a large boy. But her generosity only encourages the outsiders to beg for more money, and their behavior frightens her. She soon finds herself surrounded by a gang of gypsy children, demanding more money (Austen 260). The upsetting encounter turns out luckily for Harriet, however, because, by fortunate coincidence, Frank Churchill, a young gentleman, appears on the scene. He frightens the gypsies away and takes Harriet back to town, where their romance begins, at least in Emma’s imagination.

For Emma, born into the ranks of the landed gentry, Harriet is an object of desire. Emma wants to shape her protégé’s social experience through a courtship and marriage that will raise the girl above her humble origins. Emma’s naïve experiment with a living person, treating her as though she were an inanimate object, invokes the Pygmalion legend of Western mythology. That myth places a male figure in a dominant, leading role, above a subordinate female. In her fantasy, which cuts through class ranks, Emma plays the part of the superior male. Emma’s experiment fails, of course, as she learns of the ruthlessness with which Victorian class and gender ranks are guarded. Austen’s narrative illuminates the vicious policing of class ranks by different characters in the novel, the Eltons, for example, who jealously guard their class territory. Following the gypsy adventure, Harriet and Frank arrive at Hartfield. News of the encounter spreads around the town, among the “young and the low; and all the youth and servants in the place were

soon in the happiness of frightful news” (262). The ambiguous ground that the gypsies inhabit, then, somewhere between the established anchors, religious, legal, social, and educational, of civilized society and their truant, nomadic life, provides an imaginatively fertile space for Emma’s fantasy to take hold. That space does away with social hierarchies based on class and gender. This situation is comparable, broadly speaking, to that we find when Earnshaw, promising to give his daughter a horse whip and his son a violin, upsets the reader’s expectations by reversing the role that gender plays. It is notable, too, that gypsies were popularly associated with music and horses.

Speaking of the figure of the gypsy in nineteenth-century women’s writing, Deborah Nord comments,

By juxtaposing Harriet Smith and Jane Fairfax, and by connecting their imagined rivalry for Frank Churchill with the episode of the gypsies, Austen’s fiction hints at the dramas of birth, race, sexual passion, and anomalous femininity that would take center stage in later women’s fiction (Nord 194).

As Nord convincingly argues, it is Catherine’s identification with Heathcliff’s gypsy Otherness that allows her to transgress the boundaries—sexual, social, racial, gendered—of Victorian womanhood, passing into “heterodox femininity” (195). As I will show, Heathcliff’s gypsy alterity, his alien species, as Brontë presents it, clears the path for an inundation of racial Others who threaten the social hierarchies of English civilization. The imaginative darkness between Liverpool and the moors

plays off of the reader's sense of the foreignness of the city, the racial mix of its inhabitants. That ground propagates a host of non-white, non-English associations that go beyond the imagined geographic borders of the British Isles and cultural boundaries of European civilization. The imaginative dark space, the gap between the distant port city and the English countryside, allows Heathcliff, the dark-skinned gypsy waif, to accrete a host of racial Others—Indians, Spanish Americans, African blacks, for example-- associated with the British empire in the novel. We can see how the ambiguity that surrounds Heathcliff's origins and racial identity allows him to collect foreign Others, so to speak, during the scene in which Catherine and Heathcliff, as children, race across the moors on an adventure to spy on the Lintons. They are the Earnshaws' wealthy neighbors who live at Thrushcross Grange, located four miles away. The spying event, discussed below, takes place after Earnshaw, who favored Heathcliff over his other children, has died.

Through her portrayal, Brontë implies that Heathcliff is endowed with a kind of primitive vitality, not only physical stamina but also violent force of will. The toil that he endures under Hindley's oppression, after Earnshaw dies, for example, shows his vital resources, his extraordinary ability, not only to withstand menial labor but also to laugh at punishments intended to degrade him. Whenever Heathcliff and Catherine do not attend Sunday Church service, for example, Hindley orders Joseph, an aged servant at the Heights, an ardent Christian, to flog Heathcliff. Catherine receives punishment, too, sometimes being forced to fast all day: "The curate might set as many chapters as he pleased for Catherine to get by



heart, and Joseph might thrash Heathcliff til his arm ached; they forget everything the minute they were together again” (59). The fact that Hindley and Joseph cannot impress either of them with the importance of observing institutional Church worship, in spite of the punishments that they receive, implies that the two young people are beyond the power of Western culture to interpellate them, beyond “Western discursivity,” as Trumpener says of the gypsies. Their “savage” instincts, expressed in their tendency to laugh at the values of modern civilization, is even more evident, afterward, when Heathcliff relates to Nelly his adventure at the Grange. He says that he and Catherine decided to spy on the Linton children, Edgar and Isabella, to see how they spend their Sunday evenings. After they raced four miles to the Grange, a race that Catherine lost because she was running with bare feet, they sat on a “flower-pot under the drawing-room window.” As they peered into the room, they saw an array of modern consumer goods, purchased commodities: “[I]t was beautiful—a splendid place, carpeted with crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers.”<sup>10</sup> As the Linton children, parallel figures to the two children outside, were alone in the room, Heathcliff says, “We should have thought ourselves in heaven.” Unlike the joy that he imagined such material wealth would bring, however, what he observed next was the aftermath of an argument that the Linton children had been having. After quarreling over possession of a small dog that “they had nearly pulled in two between them,” Isabella was on one side of the room, screaming, while Edgar stood on the other side, weeping (61). Isabella then

began to cry, Heathcliff says, because, after fighting for the dog, both refused to take it. He and Catherine despised the “petted things,” and laughed at the children, just as they had laughed at Hindley’s and Joseph’s punishments.

Brontë presents this scene in order to suggest the discontent that accompanies civilization’s condition of psychological, social, moral, and cultural enervation. In this incident, that unhealthy condition contrasts sharply with the vitality of Heathcliff and Catherine. She “worked or played with him in the fields,” and they skipped Sunday Church service whenever they could, as I have said. In contrast to the freedom of their outdoor gambols, the interior scene of the Lintons’ drawing-room implies the distancing of humanity from nature, its powers of regeneration, as the dog’s hapless situation suggests. Life at Thrushcross Grange stands in sharp contrast with Heathcliff’s ploughboy existence at the Heights—farm labor, the dirty, physically demanding, close-to-nature experience he has there.<sup>11</sup> The ornate drawing-room, with its “pure white ceiling bordered with gold,” represents the Lintons’ assumption of race and class superiority. Their cultural power, supported by the moral and legal foundations of British society, lacks the potent vitality that Heathcliff brings to the moors out of the darkness from where Old Earnshaw got him or, in all likelihood, begot him, as discussed below.<sup>12</sup> The long race with Catherine across the moors and their seat on the flower-pot, a symbol of their affinity with nature, also suggest the untamed, savage vitality that is missing from the Grange. Heathcliff’s comment, when he imagines the drawing-room as heaven, ironically calls to mind the backing of Christian authority for the English social system, a white heaven, in other words, based on privileges of race

and class. His comment and his position, seated outside, accentuate the fact that he is an interloper, denied the privileges that the Linton children, in his view, ought to be enjoying. Unlike them, he has no cultural backing, no heritage, Christian or otherwise, that we know of, only nature's backing, the affection that old Earnshaw had for him, and Catherine's companionship, as they grow up "rude as savages" (58-59). It is clear, then, that Brontë presents this scene as a symbolic contrast between Heathcliff's primitive vitality, energized by his completely natural union with Catherine, and modern civilization, as it mourns the loss of the power that they possesses.

As Heathcliff relates his adventure to Nelly, he tells her why Catherine stayed at the Grange, while he returned to the Heights alone. He says that after the Linton children heard their laughter and ran to the door, they shouted to their parents, who, thinking they were thieves, let the bulldog, Skulker, loose on them. The dog bit Catherine on the ankle as she was running away. While struggling to free her from the animal's hold, Heathcliff began cursing, "curses enough to annihilate any fiend in Christendom," he says. Afterwards, when the servant, Robert, discovered Catherine, he called off the bulldog and carried her inside.<sup>13</sup> He told Mr. Linton, Edgar's father, a magistrate, that a gang of thieves must have sent the children there to open windows for them so that they could murder the family. Following Robert's mistaken logic, Mr. Linton thought that the gang purposely planned the robbery for Sunday: "To beard a magistrate in his stronghold, and on the Sabbath, too! where will their insolence stop?" At this point, Mr. Linton called to his wife, Mary, so that she could look at the boy. He asked her, sarcastically,

“[W]ould it not be a kindness to the country to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts, as well as features?”

The author presents this scene so that the Linton family gather to stare at the two children, as if they were curious specimens of scientific inquiry. This is the point in the narrative, however, when they recognize Catherine and, knowing that she is an Earnshaw, a member of their own tribe, so to speak, regard her as a person superior to Heathcliff. In their view, her family heritage, Anglo-Saxon race, and genteel status set her apart from Heathcliff, even though she has been roaming the wilds with him. Fearful of the gypsy child, as Isabella perceives him, she comments, “Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar papa. He’s exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant.” Heathcliff tells Nelly how the Lintons reacted to them:

“Edgar Linton, after an inquisitive stare, collected sufficient wit to recognize her [Catherine]. They see us at Church, you know, though we seldom meet them elsewhere.”

““That’s Miss Earnshaw!’ he whispered to his mother, ‘and look how Skulker has bitten her—how her foot bleeds!’”

““Miss Earnshaw? Nonsense!’ cried the dame. ‘Miss Earnshaw scouring the country with a gipsy! And yet, my dear, the child is in mourning—surely it is, and she may be lamed for life!’”

““What culpable carelessness in her brother!’ exclaimed Mr. Linton, turning from me to Catherine. ‘I’ve understood from Shielders [the curate] . . . that he lets her grow up in absolute

heathenism. But who's this? Where did she pick up this companion? Oho! I declare that he is that strange acquisition my late neighbor made in his journey to Liverpool—a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway.’”

“‘A wicked boy, at all events,’ remarked the old lady, ‘and quite unfit for a decent house! Did you notice his language?

Linton, I'm shocked that my children should have heard it’” (62).

Here we can see that Heathcliff symbolically threatens the boundaries of race and class that the dominant Anglo-Saxons, the Lintons, perpetuate in order to protect their interests, their power. Isabella's fearful response, as she wants to lock him in the cellar, suggests that she associates him with the working classes, hoping to distance the threat posed by his racial difference.<sup>14</sup> Along with Isabella's attitude, the curate's name, *Shielders*, implies the cultural insularity provided by religious institutions that uphold the ancient privileges and entitlements of the landed gentry. The Lintons espouse Christian faith as armor against such intrusions, unwarranted in their minds, as those represented by Heathcliff. Whenever he and Catherine skip Sunday Church service, either Mr. Shielders or Joseph informs Hindley so that he can order punishment for the disobedient children. The curate's phrase, “absolute heathenism,” as he told Mr. Linton about Heathcliff's behavior, implies his association with foreign Others, non-Christians of empire, as well as with the working classes.<sup>15</sup> After the spying incident, Mr. Linton lectures Hindley, too, about how he should manage his family better (63). The fact that Heathcliff and Catherine defy Hindley, coupled with the fact that Mr. Linton is a magistrate, a

representative of the legal establishment in Britain, suggests that Heathcliff's ambiguous racial identity symbolically interrogates ancient safeguards of the gentry.

In this scene, the stereotype of the gypsy as a wayfarer, as unattached to any known civil or religious organization, a lawbreaker in fact, extends from Heathcliff outward, to the remote corners of empire, as the reader imagines them. Mr. Linton associates racial Others, such as Indian sailors called Lascars, all those who travel from foreign lands, many arriving in Liverpool as castaways, with Heathcliff. His dark skin "collects" foreign Others, as Susan Meyer argues, so that his ambiguous identity carries more vitality than it would in the event that his racial origins were known with certainty (102). Even further, Heathcliff's continual cursing offends Mary. Her name implies her Christian faith, though she does not apply Christian principles, charity and compassion, to him. While Heathcliff's vitality symbolically threatens values on Grange, his curses are powerless to affect any real change.<sup>16</sup> They only contribute to the Lintons' perception of him as an outsider, a castaway. This situation implies the strength of cultural barriers that the British have erected, resistant to racial Others and the healthful changes that they might bring to the West. Since the Lintons make a distinction between Heathcliff and Catherine, sending him back to the Heights, while keeping her at the Grange, that callous act contributes, as well, to the author's portrayal of him as a foreigner, trespassing on ideological grounds of Anglo-Saxon power.

Even though, in this scene, Heathcliff is resentful and frustrated, his violent temperament holds the potential power to dismantle social hierarchies. For

example, during his narration, Heathcliff tells Nelly, “I’d not exchange for a thousand lives my condition here, for Edgar Linton’s at Thrushcross Grange, not if I might have the privilege of throwing Joseph off the highest cable and painting the house-front with Hindley’s blood”(60). Heathcliff’s hostility and the violence that he envisions are understandable in this case because the Lintons keep Catherine at the Grange for five weeks, nursing her, petting her as they do their own children, while transforming her into a young lady. In fact, by giving her notions about what it means to be a lady, they deny her the primitive vitality she knew before at the Heights. When she returns on Christmas day, dressed elegantly, this is the beginning of what turns out to be the separation of Heathcliff from his spiritual mate, ultimately, their loss of happiness on earth.<sup>17</sup> The timing of Catherine’s return to the Heights is important, too, as it suggests the extent to which she has adopted the Lintons’ sense of race and class superiority, backed by Christian ideology (63). The irony, of course, is that old Earnshaw presented Heathcliff as a Christmas gift to his family, but Catherine’s experience at the Grange subverts the promise of renewed vitality that that present represents.

Shortly after the spying adventure, Brontë magnifies Heathcliff’s racial Otherness again in order to suggest the potential flow of foreign influences into Britain, even though they meet with much opposition from established traditions. On Christmas day at the Heights, when Hindley and his wife, Frances, are expecting the Lintons for company, Heathcliff feels humiliated because Catherine laughs, involuntarily, at his dirty clothes and hands. Since her return from the Grange, she has unintentionally made him feel inferior. Nelly, as she

recalls Earnshaw's affection for the waif and his desire that Heathcliff should be well taken care of, feels sorry for the child. She recognizes that his relationship with Catherine is on a different footing now, so she tries to give him confidence by emphasizing the physical advantages, strength and height, that he has in comparison with Edgar. When Heathcliff tells Nelly that he wishes he had Edgar's "light hair and fair skin," so that he might have the same opportunity that Edgar does of someday becoming wealthy, Nelly comes up with a fantasy about his birth origins. In that fantasy, Heathcliff has enough power to overcome the accidental advantages given to Edgar at birth. She tells the child that it is not his skin color that is most important, even if he were a "regular black." What really matters is a good heart: "You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together?" (67).

Even though Nelly, at this juncture, does not consider the actual possibility of Heathcliff's revenge on his oppressors, her comment anticipates his revenge, later, as he takes legal possession of both the Heights and the Grange. But here Brontë makes use of the ambiguity surrounding Heathcliff's birth origins in order to suggest the power of foreign Others to dismantle oppressive values of the West. Nelly's remark that Heathcliff's skin color, even if he were a "regular black," should play no part in how he feels about himself, amplifies the ambiguity associated with the background of his birth. Her fantasy about his parents, Oriental royalty, plays off of that ambiguity, so that the reader can imagine, at least momentarily, foreign Others with enough social power to overcome those who rule



race and class with hegemonic power in Britain. Nelly's curious fantasy is especially compelling as it is linked with the stereotype of racial Others having unlimited powers of procreation. In *Colonial Desire*, Robert J. C. Young discusses the connection made, in the nineteenth-century, between culture and race. That connection involved "sexuality as its third mediating term," and the "fantasies derived from cultural stereotypes in which blackness evokes an attractive, but dangerous sexuality, and apparently abundant, limitless, but threatening fertility" (97). Even though Nelly's fantasy of Heathcliff's parents, a Chinese father and an Indian mother, does not endow them with extraordinary powers of procreation, their Otherness, coupled with her reference to Heathcliff as a "regular black," like the slaves, African dock workers in Liverpool, for example, carries the suggestion of sexual fecundity.<sup>18</sup> In the context of Heathcliff's imaginary birth origins as powerful, royal, foreign, and wealthy, that stereotype suggests the potential of foreign Others, their values, to overrun the cultural bounds of Western civilization. We can see, then, how Heathcliff's figure, as Eagleton remarks, is both fearful and fertilizing. He is fearful because he threatens ancient traditions of Anglo-Saxon society. He is fertilizing in the sense that his primitive vitality, connected with foreign Others, gaining added force from popular stereotypes of gypsies, blacks, and Irish, carries the potential to regenerate English culture.<sup>19</sup>

Heathcliff, while still living with Hindley at the Heights, begins to unseat traditions of power through paradoxical actions that are, at once, fearful and fertilizing. The author presents that undoing through the close cultural similarity between Heathcliff and Hindley's son, Hareton. His name and the year, 1500, are

inscribed above the entrance at the Heights. That inscription implies the distant reach in time, the strength of tradition, of his legacy. Since the name *Hareton* suggests an animal, the hare, it also implies that nature, not custom, is the genuine source of patriarchy at the Heights. Since Hareton has difficulty speaking English, and Heathcliff, when old Earnshaw first presented him to the family, spoke only “gibberish,” that parallel contributes to Brontë’s portrayal of the boy as his cultural reincarnation. The author also implies their affinity through an early incident in which Heathcliff saves Hareton from the negligence of his biological father.

In that event, Hindley, grieving for the loss of his wife during childbirth, staggers from drunkenness as he enters the house, cursing. When he observes Nelly attempting to hide Hareton in the cupboard, he quarrels with her and threatens her with a knife. After Nelly shows that she cannot be intimidated, Hindley threatens to “break the brat’s [Hareton’s] neck,” because the child refused to welcome him when he first walked into the house (80). Suddenly, the father grabs his son and runs up the stairs. While carelessly holding the child over the banister, Hindley listens as he hears someone approaching from below. At that moment, Hareton leaps from his father’s feeble grasp and falls. Heathcliff arrives in the nick of time to catch him. Nelly explains that Heathcliff “arrived underneath, just at the critical moment; by a natural impulse he arrested his descent, and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident” (81).

Heathcliff’s instinctive response prevents the baby’s death. His natural impulse presents a contrast between the “unnatural” neglect of the child’s biological father, whose family bloodline represents the ancient authority of the

ruling classes, and the spontaneous act of an outsider, a racial Other, as Heathcliff is regarded. His instinctive response interrogates the viability of English law, Hindley's customary right to transfer property to his eldest son. In Brontë's representation, the laws of nature—the instinct to survive, biological reproduction, natural affection between people, regardless of racial origins—carry more substance and vitality than laws inscribed in revered texts, either legal, literary, or religious, of English civilization. In fact, what sets in motion the intense momentum of the narrative is Earnshaw's affection for Heathcliff, whom the patriarch named after his eldest son, who died in childhood (52). As the hierarchical arrangements of English civilization are based on supposedly pure bloodlines, Earnshaw's affection for the gypsy waif disturbs the putatively natural system of class ranks in English civilization, the custom that passes property and power to the first born male.

The myth of pure Anglo-Saxon blood that Heathcliff interrogates had its origins, according to Reginald Horsman, in Romantic ideas about German nationality. In *Race and Manifest Destiny*, Horsman explains how Johann Gottfried von Herder opened a "Pandora's box of virulent racial theories with his stress on language as the basis of nationality." Herder replaced the idea of the nation as a political unit with that of the nation as a tribal community. Even though Herder warned against the glorification of the Germans as a chosen people, his warnings were ignored. In response to the French Revolution, patriotic German scholars "exalted the state, the language, and the German people and helped destroy the eighteenth-century vision of mankind as one" (27). As Horsman discusses further,

the glorification of the state as an “instrument of divine purpose . . . fell on receptive ears in England and the United States.”

Along with this patriotic trend, in Germany, toward “particularism,” the notion that Anglo-Saxon blood is pure was given impetus, in the late eighteenth century, by the work of Sir William Jones, a British judge and scholar of Oriental languages. In a paper published in 1786, Jones theorized that three languages, Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, had a common origin in Asia. German scholars, Fredrick Von Schlegel being foremost among them, “Germanized” Jones’s theory. Schlegel made the mistake of confusing language and race, of imagining that a particular, gifted people, with their Indo-Germanic tongue, moved out of Asia and took their language to Rome, where they revitalized the Roman empire. Max Muller, a German philologist, later called the gifted people “Aryans” (29). Horsman states,

When in the first half of the nineteenth century this idea [Aryans migrating westward] became dominant, it paralleled in scientific writing the development of a clearly delineated notion of a superior Caucasian race. Eventually, sections of the original Indo-European racial stock were depicted as a Caucasian elite (33).

Further philological inquires into the Indo-European language family gave “Saxonists,” as Horsman calls them, in Europe even more ammunition for a theory of racial superiority. Their supposition was confused, however, because they assumed that if two peoples had a common origin in language, they also had a

common origin in race. According to Horsman, the British, never forgetting that their native ancestors were once “under the yoke” of the Normans, raised the status of Saxons even further when they glorified their distant past in England. The idea of Saxon racial superiority was given credibility throughout Europe by many intellectuals, and Anglo-Saxons thought of themselves as the “elite of the elite” in Western civilization (32).

Horseman goes on to explain that the notion of Saxon racial superiority was perpetuated by race scientists beginning in the 1830s. Foremost among the phrenologists who offered specious evidence for the superiority of Caucasians was Samuel George Morton. His *Crania American* (1839) was highly influential. This group of supposed scientists argued in favor of polygenesis, the idea that human races were separate species, and that they originated as such because God had created pairs and placed them in different climates, most suited to each group’s particular racial qualities. Among Morton’s followers was Dr. Josiah Nott, a “defender of polygenesis, slavery, and inherent black inferiority”(129). Though Nott was not alone in advancing so-called scientific evidence for the superiority of Caucasians, his writings were, perhaps, most virulently racist. Besides African blacks, he denigrated the natives of Central America, indigenous tribes of North America, and many other racial groups. Between 1844 and the Civil War, Nott gained an international reputation. He believed that the ““Mongol, the Malay, the Indian, and the Negro are now and always have been in all ages and places inferior to the Caucasian”” (130). He averred that American “Indians” could not be improved, and that they were headed for extinction. He argued, too, that Egypt and

the Barbary states could never regain their former glory because they had adulterated their blood by interbreeding with other races. In fact, racial interbreeding was a disaster, in Nott's view, because it produced hybrids who were not as fertile as their parents. Thus, interbreeding eventually led to extinction of the race: "To keep Caucasian blood pure was to ensure civilization and progress" (130). This sketch suggests, then, how the myth of Anglo-Saxon pure blood, in all probability, helped perpetuate the custom of primogeniture and reinforce the system of class ranks in Britain. As a gypsy vagabond with unknown origins, inserted into the genteel Earnshaw family, with its ancient bloodline, Heathcliff challenges the traditional patrimony buttressed by that myth.

Symbolically, Heathcliff's insertion into the family restores the Heights to its original, filial heir, the deceased son from whom Heathcliff took his name. The ironic restoration of those property rights, through his abrupt intervention, implies his cultural grafting onto the Earnshaw family tree. The transplantation of values from the outskirts of empire, the dark Otherness of imagination, as Brontë presents it, to the civilized center comes about through the authority of nature, the cycle of birth and death and rebirth, rather than through the questionable mechanisms of English law and custom. From this situation, from Earnshaw's unaccountable trip to Liverpool and his great affection for the child, it is reasonable to assume, then, that Heathcliff is his biological son. Nature, rather than custom, grants him the right to inherit the Heights.<sup>20</sup> This conclusion would mean, of course, that Catherine is his half-sister and that their relationship transgresses cultural bounds even more than if they were not, by blood ties, biologically related.<sup>21</sup>

As in the scene discussed earlier, Heathcliff and Catherine spying on the Linton children, Brontë shows us, in the incident of Hareton's near death, how Heathcliff, in effect, questions the cultural authority of the West. Hindley's perverse neglect of his own child contrasts sharply with Heathcliff's instinct for the preservation of life. Both incidents present what Homi K. Bhabha calls a "re-cognition" of authority. He remarks,

Those discriminated against may be instantly recognized but they also force a re-cognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority—a disturbing effect that is familiar in the repeated hesitancy afflicting colonial discourse when it contemplates its discriminated subjects: the inscrutability of the Chinese, the unspeakable rites of the Indians, the indescribable habits of the Hottentots (160).

Bhabha's theory sheds light on Heathcliff's "inscrutability," as the scholar puts it, because the perception of him as a racial Other forces the reader to reconsider the "rules of recognition." In other words, in these events, there is something going on besides oppression, the building of desire for revenge within Heathcliff. In both cases, the reader perceives cultural authority in a different light. The injustice of power, as it is wielded, arbitrarily, not only against racial Others but also against children, biological offspring, implies that ancestral customs need to be reconstituted in accordance with human needs. Nelly's fantasy reinforces the idea, too, that the authority of the gentry on the moors needs to be reexamined because the ancient privileges that Anglo-Saxon males possess no longer retain the viability

that they once did. There is something wrong with the foundation of established power that leaves no room for spontaneity and natural instinct. Because of his gypsy origins, the perception of him as a racial outsider, and his violent acts, discussed below, Heathcliff exists in what Bhabha calls a “Third Space,” somewhere between the guarded privileges of British culture and the reader’s sense that those tribal customs no longer make sense. This situation creates an “ambivalence in the act of interpretation” (53). Brontë’s portrayal of Hindley, in which the physically and spiritually degraded Englishman, following Heathcliff’s revenge, forfeits both his offspring and his property to the outsider, implies the cultural disintegration brought on by the decadence of English civilization, an insular society much in need of a transfusion of cultural vitality.

## II. Heathcliff’s Fertilizing Violence

Even though old Earnshaw favored Heathcliff over his biological son, Hindley, so that they became boyhood rivals, his downfall does not begin with the interloper. His undoing goes back, instead, to his marriage to Frances, a “peevish” girl, afraid to die. As Nelly explains, Hindley met her when he left the Heights in order to get a formal education: “Young Earnshaw was altered considerably in the three years of his absence. He had grown sparer, and lost his colour, and spoke and dressed quite differently” (58). During Hindley’s absence, Frances’s influence on him has been considerable. His lean body and the loss of color in his complexion imply that his native strengths have been depleted. His different apparel suggests the source of that lost vitality, the gentlemanly pretenses that he assumed during his



absence. The length of Hindley's absence from the moors matches that of Heathcliff, afterward, but the time they spend away affects each differently. The gypsy waif, though dressed like a gentleman, returns with replenished energies, while Hindley suffers from his association, on the Continent, with the educated elite.

Upon Hindley's return to the Heights, his new bride shows nothing but repugnance for Heathcliff. She also pampers Catherine, as the Lintons did, after her return from the Grange. Hindley's marriage brings a stronger sense of class difference to the Heights, reinforced by his education and by the sense of superiority that Frances derives from her husband's status and belongings. When Hindley comes home, Frances is impressed by the Earnshaw's material possessions: "[S]he expressed such pleasure at the white floor, and huge glowing fire-place, the pewter dishes, and delf-case, and dog-kennel." Her love of material goods reminds us of the Linton's drawing-room, a showcase of decorative commodities. Hoping to please his wife, Hindley orders Nelly and Joseph to the back kitchen, leaving the house for Frances and himself (58). Here, in the priority that she gives material objects, above her concern for the servants, their human needs, Brontë implies the insensitive, uncaring aspect of class distinctions. As the Lintons' drawing room presents a display of consumer goods, incapable, of course, of actually fulfilling the human desire for companionship and affection, the importance that Frances attributes to material goods implies the empty promise of class rank, social status, to satisfy human needs.<sup>22</sup>

Frances's name, in fact, implies the vacuity of cultural values that the

author associates with France, England's cultural, political, religious, and military rival at mid-century. Her name suggests, in particular, what the author regards as unhealthy influences of the French nation on the English, the decadence of modern civilization. While I agree with Eagleton that Emily Brontë's portrayal, in *Wuthering Heights*, is less ideological than Charlotte Brontë's presentation, in *Jane Eyre*, of the British nation, one feature that their novels share is an ideological representation of French society. Both writers present French culture as antithetical to English people and values. For example, Charlotte portrays Mr. Rochester, before he was reclaimed to true Englishness by Jane, as a worldly philanderer, who lavishly wastes the family fortune, while carrying on a sordid affair with a French actress, Céline Varens. Varens flatters the gentleman in order to receive his expensive gifts while, at the same time, making love to a young French soldier, who is both "brainless and vicious" (C. Brontë 126). The liaison between the English gentleman and the French actress produces an illegitimate child, though Rochester disclaims paternity. The Englishman ultimately rescues the child, Adèle: "I e'en took the poor thing," he tells Jane, "out of the slime and mud of Paris, and transplanted it here, to grow up clean in the wholesome soil of an English country garden" (127). As governess, Jane tutors Adèle, who is vivacious and lovable but not very talented. Charlotte's portrait of the morally degenerating entanglements that come from flirtations with French society, a promiscuous, warring civilization, not particularly intelligent, valuing material possessions above genuine cultural accomplishments, shares common ground with Emily's portrayal of Frances. Hindley's efforts to please his bride, efforts that ultimately fail, suggest

that formal education instills dissatisfaction with one's lot by reinforcing class divisions within European society. Frances reveals her feelings of superiority by "evincing a dislike for Heathcliff" so that "Hindley becomes tyrannical toward him." Her perception of Heathcliff as a filthy, uneducated ploughboy, unsuited for genteel society, aggravates the animosity-- already inflamed by that fact that Old Earnshaw favored the gypsy orphan above his other children--between him and Hindley. The death of Frances in childbirth shows how Heathcliff's violence symbolically strips unwholesome cultural roots from civilization on the moors. Her death represents the elimination of decadence associated with French society so that Hareton's, her son's, birth is part of the cultural violence that Heathcliff embodies, as he is grafted by nature, by the affection of the patriarch and Catherine, onto the Earnshaw family tree.

In his "Preface" to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean Paul Sartre says that Fanon "shows clearly that [the native's] irrepressible violence is neither sound nor fury, nor resurrection of savage instincts, nor even the effect of resentment: it is man re-creating himself. . . . When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself" (Fanon 18). In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff's physical and psychic violence suggests his driving urge to create himself anew, as in Fanon's depiction of natives who rebel against their colonial oppressors. Heathcliff's violence comes from his instinct to recover the primitive vitality of his spiritual mate, taken from him when the Lintons cared for Catherine, transforming her into a lady. When, after a three-years' absence, Heathcliff shows up at the Grange, seemingly from nowhere, the darkness of

imagination has changed him, so that he appears charged with violent, supernatural power. That energy comes from Brontë's portrayal of him as an ambivalent figure, whose underlying instinct for retribution contradicts his external appearance of gentility. When he arrives, "a tall man dressed in dark clothes, with a dark face," Nelly tells Lockwood that she is amazed by his "transformation," that he looks "dignified," that something in his demeanor reminds her of a soldier, and that he carries no "marks of former degradation." The startling effect of Heathcliff's dignified appearance on Nelly is undercut, however, by a different sense, that of extraordinary vitality: "A half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows, and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued" (98). The author portrays Heathcliff as a figure whose outward appearance conveys the imprint of civilization—social poise, polite manners—yet, as Nelly suggests, he also retains the robust vigor of his foreign antecedents. In other words, his civilized exterior masks the ferocity that lies, on a much deeper level, beneath. The ambivalence that we sense in seeing him take revenge on Hindley and Edgar comes from Brontë's depiction of him as a character possessed of those contradictory features. One aspect presents the sartorial dignity of the gentry. The other trace, Fanon's "irrepressible violence," surges up from beneath that masculine exterior to contest traditional authority, which inscribes an unremitting ideology on the hearts and minds of Others, not only of race but also of class and gender.

When, for revenge, Heathcliff moves into the Heights and degrades Hindley, his violence dismantles established values on the moors. He shows the ambiguity of the legal system, the gap between what it does, in the execution of

pragmatic affairs, and the Christian principles that it claims to uphold. Heathcliff achieves this end, first, by taking advantage of Hindley's vulnerability, his remorse after the death of Frances. He wins card games, drives his enemy into debt, and forces him to mortgage his property, which he expropriates, afterward, for payment of what is owed him. By usurping Hindley's property and contributing to his death, Heathcliff subverts the power of the legal establishment to endorse family connections based on supposedly pure bloodlines, the passing of property from one generation to the next. He interrogates the British assumption of the inviolable nature of its ancient customs, the rule of primogeniture in this case. By stripping Hareton of the property that he is supposed to inherit from his father, he circumvents the praxis of English Common Law. Even though Christian morality condemns Heathcliff's degradation of a country gentleman, the legal system must uphold his rights as a creditor.

We can see further how Heathcliff reveals the gap between English law and Christian principles, after Isabella, Edgar's sister, marries the gypsy gentleman, and they are living together, as husband and wife, at the Heights. She tells Nelly how he terrorized both Hindley and herself. Hindley locked the door against Heathcliff, she explains, shutting him outside. He smashed a window, however, and, as he was trying to get inside, he wrenched a pistol from his enemy's grasp. As the knife blade on the gun sprang back and cut Hindley, he was rendered senseless, not only from the wound but also from drunkenness. As he lay on the floor in a pool of blood, Heathcliff, while kicking him, had an urge to kill his enemy. Unaccountably, however, he began to bandage Hindley's wounds, "spitting and cursing during the

operation as energetically as he had kicked before” (161). During that time, Isabella ran to Joseph for help. When he arrived, he believed that the tyrant had murdered the master. At that point, Heathcliff shoved the aged Christian to the floor, and he began to pray. Afterward, Joseph vowed that he would go to Edgar for help: “Mr. Linton was a magistrate, and though he had fifty wives dead, he should inquire into this.” The next morning, Isabella discovered Heathcliff weeping, sunken in despair. She took that opportunity to repay him: “[S]ticking in a dart; his weakness was the only time when I could taste the delight of paying wrong for wrong.” At this point, Nelly interrupted Isabella’s account and admonished her for having an unchristian attitude: “One might suppose that you had never opened a Bible in your life. If God afflict your enemies, surely that ought to suffice.” Isabella agreed with her but responded that no revenge on Heathcliff could satisfy her unless she had played a part in it (163).

Heathcliff’s contradictory behavior, first lashing out at Hindley, then saving him, like his rage followed by remorse for Catherine, points to the ambiguity that lies at the heart of the legal system, backed, supposedly, by Christian principles. Even though Heathcliff’s motive is revenge, Hindley’s effort to keep him out of the house out implies the refusal of the gentry to admit what it regards as foreign Others within the compass of its cultural ideology. By locking Heathcliff out, Hindley behaves as Mr. Linton did earlier, sending him home alone, as a child, while Catherine remained at the Grange. In a sense, Hindley also repeats Edgar’s action, when he denies Heathcliff visitation rights at the Grange, hoping to sever his relationship with Catherine (112-114). The recoil of the knife blade, as it sprang

back and cut Hindley, implies the force of his own ideology, crashing back against him. Heathcliff embodies that violent backlash, kicking him while he is unconscious. Hindley is so insensible during the combat, however, that he does not recall what the tyrant, as Isabella regards her husband, did to him. His lack of awareness implies that the gentry does not recognize the damage that its own values can inflict upon them. If Heathcliff is Earnshaw's biological son, as I am arguing, Hindley's attempt to keep him out of the house is highly ironic, as he shuts the door on his own half-brother. The possibility that they may be related by blood reinforces the idea that Heathcliff is both inside and outside of British culture at once. That paradoxical figuration charges him with violent energy. In all likelihood, since Joseph punished Heathcliff, as a child, for not attending Church, he prays here in order to invoke God's punishment of the intruder. Still, once Heathcliff becomes the new master, the aged servant never seeks Edgar's help, as he angrily averred that he would. That behavior shows his hypocrisy, as he favors whoever is in power at the Heights. Isabella shows her hypocritical self, too, since she cannot resist taunting Heathcliff, paying him back while he grieves for Catherine. Nelly is right about Isabella's unchristian attitude, which goes hand-in-hand with Joseph's hypocrisy and his prayer for God's revenge on the gypsy intruder. What Heathcliff brings out in this incident, then, is that the gentry puts up a front of Christian compassion, as long as the law supports its interests, but abandons that pretense when the legal system is not on its side, when confronted by the threat of racial and cultural difference.

Even though Joseph does not seek Edgar's help, Nelly, afterward, during

the time that preparations are underway for Hindley's funeral, does. She asks Edgar to assume guardianship of Hareton. Edgar says that he is unable to do so and advises her to speak with his lawyer, who had been Hindley's attorney as well. Nelly says, "He shook his head and advised that Heathcliff should be let alone; affirming, if the truth were known, Hareton would be found little else than a beggar." Since Hindley died with so much debt, the lawyer adds that Hareton's best chance is to "create some interest in the creditor's [Heathcliff's] heart" (168). This situation, Hareton's dependence on Heathcliff, reproduces the moral climate of the earlier event, the affection that the gypsy child aroused in old Earnshaw's heart. Although Heathcliff's physical abuse of Hindley is repugnant, he shows how social institutions, in this case, the legal establishment supported by Christian ideology, can demean people, even deprive them of their basic humanity. Edgar's hatred of Heathcliff, in fact, his desire to avoid him in public, coupled with grief over the loss of Catherine, is the reason that he cannot take care of Hareton, her nephew: "Grief, and that [Edgar's hatred of Heathcliff] together, transformed him into a complete hermit: he threw up his office as magistrate, ceased even to attend Church, avoided the village on all occasions, and spent a life of entire seclusion within the limits of his park and grounds" (166). Since Edgar, like a misanthrope, withdraws from society, his behavior shows how the legal system, propped up with Christian principles, supposedly, exerts demonic power over him and his family.<sup>23</sup> Afterwards, Isabella abandons society on the moors, and Edgar no longer shows much concern for his sister. After giving birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son, she dies, twelve years later, in seclusion (166). Her death goes along with that of Frances. It



signifies Heathcliff's paradoxical power, as a gypsy gentleman, to unhinge the assumptions of the gentry from their ideological doors. Heathcliff, then, generates a tension in the narrative, what Bhabha calls the "ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject." The English gypsy becomes the "terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification" (162). That tension questions Englishness, the assumption of race, class, and gender hierarchies, backed by Christian demagogues, like Joseph, and "Christian" ladies, like Isabella. Heathcliff's violence reveals the contradictory space between what the legal establishment claims it does for people and how Christian ladies and gentleman actually behave in the face of that ambiguous gothic specter.<sup>24</sup>

In *Maps of Englishness*, Simon Gikandi notes that the key terms of John Stuart Mill's speech to Parliament on the Morant Bay uprising of 1865 were "respectable authority" and "rule of law." Gikandi remarks that these phrases "were then, as now, subliminal indices of Englishness, its constitution, and ideals" (55). The physical, moral, and psychological deterioration of Hindley, living under the same roof as Heathcliff, illustrates the power of Heathcliff's cultural violence to undermine representative authority and the rule of law. His manipulation of legal arrangements on the moors cross-examines the concept of English national identity. Bhabha's theory of colonialism helps us to see how Heathcliff's revenge works. Speaking of crises that take place at certain moments in the English representation of imperialism, he states, "They mark the disturbance of its authoritative representations by the uncanny forces of race, sexuality, violence, and even climactic differences which emerge in the colonial discourse as the mixed and split

texts of hybridity” (161). The splitting of traditional authority works in the text to fertilize both the Heights and the Grange with renewed vitality, the sort that Heathcliff and Catherine possessed as children. However, before the Earnshaws and the Lintons can come together, Heathcliff must transfer his powers of regeneration to Hareton, his cultural son. Hareton must possess Heathcliff’s primitive vitality before he will be a suitable mate for Cathy, Edgar’s and Catherine’s daughter. In Brontë’s imagination, that can happen only if Hareton repeats Heathcliff’s degrading experience as a racial outsider. Speaking of the symbiotic relationship between race and culture in the nineteenth-century, Young explains that these two, almost synonymous, concepts were linked:

Culture has always marked difference by producing the other, it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed (54).

While the author presents Heathcliff both as a racial outsider, a gypsy, and as a cultural insider, an English gentleman, he passes the potent power of his dual character, as Young’s analysis suggests, to his cultural son, Hareton, so that he can complete the revitalization of civil society. Brontë naturalizes the bond between Heathcliff and Hareton by portraying them as cultural doubles. Even though Heathcliff dispossesses Hareton of the property that he is supposed to inherit, degrading him, forcing him to work without wages, depriving him of an education,

we know that Heathcliff's revenge means, in part, compelling Hindley's son to pass through the same conditions of uncertainty—what Fanon calls the “zone of occult instability where the people dwell”—that the gypsy waif experienced as a child.<sup>25</sup> By forcing Hareton to repeat his own suffering, Heathcliff violently infuses vitality into the otherwise sterile civilization on the moors. Before Hareton can inherit the Heights, and before the Heights can merge with the Grange, he must be divested of all the incapacitating features of modern civilization. Heathcliff strips his symbolic son of the appurtenances of Western society upon which white male privilege is based—property, capital accumulation, formal education, religious indoctrination—privileges accruing from race, class, and gender distinctions. Hareton's union, later, with Cathy is, therefore, symbolically freed of the burden of that heritage.

Through Brontë's portrayal of Linton, we can see how Heathcliff's violence works to free the younger generation of that burden. After he forces Edgar to give up Linton, who, following Isabella's death, stayed with his uncle for a short time, Nelly visits the boy at the Heights. When she arrives, Heathcliff tells her, “I've a room upstairs, furnished for him in handsome style—I've engaged a tutor, also, to teach him what he pleases to learn. I've ordered Hareton to obey him: and in fact, I've arranged everything with a view to preserve the superior and the gentleman in him” (185). Hareton endures demeaning servitude under the educated Linton and learns, as Heathcliff did, about the injustice of a class system that allows the energies of one group to be wasted by catering to the petty whims of another.<sup>26</sup> By forcing Hareton to experience the same sort of hardship, humiliation, and degradation that he endured as a youth, Heathcliff grafts his own values onto

Hindley's biological son. That ironic reversal places the child with the most vitality, Hareton, in a subservient position to the child with the least, Linton, so this event parallels Heathcliff's subjugation by Hindley. The difference, however, is that Linton's death, which Heathcliff promotes through neglect of his biological son, frees Hareton, symbolically, from the cultural burdens of the upper classes. As a result, Heathcliff's values, associated with nature rather than culture, become uppermost at the Heights. His violent intervention here recalls how, as a gypsy waif, he disrupted the Earnshaw family because the patriarch loved him most of all.

Even though Heathcliff's callous behavior, setting up his son with tyrannical privileges over Hindley's son, contributes to our conception of him as a monster, as Isabella calls him, his violence symbolically severs the emasculating features of English civilization, represented by Linton, from their patriarchal roots. The author portrays Linton as possessing physical features resembling those of his mother and his uncle, rather than those of Heathcliff. The boy's bodily attributes signify the cultural degeneration that flows through his veins, metaphorically. For example, after Nelly delivers the lad to his father at the Heights, Heathcliff, while dragging him between his knees, lifts up his face and stares at him. Heathcliff says, "Thou art thy mother's child, entirely! Where is *my* share in thee, puling chicken" (184). Even though Linton is Heathcliff's biological son, Brontë presents him as an overly indulged, "effeminate" weakling, whose physical features mark him as member of the decadent ruling classes. In fact, his features recall those of Georgiana Reed, in *Jane Eyre*, because, like her, he matches the Victorian ideal of physical beauty. When Heathcliff removes Linton's cap and pushes back his "thick

flaxen curls,” the child raises his “great blue eyes” and gazes at his father. Staring down on Linton, who reminds him of Isabella, Heathcliff calls her a “wicked slut.” When Linton blushes, Heathcliff remarks, “Now don’t wince, and color up! Though it is something to see you have not white blood—be a good lad; and I’ll do for you” (185).

We know, of course, that Linton, from the perspective of race and culture, is entirely his mother’s son, as Heathcliff says, and that he does, in fact, possess the metaphorical “white blood” that is suggested by his light hair, fair skin, and blue eyes. In contrast to Heathcliff’s dark skin, Linton has the prominent traits of his mother’s family—“fair skin and small features and yellow curling hair” (170). The Linton family’s physical attributes point to the assumption of the gentry that what flows in their veins is superior to that of foreign Others, because, supposedly, it is pure Anglo-Saxon blood. When, early in the novel, Heathcliff, who is jealous of Catherine’s affection for Edgar, complained to Nelly, he spoke of his rival’s “light hair” and “fair skin.” He wished that he had Edgar’s “great blue eyes,” and his “even forehead,” so that he might become wealthy someday. As I mentioned earlier, Nelly said that, even if Heathcliff were a “regular black” that a good heart is the most important quality a person can possess (67). In Brontë’s ideology, the somatic attributes of the characters provide a much surer measure of their race than their blood kinship does, as suggested, even further, by Catherine’s physical features. Earlier, she tells Nelly that she is not jealous of Isabella’s “yellow hair” and the “whiteness of her skin,” so we know that Catherine has dark features (100). Regardless of whether or not she is Heathcliff’s biological

sister, the fact that she has dark features aligns her with him, racially. We can see, then, that Heathcliff's remark about his son's white blood stares back, with vindictive sarcasm, at the culturally constructed fiction of the purity of Anglo-Saxon blood.<sup>27</sup> Linton represents the threat of the continued infection of English civilization with race, class, and gender hierarchies, no less artificial than the so-called pure blood of the propertied classes.

Later, the author implies Heathcliff's power to annihilate the threat that Linton poses through her portrayal of Hareton. As a rival for Cathy's affection, he rises up against Linton, his gentility: "If thou wern't more a lass than a lad, I'd fell thee this minute," Hareton says (195). By switching, from male to female, Linton's gender characteristics, Brontë suggests that the sick, moody child is powerless to respond to Cathy in a normative sense, particularly her sexuality. He cannot respond to her entreaties that he play outdoors, that he *do* something besides read. He is helpless to free the repression of her female sexuality and vitality, discussed below, just as Edgar is powerless to respond fully to Catherine's, her mother's, needs. While Cathy is enthralled, at first, as her mother was, by the power and status of English gentility, what Brontë portrays as her natural sexuality draws her to Hareton, so that, in time, she comes to experience the author's conception of the primitive vitality that Catherine had known as a child but gave away. That element of the narrative recalls Jane Eyre, too, because she finds Rochester alluring, not only spiritually but also physically. She is driven to marry him, at least in part, by her natural sexual impulses.

While Heathcliff, in his revenge, appears avaricious, what is most important

to him is not the wealth that he acquires but the gratification that he derives from turning against his enemies the power of oppressive ideologies that thwart what this novel represents as human instincts. For example, his revenge involves a plan, through the marriage of Linton and Cathy, to get possession of the Grange. Even though Edgar has ordered Cathy not to visit the Heights, and Nelly keeps a watchful eye on her, she often sneaks away by night on her pony, named Minny, to see Linton. Following one of Cathy's nocturnal flights, Nelly, while snooping around, discovers her returning to the Grange. After getting caught, the young lady describes her adventures to the housekeeper, who puts a stop to them by informing Edgar of his daughter's disobedience. During Cathy's excursions, not only here but also later, Nelly behaves as a kind of spy who thwarts the natural impulses of her young charge. Since Edgar does not want Cathy to know anything about his involvement with Heathcliff, whom he blames for Catherine's death, he informs the housekeeper that his daughter should have no further association with either Linton or Heathcliff. But that imperative, based primarily upon Edgar's hatred of his rival, denies his daughter's natural curiosity about males. Even though Edgar's health is visibly declining, Cathy is hesitant to admit that he is dying. She loves "papa," as she affectionately calls him, and cannot deal with the thought of his death. On the other hand, she is seventeen years old and is drawn to the Heights by her sexual attraction to the men who live there. The result is a conflict that Heathcliff's violence eventually resolves, as he ruthlessly pulls apart the mask of genteel civility that Edgar represents, the same front that the gypsy gentleman adopts, ironically, as a means of demolishing established traditions on the moors.

Edgar's injunction against Cathy visiting the Heights prompts Linton to write letters to him, with the hope of getting his permission to meet with his cousin. Heathcliff always reads the letters to make sure that the contents emphasize Linton's separation from his cousin rather than his own sufferings (224). After Linton's correspondence and Cathy's entreaties, Edgar finally allows them to meet. Unaware of his nephew's feeble condition, Edgar consents to their meeting, especially as he is worried about his daughter's fortune and hopes that she will marry Linton one day. Heathcliff takes advantage of this situation by terrorizing Linton, using him as bait to lure Cathy to the Heights. When Nelly and Cathy meet with Linton on the heath, he looks more debilitated than ever. Heathcliff has forced him into a scheme to imprison Cathy, to compel her to marry his son. The deception works because Nelly, even though she dislikes Linton's selfish, manipulative behavior, is worried about his health. So Heathcliff promises to send for a doctor if the two women will accompany Linton from the heath to the Heights. When they arrive, Cathy helps the invalid to a chair, and Nelly, accepting Heathcliff's hospitality, sits down at the table for tea. He locks the door at once and keeps the key so that the two women cannot leave. Now a sadistic impulse rises up within Heathcliff. He tells Cathy to sit down next to Linton. With biting derision, he remarks that Linton, the only gift he can offer her, is "hardly worth accepting." Then, with the couple seated next to one another, Heathcliff berates both:

"How she does stare."

"It's odd what a savage feeling I have to anything that seems afraid of me! Had I been born where laws are less strict,



and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of those two, as an evening's amusement . . . By hell! I hate them."

"I'm not afraid of you!" exclaimed Catherine, who could not hear the latter part of his speech.

She stepped close up; her black eyes flashing with passion and resolution.

"Give me that key—I will have it!" She said. "I wouldn't eat or drink here, if I were starving."

Heathcliff had the key in his hand that remained on the table. He looked up, seized with surprise at her boldness, or, possibly, reminded by her voice and glance, of the person from whom she inherited it (232).

When Cathy grabs the knife from Heathcliff's hand, her action "recalls[s] him to the present." At that point, he recovers the weapon and threatens to knock her down. But Cathy, still furious, wrenches the knife from his hand: "We *will* go!" she repeated, exerting her utmost efforts to cause the iron muscles to relax; and finding that her nails made no impression, she applied her teeth pretty sharply." With a glance at Nelly, Heathcliff cautions her not to interfere. He then releases the knife, pulls Cathy over his knee, and administers a "shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the head, each sufficient to have fulfilled his threat, had she been able to fall." At that point, Nelly rushes toward him. But he stops her, easily, by touching her on the chest. The housekeeper says, "I staggered dizzily back, and felt ready to suffocate, or to burst a blood-vessel."

In this scene, Cathy stares at Heathcliff because she recognizes, for the first time, his savage instincts, as they surface from beneath his genteel exterior. Of course, we are repulsed by the viciousness of this harrowing event. But Heathcliff's revenge works, paradoxically, to free Cathy from her true jailers, Nelly and Edgar. The incident parallels the violence of the earlier scene in which Heathcliff, after returning to the moors, visited Catherine at the Grange. In that event, she pushed Nelly away and locked the door to prevent Edgar from leaving in order to get help from the servants. His command that Heathcliff must leave incited a physical confrontation. Defiant in her resolve that the two men fight fairly, Catherine said, "No, I'll swallow the key before you shall get it" (113). Edgar then tried to wrest the key from her, but she threw it in the fire. Here Cathy's retaliation, her willful disobedience, reminds Heathcliff of Catherine so much that he is caught up, momentarily, in the past, "reminded by the voice and glance of the person from whom she inherited it." In that sense, the spirit of the mother is revived in her daughter. The viciousness of Cathy's assault, applying her teeth "pretty sharply" to his flesh, in fact, shows that Catherine's primitive vitality has been reborn in Cathy. The difference in the two incidents, however, is that Catherine's instincts, in the earlier scene, remained pent up, symbolically caged. After the fight, she locked herself in her room, keeping the door barred for three days, before allowing Nelly to enter, to watch over her. Although afterward, she dies in childbirth, the fight between Heathcliff and Edgar is what instigated her demise (151). On the other hand, Heathcliff, in this scene, undoes the repression of female instincts. Within the sadomasochistic complexities of Brontë's ideological universe, he frees Cathy,

ironically, by locking her inside the house, forcing her instincts to the surface, into the light of day, alongside his own.

Even further, when Heathcliff pushes Nelly away, he steps between the young woman and her metaphoric jailer. He prevents the sort of prying interference that has kept Cathy at the Grange, torn between her devotion to her father, based partly on filial obligations, and her inborn drives. The paradoxical aspect of this scene is evident, afterwards, when she asks Heathcliff why he is forcing her to do something, marry Linton, that she is already willingly to do (235).<sup>28</sup> From this question, it is clear that Heathcliff does not care as much about taking possession of the Grange—the will guarantees he will receive that anyhow, since Edgar has no male heir (190)-- as he cares about unleashing his own savage impulses. Through behavior that gives back in kind the violent ideologies of his ancient antagonists, he recreates himself, as in Fanon's portrayal of the natives who rebel against their colonial oppressors. Even though Nelly says that the marriage, a traditional Christian rite, is illegal "without benefit of clergy," that does not stop Cathy from accepting Heathcliff's diabolical bargain. He promises to release her the next day if she promises to marry Linton (235). Afterward, Heathcliff tells Cathy, "You cannot deny that you entered my house on your own accord, in contempt of his [Edgar's] injunction to the contrary. And it is quite natural that you should desire amusement at your age; and that you are weary of nursing a sick man, and that man *only* your father" (236). In other words, Heathcliff forces the marriage on Cathy so that she will accept truths that her father and Nelly, guardian of civic virtue and paternal wisdom, attempted to shelter her from at the Grange. The central truth is that

Edgar's powers, not only his physical health but also his ancient authority, are rapidly declining, as he looks forward to a reunion with Catherine in the grave. By omitting the actual wedding ceremony, the author draws on the imaginative darkness, as we have seen before, to amplify Heathcliff's power to transgress ancient customs. By forcing the marriage, he also reveals the morally empty values, what Leslie J. Moran calls "vestigial shadows haunting the social order," that perpetuate the legal system (Botting 2). Even though Cathy, now Mrs. Heathcliff, runs home to her dying father afterward, her only passage out is through the window of Catherine's chamber, where she crawls down by means of a fir tree (236). That act shows her spiritual kinship with her mother. It also implies her affinity with the nature that Heathcliff, through his wolfish ferocity, bequeaths to her.

The urge to recreate himself, to throw off the yoke of English civility and recover Catherine's vitality, explains Heathcliff's remark that if he were born in a land where "laws were less strict and tastes less dainty, [he] would treat [him]self to a slow vivisection of those two." As part of his revenge, he turns the legal system against Edgar, as he turned it against Hindley. He does so, primarily, by allowing rumor to run its natural course. After Heathcliff has had Nelly locked up for five days and four nights, Zillah, the housekeeper at the Heights, arrives from town. She tells Nelly that the townsfolk in Gimmerton believed that she and Cathy had drowned in Blackhorse marsh. Zillah explains that Heathcliff told her that the two females had been found, and that he lodged them at the Heights, so that they could recuperate, apparently. Zillah says, "What, you must have got on an island

sure? And how long were you in the hole? Did master save you, Mrs. Dean?"

When Nelly accuses Heathcliff of raising a false tale, Zillah disagrees with her. She tells Nelly what Heathcliff said earlier, before he released the housekeeper, about the rumor: "If they have been in the marsh, they are out now, Zillah. . . . You can tell her to flit, when you go up. Here is the key. The bog water got into her head, and she would have run home, quite flighty, but I fixed her till she came round to her senses." Since Nelly, the inside narrator of the double frame structure of this novel, is the primary gossip and tattle-tale within it, Heathcliff certainly does fix her. He reverses her own method of orally transmitted story telling, ironically, to subvert the laws that reinforce Edgar's power.

We can see how that reversal works, afterward, when Nelly explains what happened while Heathcliff was keeping her locked up. During that time, as Edgar is concerned about Cathy's fortune, he wants to alter the will, to put it in the hands of trustees. So he sends for a lawyer, Mr. Green. But the attorney is not available. He delays in responding to Edgar's summons because "he had sold himself to Mr. Heathcliff," as Nelly says. Heathcliff had already gone to court and, after speaking with Dr. Kenneth, who told him that Edgar was dying, must have secured Green's services (240). Brontë omits the conference between Heathcliff and the lawyer because, once again, she wants to imaginatively enlarge Heathcliff's fiendish powers. Despite Nelly's threat to expose Heathcliff's scheme to legal authorities, he disproves her assertion that there is "law in the land" by showing the ambiguity at its center, as we have seen before. When Edgar tries to use the will, a legal instrument, as a means of protecting his daughter, Mr. Green, by following the law,

now on Heathcliff's side, prevents that from happening. Since the Grange is now in Heathcliff's possession, Edgar cannot alter the will.

This incident reveals the fictive aspect of the law and the corruption that dwells within it. As we see here, the law constructs paternity as a legal fiction, based on putatively pure bloodlines and on property privileges. But it elides the affective nature and actual conditions of the parent/child relationship. Whenever it is expedient, the law, represented here by Mr. Green, can be manipulated to serve the interests of the most powerful litigant. Even further, since Heathcliff does not want Edgar buried beside Catherine, in the churchyard, the lawyer would have ordered that he be buried in the Chapel with his family. But the will disallows that action too (243). This situation presents a kind of wash, in which the legal system, marked by competing loyalties, giving itself to whatever party is in power, cancels out any moral substance it claims to have. Through the specter of ambiguity that the law presents, Heathcliff wrenches it, violently, from the foundation of morality that it supposedly rests upon. The rumors circulating about Nelly and Cathy getting lost in Blackhorse Marsh provide a margin of time and opportunity for Heathcliff to exploit that legal ambiguity. In Brontë's view, then, orally transmitted tales and folk legends have a power that is superior to what is inculcated by civilization through its academic and religious institutions. Even though the law already insured that he would receive Edgar's property, Heathcliff exposes the vacuity of the legal establishment by appropriating its insidious instruments to his own use. So, through intentional neglect, by refusing to get medical assistance for Linton, poisoning him perhaps, Heathcliff brings about the death of his own son, whom he

despises.<sup>29</sup> After wresting the Heights from Hindley, he also appropriates the Grange, so that he accomplishes his goal of revenge, cutting another rotted branch from the ideology of civilization on the moors.

Besides the violence that disturbs class ranks and male privilege, Heathcliff also reveals his sadistic impulses as he attempts to reunite with Catherine, to free her from the bondage of repressed female sexuality that she experienced at the Grange. The author builds a symbolic sexual tension between the masculine Heights, where the appropriately named Penistone Crag is located, and the Grange, gendered in the novel as female. At the Grange, Catherine, Isabella, and Cathy each suffers from repression of her natural instincts. Edgar's civility, signified by his library, where he retreats during Catherine's agonizing illness, contributes to that repression, as does Nelly's watchful guardianship over the females who reside there. Brontë establishes the symbolic sexual dynamic between the two families, their dwellings, their properties, their economics of survival, through travel. She brings characters from one place across the geographic borders of the other so that those figures enter into, and become a part of, another realm, foreign to their experience. The trope of travel looks back, of course, to the transgression of Old Earnshaw's trip to Liverpool, the potentially bountiful, culturally fertilizing, effects of that journey.<sup>30</sup>

The symbolic sexual tension erupts most violently when Heathcliff, before taking possession of the Grange, elopes with Isabella. In that incident, the author presents Heathcliff's physical cruelty, though certainly repugnant, as a mechanism for overturning the myth of romantic love upon which Western civilization is

based. Shortly after he returns to the moors from his unknown travels, Isabella, “a charming young lady of eighteen, infantile in manners, though possessed of keen wit,” displays a “sudden and irresistible attraction to him.” Edgar fears the alliance of his sister with a “nameless man, and the possible fact that his property, in default of heirs male, might pass into such a one’s power” (102). Edgar wrongly blames Heathcliff for starting the affair with Isabella. He simply takes advantage of her infatuation. One day at the Grange, she becomes irritable as “she fret[s] and pine[s] over something,” accusing family members of neglecting her needs, while constantly teasing Catherine. Fearing the girl might be ill, the family suggests that the doctor, Kenneth, should be summoned, but Isabella dismisses the idea, blaming her unhappiness on Catherine’s harsh treatment of her. The result is a dispute in which the two females argue about the capacity of Heathcliff to love another human being. Isabella claims that Catherine is jealous, playing “dog in the manger” with Heathcliff’s affections. She asserts, “I love him more than ever you loved Edgar, and he might love me, if you would let him!” This argument highlights Heathcliff’s dissociation from European concepts of romantic love: it shears his character from idealized notions of romance found in Western literature, so that only the “eternal rocks,” in Brontë’s representation male and female vitality, remain. Catherine answers Isabella’s naïve protests by saying that the girl should not be deceived by Heathcliff’s masculine exterior:

“I wouldn’t be you for a kingdom, then!” Catherine declared empathetically—and she seemed to speak sincerely. “Nelly, help me to convince her of her madness. Tell her what Heathcliff



is—an unreclaimed creature, without refinement—without cultivation; and arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! It is deplorable ignorance of his character, child, and nothing else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray, don't imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence and affection beneath a stern exterior! He's not a rough diamond—a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic; he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man. I never say to him let this or that enemy alone, because it would be ungenerous or cruel to harm them—I say let them alone because I should hate them to be wronged: and he'd crush you like a sparrow egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge. I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet, he's capable of marrying your fortune and expectations" (103-104).

Here we can see how the dual aspects of Heathcliff's character work to break down the concept of gender that Isabella's expectations are founded on. In frank and forceful language that reminds us of Heathcliff, the energy of his statements, stripped of sentimentality, Catherine tries to caution her sister-in-law about the ferocious vitality that lies beneath his civilized front. Catherine warns Isabella not to be fooled by the romantic stereotype found in Heathcliff's rough exterior, that she should have no false hopes based on literary formulations of the Byronic hero or the noble savage, because his passion makes no room for

“benevolence and affection.”<sup>31</sup> His desire for revenge drives his avarice, she asserts, so that he can overcome his enemies. And Isabella, as Catherine tries to point out, is one of them. The phrase “unreclaimed creature,” meaning non-Christian, uncivilized, points, too, to that fact Heathcliff’s love is more demonic than human, that it is beyond death, outside Western “discursivity,” as Trumpener says of the gypsies. The manner in which Heathcliff, shortly afterward, secretly steals away with his bride by night, the rumors that spread abroad in Gimmerton, and his deception of Edgar, the foiled guardian figure, are features of the plot that dramatize the conventions of romance found in Western tales of adventure. The author plays off of the reader’s familiarity with European novels, French romances in particular, by setting up a pattern of conventional romance but breaking it down with Heathcliff’s undisguised cruelty. His torture of Isabella’s spaniel, Fanny, at the time of the couple’s elopement, by hanging it on the fence with a handkerchief, for example, disrupts the romance plot pattern because the incident reveals a sadistic impulse within the marriage, a psychic feature that challenges Western concepts of romantic love (124). The rumors that circulate in town suggest, too, how Heathcliff represents a force of nature more powerful than European ideology. We can see, then, how Heathcliff’s violence breaks apart the ground of English tradition so that new values can be transplanted to the moors from the ambivalent darkness of empire.

In another novel of the mid-Victorian period, *Great Expectations* (1860-61), Charles Dickens portrays a similar sort of sadistic impulse, underlying the concept of romantic love, that we find in *Wuthering Heights*. Dickens presents the Pocket

family in complete disarray, turned upside down, because Mrs. Pocket has aristocratic pretensions, claiming that she is the “only daughter of a certain quite accidental deceased knight” (Dickens 205). Mrs. Pocket’s assumption of gentility, like that of her son, Herbert, and also that of Pip, the novel’s central figure, means that she is exempt from all physical exertion, even what is required for nurturing her own children. While Dickens presents the domestic chaos of the Pocket family humorously, Mrs. Pocket’s neglect of her children, leaving them in danger, reminds us of Hindley’s drunken carelessness, as he holds Hareton over the banister. In *Great Expectations*, the tragic consequence of aspiration to upper-class gentility, signified by the pocket handkerchiefs that Herbert and Pip sport, contributes nothing to the well-being of the nation. Dickens’s point resembles Brontë’s: gentility drains the life-blood of English citizens by giving entitlements to a social class who live, like parasites, off of their inheritances and off of the hard work of less fortunate people. In Dickens’s novel, what puts Pip and Herbert right is the recognition of their uselessness, the waste of their talents and energies on “self-swindling,” on pretended accomplishments—the refinements of social manners and formal education such as those possessed by Hindley, Frances, and the Lintons. Self-knowledge comes home to Pip, in particular, when the convict, Magwitch, who anonymously provided his great expectations, returns to England from New South Wales, where he had been exiled, serving his prison sentence. Although Magwitch is an Englishman, not a racial outsider, and he returns to England from a British penal colony, Dickens uses the imaginative darkness of an unknown frontier as a means of importing knowledge about the artifice of class ranks, in this case, to

the center of empire.

After Magwitch's return, Pip learns that his genteel pretense has been paid for by the labors of a criminal, that the money sustaining his ambition originates in the violence of criminal activity, Compeyson's forgery schemes, involving Magwitch. Pip learns, too, from the cruel teachings of Miss Havisham, from his desire for Estella, that romantic love has a dark, irrational underside, the narcissistic impulse to inflict pain on others and on one's self. Pip learns this hard truth through his continuing pursuit of Estella, who breaks his heart by choosing a sadistic gentleman, Bentley Drummle, for her spouse. His brutality strips the mask from romantic love associated with class rank. Pip's guardian, the lawyer, Mr. Jaggers, is also complicit in the gentlemanly pretenses which conceal the truth about the criminal source of Pip's money, as well as the sadomasochistic features of romantic love. Shortly after Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, in whose humble home Pip was raised, visits him in London, the young man returns to his hometown. While there, he goes to Miss Havisham's decaying mansion and is surprised to see Jaggers, who pushes the old lady around the room in her chair. Observing him, Pip says, "He always carried . . . a pocket handkerchief of rich silk and imposing proportions which was of great value to him in his profession. I have seen him so terrify a client or a witness by ceremoniously unfolding his pocket-handkerchief." Then Pip explains that while Jaggers pushes Miss Havisham's chair with one hand, he "put the other in his trouser's pocket as if the pocket were full of secrets" (260-261).

One secret that Pip learns is the truth about Jaggers's housekeeper, Molly, "a wild beast tamed." Herbert relates to Pip the tale of murder associated with

Jaggers's defense of a tramp, a case which Jaggers worked himself at the police office. Other than the revelation of Molly's preternatural ferocity—she killed another woman, “much larger, and very much stronger than herself”—Pip also learns that the handsome Molly had some “gypsy blood in her,” and that she destroyed her own child in revenge against the man she married (422). In Herbert's narrative, Dickens portrays Molly as a racial Other in order to accentuate the violence behind Jaggers's sophistry, the viciousness with which he polices his genteel grounds. His name, with its connotation of an animal's jagged fangs, implies as much. The pocket handkerchief that he handles so deftly disguises his ruthlessness. The feature of romantic love that the lawyer's defense of Molly conceals is its sadomasochistic underbelly. Heathcliff's marriage to Isabella, particularly the incident of the hanging dog, brings that feature to light. The handkerchief symbolizes the genteel values, the myth of romantic love in this case, that exert a suffocating hold on everything natural, as represented by the dog, Fanny.<sup>32</sup> Heathcliff turns those values against all those, like Isabella, who perpetuate them. This incident gathers intensity from the spying incident at the Grange in which the children, Isabella and Edgar, fought over a small dog and almost pulled it apart.

Near the end of *Great Expectations*, after Herbert marries his beloved, Clara, he and Pip, having given up their ambitions, are employed by Clarriker's shipping firm with offices in Cairo. Similar to Brontë's representation of empire, Dickens's novel implies that cross-cultural encounters have the potential to revitalize English civilization by bringing a “contrapuntal” perspective, as Edward

Said calls it, to English civilization.<sup>33</sup> Both novelists use the pocket handkerchief as a symbol of the power of the gentry to throttle human potentials. Heathcliff ironically reverses that power, turning it against his oppressors. The hanging dog incident generates an uncertainty, as Bhabha says, in the image of authority. We respond ambivalently to Heathcliff because, in the context of the Western myth of romantic love, represented by his elopement with Isabella, the violence appears both cruel and gratuitous, yet it also gratifies Heathcliff's natural desire for revenge. As Sartre suggests, he "re-creat[es]" himself in the act of violence. His torturing of the dog, though repugnant, justly repays, in his mind, the bite that Linton's dog, Skulker, gave Catherine, infecting her, symbolically, with the decadence of the gentry. Nelly, of course, discovers the animal, almost dead, and unties it. Her action implies her complicity with the gentry in sustaining the power of established traditions that repress female sexuality through the assumption of race, class, and gender differences.

### III. Heathcliff's Violence Regenerates Civilization

When Isabella tells Nelly about her frantic escape from the Heights, she describes the terror that she experienced living there as Heathcliff's wife. After she accused him of brutality toward Catherine, he threw a knife at her, cutting her ear: "It stuck beneath my ear," Isabella says, "and stopped the sentence I was uttering." In retaliation, she hurls the knife at Heathcliff, runs out of the house, and, in her desperation, almost knocks down Hareton, who is "hanging a litter of puppies from the chair-back in the doorway" (165).<sup>34</sup> When Isabella, laughing hysterically, gets

back to the Grange, she kisses Nelly, kisses the portraits of Edgar and Catherine, then discovers Fanny, “who yelped wild with joy at recovering her mistress.”

While, once again, we are repulsed by Heathcliff’s brutality, Isabella’s experience brings to light the sadomasochistic impulses beneath romantic love, savagery that Catherine had warned her about. Apparently, Isabella did not believe her sister-in-law’s portrayal of him as a “pitiless, wolfish man.” Although we are repulsed by Hareton’s violence, no less than Heathcliff’s, the parallel between his cruel act, hanging a litter of puppies from the chair, and Heathcliff’s torturing of Isabella’s small dog, implies a shift of power from one generation to the next. Through acts of violence, such as the hanging dog incidents, the gypsy gentleman symbolically transfers his values from the imaginative darkness on the outside of the family to the younger generation. The transplantation of values was well underway when Lockwood, the misanthropic voyeur, began his narrative in the opening chapter. Upon arriving at the Heights, he was threatened by dogs, “a ruffianly bitch” and two sheep dogs with fangs, before being knocked down by whole group of “four-footed fiends,” as he called them (28). The fact that Hareton’s dogs instinctively dislike Lockwood helps us to see how his values, those of modern civilization, are opposed to Heathcliff’s. That early incident, along with Hareton’s violence here, implies Heathcliff’s passing of the legacy of self-survival, preservation of natural instincts, spontaneity, openness, and affection from himself to his cultural son. Although Heathcliff does manipulate and torture his enemies, he is open in the sense that he never conceals his motives from Nelly, whom he regards, from their childhood together, with affection. Even when he schemes for Cathy to marry

Linton, he tells the housekeeper beforehand, “as honest[ly] as possible,” what his intentions are (190).

Isabella’s harrowing experience shows Heathcliff’s power to sever unwholesome ideologies from their sources, while bequeathing his values to Hareton. After getting back to the Grange, Isabella cleaves to her family, their genteel values, as shown in her kissing of Edgar’s and Catherine’s portraits, in Fanny’s welcome home, and in her running to the housekeeper for emotional support. While Isabella tells Nelly of the terror that she experienced at the Heights, especially unbearable after living, petted and indulged, at the Grange, the cultural insularity given her by her family does her no good. She retreats into obscurity and, during that time, gives birth to Heathcliff’s son. Nelly says that she died, “Fortunately,” before Heathcliff could take the child (166). In other words, Brontë presents Isabella’s unhappy experience as a contrast between the refined civility of the feminine Grange and the savage brutality of the masculine Heights. Those contrasting images show how Heathcliff’s violence works, simultaneously, to sever from the gentry, on the one hand, the pernicious ideology of romantic love that Isabella represents, while regenerating, on the other, the cultural power that Hareton embodies.

Let us shift back in the narrative now to the time not long after Heathcliff returned to the moors from his unknown journey. By considering the analogy between Catherine and Cathy, we can see how Heathcliff passes his values from one generation to the next. By marrying Edgar, Catherine gave up her vitality, “half savage, hardy, and free,” a betrayal of her natural self, innocence divorced from



knowledge of cultural categories. When Heathcliff came back, however, she wanted to reunite with him, to recapture that vitality. Thus, when Edgar demanded that Catherine choose between himself and Heathcliff, denying him visitation rights at the Grange, Catherine found that choice impossible. Edgar's demand precipitated her illness, marked by the fragmentation of her identity. That dissolution took place while she was confined in her room. There, while dreaming that she is home at the Heights, she looks into the black press but is unable to recognize her own face in what is actually a mirror (199-120). Nelly behaves as a willing conspirator, so to speak, as she helps Edgar by keeping in her possession the keys to Catherine's room, symbolically, the established traditions that keep female sexuality locked up, repressed. In the bedroom incident, as Catherine pulls feathers out of the pillow that she has torn with her teeth, placing each piece of down on the bed, she recalls her journey with Heathcliff to Penistone Crag, located in the shadow of the Heights. There, after seeing a bird's nest full of dead babies, little skeletons, she made him promise not to shoot any more lapwings.<sup>35</sup> While Nelly, not in Catherine's dream but in actuality, gathers feathers strewn about the room, Catherine, still delirious, says,

“I see you, Nelly, . . . an aged woman—you have grey hair, and bent shoulders. This bed is the fairy cave under Penistone Crag, and you are gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers; pretending, while I am near, that they are only locks of wool. . . . I'm not wandering, you're mistaken, or else I should believe you really *were* that withered hag, and I should think I *was* under

Penistone Crag, and I'm conscious it's night, and there are two  
candles on the table making the black press shine like jet" (119).

Catherine's feverish dream is an honest indictment of Nelly's influence. While the housekeeper is gathering down feathers, Catherine's comparison of her with a haggard witch implies that, while her intentions may be good, her desire to protect females—"heifers" in her vision--harms them psychologically.<sup>36</sup> She damages them by denying the truth about male sexuality, represented by Penistone Crag, assuming that it is something forbidden and dangerous, something other than the natural cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that Heathcliff himself embodies. The Crag, home of baby birds that have died from starvation, represent breeding grounds, the space of cross-cultural procreation that Heathcliff's violence nourishes, potentially. In Brontë's symbolic imagery, the birds, similar to Catherine living at the Grange, have been deprived of the sustenance necessary for survival. The starving birds are analogous to her identity, shattered by her separation from Heathcliff, Edgar's civilizing influence, and Nelly's domesticity. In other words, the house-keeper, though she means well, and her behavior looks protective, like "locks of wool," actually aggravates Catherine's morbid condition. As Nelly and Edgar strive to keep her away from Heathcliff, their behavior, as it goes against her inborn instincts, drives her to a traumatic breakdown from which she eventually dies. In fact, Catherine's delusion suggests what the repression of natural instincts can do to females over time. It can transform them, metaphorically, into withered hags, as the house-keeper is portrayed in the vision. In the dream, she embodies what females become if they are sheltered, distanced from Penistone Crag and the

fairy cave. Symbolically, that is where human sexuality develops according to nature, without the interference of culture, without inventions of storytellers like Nelly and Lockwood, whose views of nature and human nature are tainted by ideology, as the author presents it. Lockwood's name, in fact, implies the ideological beliefs that enclose female sexuality within Western narratives of romantic love and Christian myth. When Catherine is dying, she cannot comprehend Edgar's behavior, in such a crisis, as he retreats to his library and reads books. His library must house texts, literary, legal, and religious, that perpetuate myths of Western superiority, the sort of sacred knowledge that, ironically, gives him cultural power but strips him of the ability to identify with Heathcliff, to understand his wife's passion for him, thus bringing about her illness in the first place (118, 123). His library, obviously, does not include the Romantic literature that prefigure Brontë's preferred ideology of nature, sexuality, and femininity.

In another incident, linked with Catherine's dream through symbolic imagery, we can see the conflicted, subjective role that Nelly plays as she relates Heathcliff's history to Lockwood. That event takes place on Cathy's birthday, when she is sixteen years old, before her marriage to Linton. There is no celebration, however, because March twentieth is also the anniversary of her mother's, Catherine's, death, three years before. So, for amusement, Cathy decides to explore the moors, to look for birds' nests. Nelly goes along to protect her, presumably, from any dangers that she might encounter. Caught up in the act of looking for birds' eggs, the young lady strays too far from the housekeeper, however, and wanders onto the Heights, now Heathcliff's property. From a

distance, Nelly sees two men, who turn out to be Heathcliff and Hareton, accosting her. The former accuses her of plundering, but she explains that she had no intention of stealing eggs. In a brief exchange, Heathcliff's surly attitude toward her father, whom he pretends, at first, not to know, arouses her curiosity. She also asks if the other person, Hareton, who is standing apart, shyly, from the group, is his son. Heathcliff says that he is not but that he does have a son, Linton, whom she has met before. In this incident, Cathy does not recognize Hareton from her outing with him, two years before, to Penistone Crag. Physically, Hareton has changed, having grown stronger and heavier, since their excursion. During the earlier trip, Nelly explained, "He opened the mysteries of the Fairy cave, and twenty other queer places [to Cathy], but being in disgrace, I was not favored with a description of the interesting objects she saw" (172). While Cathy does not recall having met Linton either, Heathcliff invites her to the Heights in order to rest. Nelly warns her against going there, urging her to return to the Grange. Cathy insists, however, on going ahead. She walks with Hareton, while Heathcliff accompanies Nelly. During their walk, Nelly resists Heathcliff and questions his motives. He openly admits his purpose, however, for Cathy and Linton to marry (190). Even though Edgar has done his best to keep his daughter from knowing anything about Heathcliff, she enjoys her visit to the Heights, while spending time with both of her cousins, Hareton and Linton.

During the visit, Hareton shows that he is completely unschooled. He has no social graces, cannot read, and speaks with a distinct Yorkshire dialect. His lack of gentility stands in sharp contrast to Linton, the refinements of his education.

Although lethargic, unwilling, at first, to go outside with Cathy and Hareton, he is well read and articulate. So, in order to impress the young lady, Linton ridicules his rival, calling him a “colossal dunce” (198). On their trip back to the Grange, Cathy blames Nelly for siding with her father, for keeping her away from Linton and her uncle, Heathcliff, for so long. When she asks Edgar about his decision, he explains that he kept her away for her own good, since Heathcliff is a “diabolical man,” who delights in destroying his enemies (196). Edgar also insists that she not return to the Heights. Although Cathy asks for permission to send a note to Linton, her request is denied. Both Edgar and the housekeeper do all they can to prevent her from having any further contact with him or with Heathcliff.

This situation leads to a subterfuge on Cathy’s part. She sends notes to Linton secretly, via the milk-fetcher, and he responds with love letters. From observing Cathy’s suspicious behavior, however, Nelly deduces that she keeps her letters locked up in a drawer in a cabinet in the library. After unlocking it and reading some of them, she feels that they are childish. Nelly finds the letters curious, however, as they have “touches . . . borrowed from a more experienced source.” Even further, the letters contain “singularly odd compounds of ardour and flatness.” Afterwards, she ties the notes in a handkerchief and locks the empty drawer. Then the housekeeper intercepts one of Cathy’s letters, intended for Linton. She finds that it is “more simple, and more eloquent than her cousin’s.” Later, Cathy goes to the secret drawer. Upon discovering that Linton’s letters are missing, she is stricken with anxiety:

Never did any bird flying back to a plundered nest which

it had left brim-full of chirping young ones, express more complete despair in its anguished cries and flutterings, than by her single “Oh!” and the change that transfigured her late happy countenance. Mr. Linton looked up. “What’s the matter, love? Have you hurt yourself?” he said. His tone and look assured he had not been the discoverer of the hoard. “No, papa--” she gasped. “Ellen! Ellen! come upstairs—I’m sick!” (199).

Following her discovery, Cathy pleads with Nelly not to tell Edgar about her secret correspondence and promises to end it. After the house-keeper admonishes the young lady, referring to her letters as a “fine bundle of trash, good enough to be printed,” a frantic dialogue ensues. When Cathy states that she loves Linton, the housekeeper ridicules her notion of love. As Cathy tries to grab the letters, Nelly holds them over her head. She also reprimands the young lady for sending books, not just “playthings” to Linton. Taking offense at Nelly’s insinuation that her affair is childish, Cathy protests that it is not. Still under the threat of Nelly telling Edgar about her subterfuge, however, she promises to end all correspondence with Linton and consents to having his letters burned. When the housekeeper opens the handkerchief and uses the poker to make room for them in the fireplace, however, Cathy begs that she be allowed to keep one or two of the notes. Ignoring her, Nelly drops the letters into the fire. As flames consume them, Cathy calls her a “cruel wretch.” With a sudden impulse, the girl sticks her hand in the fire and pulls out a letter. After Nelly threatens to show Edgar some fragments

of the note, Cathy relents. She reluctantly agrees to the destruction of all of the letters and, “with a sense of intense injury, retire[s] to her private apartment.”

From the coincidence of the anniversary of Catherine’s death and Cathy’s birthday arriving in spring, on the same date, as well as the imagery of birds’ eggs, present in both Catherine’s dream and Cathy’s adventure, we know that her outing, as she crosses beyond the feminine-gendered Grange to the masculine-gendered Heights, clearly symbolizes sexual awakening and rebirth. In other words, even though Heathcliff could not free Catherine from the socioeconomic, religious, and political forces of repression that destroyed her, his vengeful acts work, ironically, to free Cathy from the repression that her mother experienced. Here, again, Brontë portrays Heathcliff so that his apparently contradictory actions fertilize the ground of established values with fresh vitality. Despite that fact that his motive for inviting Cathy to the Heights is to maneuver her into a marriage with Linton, her curiosity about males, not only Hareton and Linton, but also Heathcliff himself, show that she is leaving Edgar and his values behind, instinctively following Heathcliff. Nelly’s role as preserver of female virtue is misguided, too. Since she treats Cathy as a child, resisting her contact with males, denying the sexual side of her nature, even though she is sixteen years old, her efforts to protect the young lady from her own instincts is wrongheaded. The secret correspondence that Cathy carries on with Linton threatens her father’s power because it involves human drives and passions that cannot be contained within the genteel values that he espouses, as suggested by his library, where he retreats in time of crisis. Those drives are more dynamic, urgent, and meaningful than the categories of race, class,

and gender upon which Edgar's power rests.

The letter writing incident suggests how Heathcliff again reverses the gentry's own devices, forcing into view the rotted foundations of their power. From Nelly's response to the letters, which contain contradictory features, as if "borrowed from a more experienced source," it is clear that Heathcliff instructed Linton to add romantic flourishes to the letters in order to ensnare Cathy in his scheme. This inference is supported by the fact that later, when Heathcliff uses Linton as bait to lure Cathy to the Heights, he alters his son's correspondence (224). Since Nelly responds sarcastically to the letters, saying that they are "good enough to be printed," they must be filled with sentiments of romantic love, the sort that Isabella believed, found in popular novels. This event shows how Heathcliff turns the myth of romantic love against its Western perpetrators, using it as a means of bringing Cathy and Linton together. Even so, the intensity of Cathy's conflict, based both on her fear of being found out and her desire to continue her association with Linton, shows the heartlessness of the repressive cultural forces that support her father's ideology. Even though Cathy, like the mother bird whose eggs are endangered, feels threatened by Nelly's burning of her letters, the house-keeper and Edgar cannot restrain her natural impulses indefinitely. The young woman shows the force of those instincts when she sticks her hand in the fire to save one of Linton's, actually Heathcliff's, letters. As Catherine's ghost, in Lockwood's nightmare at the beginning of the novel, haunts the moors, seeking to reunite with Heathcliff, her spirit is reborn in her daughter. As the name of one of Hareton's dogs, Phenix, implies, Catherine's spirit rises, in a sense, from the ashes of Nelly's



fire. When Phenix bites Cathy on the leg after her first trip to Penistone Crag, that symbolic act undoes, as well, the bite that Skulker gave Catherine when she and Heathcliff, as children, spied on the Lintons. The bite from Hareton's dog implies Cathy's freedom from the repressive ideologies that killed her mother, ultimately (174).

From the time that Heathcliff imprisons Cathy at the Heights for the purpose of forcing her to marry his son, she struggles violently against his tyranny, even though, as he says, she came there "on [her] own accord, in contempt of [Edgar's] injunctions to the contrary" (236). Although she believed, at first, that she wanted a union with Linton, with genteel civility, Heathcliff brings what Brontë portrays as her instinctive drives to the surface. In the aftermath of Linton's death, what we find is a sort of tug-of-war between Joseph, the Pharisee of Christian worship, and Cathy, for Hareton's affections. A struggle develops between Joseph, his books, his Bible, his Christianity, inculcated by God-fearing evangelicals such as Jabes Branderham of Lockwood's nightmare, and Cathy's non-institutional learning, that is, knowledge not inculcated but discovered through a seemingly natural curiosity, nurtured by instinct, her affection for Hareton, primarily. We can see the conflict between Joseph's repressive Calvinist ideology and Cathy's naturalized, leading education, as the author presents it, expressed most clearly in the analogy between the Heathcliff / Catherine figuration and the Hareton / Cathy relationship. At the time of Lockwood's last visit to the Heights, the voyeur is astonished to learn that Cathy has no books. She believes that Heathcliff destroyed them. Then, while searching "Joseph's store of theology,"

Cathy finds a “secret stock in [Hareton’s room] . . . some Latin and Greek, and some tales and poetry; all old friends—I brought the last here—and [Hareton] gathered them, as a magpie gathers silver spoons, for the love of stealing!” (256).

At this point, Cathy rebukes Hareton as an inarticulate dunce and humiliates him for defiling her precious, consecrated books, “debased and profaned in his mouth.” She does not understand that Hareton’s store of books reveals both his intellectual curiosity and his desire to please her by emulating her literary accomplishments. The young woman’s verbal quips sting Hareton with anger and embarrassment: “Earnshaw blushed crimson . . . and stammered an indignant denial of her accusations.” His experience repeats Heathcliff’s, as it recalls his feelings of shame when Catherine humiliated him by telling Nelly that she could not marry him—“It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now”—a comment that he overheard, prompting him to leave the moors (86). Hareton’s sense of shame, like that of his cultural father, places him on the outside of Anglo-Saxon values, represented especially by Cathy’s books from classical antiquity. Recalling Young’s discussion of the symbiotic relationship between race and culture, Hareton, like Heathcliff before him, is represented, symbolically, as a racial outsider.

One difference in the analogy between character pairs is that, while Catherine says that she wants to marry Edgar in order to help Heathcliff, to “aid him to rise,” Cathy’s tutoring of Hareton has nothing to do with social class ambition. In fact, Cathy’s education reverses the Pygmalion myth found in *Emma*. Unlike Emma’s desire to sculpt Harriet’s identity, which establishes a relationship

of dominance, master and slave, Cathy's education lays the groundwork for the dissolution of class and gender distinctions, through the acquisition of knowledge seemingly divorced from ideology. In Austen's novel, Emma assumes the role of male educator shaping female identity. In Brontë's novel, however, the female figure, Cathy, leads the male so that, ultimately, there is a merging of their identities. Even though Heathcliff takes revenge on his oppressors, usurping their property and manipulating their children, such as Hareton, his violence paradoxically plants the seeds of renewed values because he is simultaneously within and without English civilization. When Lockwood first sees him at the Heights, he looks as much the gentleman as any other country squire. And, upon his return to the moors, he does rise in status. However, to some extent, he always remains outside the power of English ideology to interpellate him. That explains why, near the end of the novel, Heathcliff, drawn to Catherine's ghost, starves himself, walks on the moors by night, and gives up his revenge. Though his violence works to free the younger generation from oppressive burdens of culture, it does not satisfy his hunger to reunite with Catherine, to fully merge his identity by with hers. That desire is suggested by Catherine's famous line, "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff."<sup>37</sup> The folk tales that circulate in Gimmerton after Heathcliff's physical death, stories people tell of seeing his ghost and that of Catherine, haunting the moors, goes along with Cathy's teaching of Hareton, removed, seemingly, from ideology. The folk tales, like the rumor of Nelly and Cathy disappearing in Blackhorse marsh, are propelled by natural curiosity. They show that Heathcliff draws his power from nature, that he is a supernatural figure with androgynous

qualities, at once vicious and vital, both heath and cliff, female and male, as his name implies.<sup>38</sup> Considering his figure from that “contrapuntal perspective,” as Edward Said says, he transgresses, through the supernatural fusion of genders and races, the bounds of individual identity established by European civilization.

In the contest for Hareton’s sympathies, Joseph loses because his Christian doctrine, based on punishment of transgressions, “Seventy-Times-Seven,” as we see in Lockwood’s nightmare, early in the novel, cannot compete with Cathy’s instinct to nurture Hareton’s natural curiosity and his native intelligence (40). Her affectionate teaching gradually removes the young man from the grasp of Joseph’s ideology. For example, in the incident following Cathy’s discovery of Hareton’s books, he lashes back at her insults by throwing the books in the fire. But after that quarrel, as Lockwood approaches the Heights, he observes several changes, “improvements,” since his first visit. He notices that the doors and lattices are open, that the fruit trees are fragrant, and that a “fine red fire illumined the chimney.” From outside, looking through the window, he can see the inhabitants of the house and hear them talking. A “mingled sense of curiosity and envy” draws him closer. As he observes them, Cathy is teaching Hareton to read. She disciplines him by threatening to pull his hair unless he pronounces the word “Contrary” correctly.<sup>39</sup> But she also mixes affection with her corrective measures, teasing him, ordering him to kiss her because he obeyed her so well: “The male speaker began to read—he was a young man respectably dressed, and seated at table, having a book before him. His handsome features glowed with pleasure, and his eyes kept impatiently wandering from the page to a small white hand over his shoulder, which recalled

him by a smart slap on the cheek” (261). Here we can see, in his respectable attire and his “contrary” impulses, that Hareton has inherited from Heathcliff, his cultural father, the powers of the gypsy gentleman.

In this scene, Brontë presents the playful intimacy of Cathy and her pupil as the transmission of knowledge separated, seemingly, from ideologies inculcated through religious and academic institutions. While Hareton looks like a respectable gentleman, his robust vitality, his “contrary” impulses, affectionate glances and kisses, show that he is Heathcliff’s heir by nature, not by custom. Cathy’s behavior, granting Hareton kisses as a reward for good conduct, also shows Heathcliff’s influence. Her affection promotes, in contradictory fashion, the inattentive behavior that her slaps are supposed to discourage. Although Cathy is only teasing Hareton, her actions, slaps and hair pulling, show that she has inherited some of Heathcliff’s traits. His violence has been reshaped and born anew in her so that it regenerates the moors with health, beauty, and vigor. Shortly after this scene, Joseph complains about Nelly, who is singing in the kitchen, and about Cathy’s influence on Hareton. In his distinct Yorkshire accent, the aged Christian hypocrite protests that together they are turning the young man to wickedness: “Aw cannot open t’ Blessed Book, bud yah set up them glories tuh sattan, . . . ; un that poor lad ‘ull be lost, atween ye. Poor lad!”. . . . “O, Lord, judge ’em fur they’s norther law nur justice among wer rullers!” Joseph’s frustration, as Nelly sings “Fairy Annie’s Wedding,” suggests that he cannot keep Hareton under the lock and key of his Calvinist beliefs, just as he could never rein in Heathcliff’s natural impulses, as a child, with punishments. Later, Cathy and Hareton work in the garden, digging up Joseph’s black currant

trees and gooseberry bushes in order to make space for an “importation of plants from the Grange.” That transplanting of flowers from the Grange to the Heights symbolizes their freedom from Joseph’s repressive ideology, the rejuvenation of values on the moors (268).

Overall, then, we can see that Brontë imagines a civilization on the moors shorn of debilitating categories based on race, class, and gender. By interrogating the legal and religious foundations that support those hierarchies, Heathcliff, a “Prime Mover,” as Barbara Goff calls him, embodies a force powerful enough to undo those cultural boundaries and to replace them with the primitive vitality of foreign Others.<sup>40</sup> Even though, as Earnshaw’s biological son, he is racially “white,” his perceived Otherness, the ambiguity surrounding his origins, carries sufficient cultural violence, coming from the imagined outreaches of empire, to disrupt and renew the established values, customs, and traditions of English society. Unlike the violence that Charlotte Brontë presents in *Jane Eyre*, however, masked by the middle-class morality that endorses it, Heathcliff’s violence, though repugnant, is open and undisguised. Besides, Brontë presents his violence primarily as a metaphor of re-creation, as in Sartre’s description of Fanon, his representation of revolt in the French colonies. Although I agree with Eagleton that *Wuthering Heights* is less ideological than *Jane Eyre*, it is not entirely divorced from ideology. Even though the incident in which Cathy teaches Hareton to read may seem non-ideological, for instance, education always belongs to historically specific cultural formations, and so serves to reproduce ideology, as a Marxist critic such as Eagleton would be among the first to acknowledge. Moreover, as her portrayal of

Frances implies, Brontë regards English civilization as superior to French culture. Her attitude suggests the historic “inter-imperialist” rivalry, as Vladimir Ilyich Lenin calls it in 1917, among European nations.<sup>41</sup>

While Brontë discounts education within academic and religious institutions, the guidance that Cathy gives Hareton comes from Edgar, his civility, including formal education, presumably.<sup>42</sup> This situation presents an ambiguity because, in order for working-class people, whom Heathcliff and Hareton are aligned with, to make “improvements,” as Lockwood says, they must depend on academic knowledge of the middle and upper classes that is inculcated rather than self-taught. To say that differently, the picture of pastoral happiness that Brontë presents at the end is a romantic ideal that supports democratic reforms, as defined by and for the middle classes, taking place in England at mid-century. But the image is vexed by the actual distance, socioeconomic, political, and religious, between the governing and the working classes. The figure of Heathcliff is, of course, the central ambivalent feature in the novel. We have seen how the author uses that ambivalence as a mechanism to interrogate and overturn the values of the gentry, but it is important to note that she does so in favor of values—such as literacy—that, to a great extent, represent middle-class imperatives. *Wuthering Heights* anticipates the torrent of violence, social, political, religious, and economic, as it enters England, set in motion by British imperialism, represented by Wilkie Collins in *The Moonstone*.

## Notes

1. All references to the text come from Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Linda H. Peterson (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1992). For a discussion of Heathcliff's "unhuman" aspects, see Daniel Cottom, *Unhuman Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 37-54. For a collection of critical essays and extracts, see *Heathcliff*. Ed. Harold Bloom (New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1993). Another valuable collection is *Wuthering Heights: An Anthology of Criticism* Ed. Alistair Everitt (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967).

2. In *Heathcliff*, Harold Bloom remarks, "As a protagonist of a kind of daemonic romance, Heathcliff would incarnate some mode of guilt, but even the daemonic is not an adequate descriptive mode for encompassing him. He is so much a negation of every received tradition that he can be seen only as an undoing figure, presumably a blocking agent, set against male representations, like Byron's or Shelley's, of the infinite nature of desire" (2).

3. Tabish Khair states, "Liverpool was also, like almost all major ports in European imperial states, a place that contained various non-European peoples, including Black sailors and Lascars" (66). For a discussion of Gothic terror in *Wuthering Heights*, see Khair, *The Gothic, Postcolonialism, and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 61-71.

4. Margaret Lenta notes that Earnshaw represents a "patriarchal, authoritarian rural culture of the eighteenth century," a culture that is "waning." See Lenta, "Capitalism or Patriarchy and Immortal Love: 'Wuthering Heights.'" "



*Theoria: A Journal of Studies in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* LXII (May 1984), 66.

5. Speaking of Heathcliff's association with racial Others, Matthew Beaumont remarks, "His 'otherness' discovered by Mr. Earnshaw among the refugees that populate the port city of Liverpool, Heathcliff is associated with various victims of colonialism, from displaced African slaves to itinerant Irish laborers" 138. See Beaumont, "Heathcliff's Great Hunger: the Cannibal Other in *Wuthering Heights*." *Journal of Victorian Culture* 9.2 (2004 Autumn), 137-163.

6. Linda Ray Pratt comments, "[T]he strength of the incest taboo often stops readers who wonder if Cathy [Catherine, the mother] and Heathcliff are half-brother and half-sister from imagining a sexual relationship between them, thus closing off the possibility that Catherine [Cathy] is their daughter." See Pratt, "'I Shall Be Your Father': Heathcliff's Narrative of Paternity." *Victorians Institute Journal* 20 (1992), 16.

7. For an analysis of Heathcliff as a Lucifer figure who reveals the emptiness of the Christian myth, see Davie S. Davis, "Heathcliff, Lucifer, and the Failure of the Christian Myth." *PMPA: Publication of the Missouri Philological Association* 16 (1991), 56-61.

8. Wade Thompson remarks that Catherine's horsewhip signifies her male power, 144. For a discussion of sadistic elements in the novel, as well as his argument that Catherine and Heathcliff are biologically related, half-brother and half-sister, see Thompson, "Infanticide and Sadism in *Wuthering Heights*" in *Wuthering Heights: An Anthology of Criticism*.

9. Cottom remarks, “Lockwood appears as a failed or indecisive misanthrope—as so much of a dilettante in this respect, in fact, that he takes Heathcliff’s vehement rejection of any desire for his company as a perverse incitement to pester him further” (53).

10. Tricia Lootens states that Thrushcross Grange presents an example of “commodity Gothicism,” a type of abstraction that “transforms objects into commodities by occluding their physical materiality and precise social origins” (149). For a discussion of commodity Gothicism in Victorian novels, see Lootens, “Fear of Furniture: Commodity Gothicism and the Teaching of Victorian Literature” in *Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions*. ed. Diane Long Hoeveler and Tamar Heller (New York: The Modern Library Association of America, 2003), 148-158.

11. Graham Holderness argues that we have sympathy for Heathcliff as a child because he is the recipient of violence that is “latent in the family structure.” See Holderness, “Heathcliff is Both Tyrant and Victim” in ed. Haley R. Mitchell. *Readings on Wuthering Heights*. (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1999), 50.

12. For a discussion of possible scenarios that critics have considered regarding Heathcliff’s paternity and the nature of his kinship with Catherine, see Pratt, “‘I Shall Be Your Father’: Heathcliff’s Narrative of Paternity.” *Victorians Institute Journal* 20 (1992):13-38.

13. For a discussion of Heathcliff’s link to animals, with particular emphasis on the contradictory sides of his emotions, both loyal and cruel, like a dog’s behavior, see Ivan Kreilkamp, “Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the

Animal.” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 18.1 (2005), 100.

14. For an early essay that links Heathcliff to the working class, see Arnold Kettle, “Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights*” in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Wuthering Heights*. ed. Thomas A. Vogler (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968). See also, Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontë’s* (London and Basingstoke: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975).

15. Nancy Armstrong remarks, “Although, we tend to think of British colonialism in terms of the English conquest first of North America and then parts of Africa and Asia, much the same thing went on inside Great Britain. . . . Great Britain experienced a division of labor that produced an English core and an ethnic periphery.” See Armstrong, “Imperialist Nostalgia and *Wuthering Heights*” in Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Linda H. Peterson (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 446.

16. Khair remarks that Heathcliff’s curses are like those of Caliban in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*: “Heathcliff, like Caliban, has learnt a ‘language’, but is finally reduced to cursing” (69). The parallel between Heathcliff and Caliban helps us to see how Heathcliff’s Otherness, the perception of him as ugly and dirty, is actually a product of the perverse values of those, like Prince Prospero in Shakespeare’s drama, who hope to colonize him. In that sense, Heathcliff has been taught to curse.

17. In his discussion of Romantic theory, Larry H. Peer finds Heathcliff’s identity an example of romantic bonding: “Romantic bonding is based on the idea that any individual must be complemented by someone of the opposite sex in order

to have complete identity. This is what Coleridge meant by asserting that any great mind is androgynous.” See Peer, *(Roman)ticism* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: University Press of America, Inc., 2008), 33.

18. In “Reverse Imperialism in *Wuthering Heights*,” Susan Meyer determines the year, 1769, that Earnshaw found Heathcliff in the streets of Liverpool, “England’s largest slave-trading port, conducting seventy to eight-five percent of the English slave trade.” See Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women’s Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 98. Maja-Lisa Von Sneidern connects Heathcliff, as well, to contemporary accounts of black slaves who were both deceitful and loyal or unselfish. See Von Sneidern, “*Wuthering Heights* and the Liverpool Slave Trade” in *Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions*. ed. Diane Long Hoeveler and Tamar Heller (New York: The Modern Library Association of America, 2002), 381.

19. In “The Yahoo, Not the Demon,” Elsie B. Michie argues that both Heathcliff and Rochester are linked to contemporary stereotypes of the Irish as ape-like, “simian.” See Michie, *Outside the Pale: Cultural Exclusion, Gender Difference, and the Victorian Woman Writer* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 54.

20. Pratt notes that Heathcliff becomes the “guardian of the family” by rescuing Hareton from his fall, by paying for Hindley’s funeral, and by actions that “claim Hareton, Linton, and Catherine as his own,” 33.

21. For a discussion of the incest theme in *Wuthering Heights*, see

Volger's, Lenta's and Pratt's essays. Lenta remarks, "The Romantic idea of brother-sister incest, in the completion of oneself by union with one's counterpart of the opposite sex, is closely related to this notion, [Romantic concept of identity] and both inform Emily Brontë's sense of the 'rightness' of a union between Catherine and Heathcliff" (72).

22. Thomas Richards states, "The Victorians invented the idea of a 'standard of living,' and by it they meant that life could be measured by counting the number of goods and articles that people consumed." See Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851-1914* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 119.

23. Cottom remarks, "Thus evoked from the outset, the general spirit of misanthropy is concentrated in the history of Heathcliff, who incarnates its unhuman agency in every aspect of his being, from the dubious circumstances of his birth and his disruptive insertion into the family on through to his animalic, devilish, and monstrous appearance as an object of superstition to Nelly Dean, among others, when he is an adult," (49).

24. In "Law and the Gothic Imagination," Leslie J. Moran, states, "Law is a recurrent theme within Gothic literature, embracing the domestic legal tradition in general, the English Common Law, and a wide range of locations within law's institutional topography. In these various contexts the law is presented as archaic and dark, a vestigial shadow haunting the social order of the enlightenment and modernity . . . . More specifically law is associated with the ad hoc, unreason, the outmoded . . . ." See *Essays and Studies 2001: The Gothic*. ed. Fred Botting

(Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 87.

25. Bhabha uses Fanon's phrase, "zone of occult instability," as it helps to explain the concept of a "Third Space" in his theory of cultural hybridity. Bhabha remarks, "Fanon's vision of revolutionary cultural and political change as a 'fluctuating movement' of occult instability could not be articulated as cultural practice without an acknowledgement of this indeterminate space of the subject (s) of enunciation" (55).

26. In his historical analysis of the word "class," Raymond Williams states, "The essential history of the introduction of class, as a word which would supersede older names for social divisions, relates to the increasing consciousness that social position is made rather than merely inherited. All the older words [*rank, order, estate, degree, lower orders*], with their essential metaphors of standing, stepping and arranging in rows, belong to a society in which position was determined by birth." See Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, 1983), 61-62.

27. For a thorough treatment of the intersection of race, class, and gender, as in the figure of Linton, see Carine M. Mardorssian, "Geometries of Race, Class, and Gender: Identity Crossing: in *Wuthering Heights*." In Lonoff, Sue and Terry A. Hasseler, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Wuthering Heights* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1966).

28. In his discussion of language, David W. Shaw remarks, "Heathcliff's paradoxes invite us to construct a totally novel universe—one where laws of motion cease to apply, even metaphorically." See Shaw, "The Burden of Signs in

*Wuthering Heights*,” in Bloom, ed., *Heathcliff*, 192.

29. After the harrowing scene in which Heathcliff locks up Cathy and Nelly, he hands the housekeeper a cup of tea. In passing, he says that she need not worry: “It’s not poisoned, though I prepared it myself” (233). This comment, along with the rapid deterioration in Linton’s health, suggests that Heathcliff may indeed have did poisoned him.

30. Carine M. Mardorossian argues that the blurred boundaries between the Heights and the Grange—characters shuttling back and forth between the two locations—reinforces the concept of fluctuating racial identities in the novel. See Mardorossian, “Racial Vagaries in *Wuthering Heights*” in *Reclaiming Difference: Caribbean Women Rewrite Postcolonialism* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 91.

31. Khair notes that Isabella reconstructs Heathcliff as a Byronic figure, a “dark, Romantic hero” (67).

32. In his discussion of infanticide and sadism in the novel, Thompson explains that “pain” is often suggested by “threats of choking, throttling, suffocating, or strangling” (143).

33. Edward W. Said comments that we can read Victorian novels from a “contrapuntal” perspective, “with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.” See Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1994), 51.

34. Barbara Munson Goff does not regard the hanging dog incident as

gratuitous violence. The scholar states, “Hareton’s hanging the litter of puppies is not necessarily the act of gratuitous cruelty Isabella implies, especially if we recall the cruelty of our first glimpse of Edgar and herself, who ‘had nearly pulled [a little dog] in two between them.’” See Goff, “Between Natural Theology and Natural Selection: Breeding the Human Animal in *Wuthering Heights*.” *Victorian Studies: A Journal of the Humanities, Arts and Sciences* 27.4 (1984), 498.

35. Katherine Frank points out that Brontë’s bird imagery connects Heathcliff with the cuckoo. The cuckoo lays its egg in another bird’s nest: “When the cuckoo egg hatches, the foster parents feed the alien chick, which is generally larger and more aggressive than their own offspring. The cuckoo takes over the nest, pushing the baby birds or eggs out.” For a discussion of bird imagery, see Katherine Frank, *A Chainless Soul: A Life of Emily Brontë* (New York: Random House, 1990), 89-90.

36. On Catherine’s dream, Jean Fernandez comments, “Catherine’s statement is both visionary and an act of displacement, considering her swiftly repressed recognition that her own bed, the locus of her erotic life, belongs to the very landscape and terrain where she seeks to locate Nelly. . . . At the root of such repression lies class and the compulsions it enforces upon narrator and narrative form” (70). For a discussion of repression in the novel, see Fernandez, *Victorian Servants, Class, and the Politics of Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 54-86.

37. K.C. Belliappa remarks, “What is truly fascinating is the novel is Emily Brontë’s questioning of the very idea of individual identity as expressed in



unequivocal terms in Catherine's assertion that she *is* Heathcliff." See Belliappa, "Macaulay's 'Imperishable Empire' and 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff' in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*." *Journal of Indian Writing* 30:1 (2001 Jan.), 40. See also, Graeme Tytler, "'Nelly, I am Heathcliff!' The Problem of Identification in *Wuthering Heights*," *Midwest Quarterly* 47.2 (Winter 2006), 167-181.

38. See endnote 16 for Peer's comment about the androgynous aspect of Romantic bonding.

39. Pratt remarks, "In the weeks that follow Linton Heathcliff's death, an accelerating exchange of clashes occurs between Catherine [Cathy] and Heathcliff, culminating in another physical attack in which he grabs her hair and threatens to kill her. Yet, given the novel's pattern of violent passions, the scene may suggest as much about love as hate, especially when we remember the animosity between Catherine [Cathy] and Hareton that turns to love and the slapping and hair-pulling that accompany the kisses in their reading" (31).

40. Goff refers to Heathcliff as a "Prime Mover," as a "principle of creation and destruction in whose aura life is both conceived and terminated for the other characters" (500).

41. In 1917 Lenin wrote a pamphlet, "Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism," that denounced European imperialism, as it catered to the interests of bourgeois financiers and the propertied classes, primarily. Lenin shows how "inter-imperialist" rivalries, which had begun much earlier, at an indefinite period, were not merely a political phenomenon, as Karl Kautsky argued, but also an economic development that intensified antagonisms among nations. Lenin remarks,

“Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom.” Brontë’s portrayal of Frances suggests the antagonism among European nations that Lenin speaks of. See Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.”

42. The time that the Brontë sisters, Charlotte and Emily, spent in formal schooling in Belgium and their familiarity with French novels is well documented. See, for example, Tom Winnifrith, *The Brontë’s and Their Background* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1973), 97-98.

British Law and Indian Thieves in  
Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*

In one of the early scenes in Wilkie Collins's detective romance, *The Moonstone* (1868), Gabriel Betteredge, the Verinder family steward, is about to relax in his beehive chair on the back court when he hears a faint beating sound that he follows to the front terrace.<sup>1</sup> There he discovers “three mahogany-coloured Indians,” with a “small hand-drum slung in front of them,” as they stare at Lady Verinder's house. The interlopers, whom Betteredge describes as “strolling conjurers,” are accompanied by an English boy—a “little, delicate-looking, light-haired English boy carrying a bag” (503). The steward guesses that the bag contains the tools of trade of the wandering magicians. One of the three, who speaks English, politely asks permission to entertain the family.<sup>2</sup> A striking aspect of Betteredge's recollection, his written account of the incident, is that he admits to a weakness, a natural tendency to suspect superior acting strangers of disguising their motives. Despite his comment that he would not “distrust another person because he happens to be a few shades darker than [himself],” Betteredge has a suspicion that the Indian jugglers are thieves. Concerned about the family plate-basket, open to their view, he orders them off the premises.

Betteredge's instinct that the Indians are not what they appear turns out to be true. As he learns later, they are three Brahmin priests trying to recover a sacred diamond, the Moonstone, taken from them during a British imperial venture, the battle of Seringapatam (1799).<sup>3</sup> Even so, the steward's uncertainty about their

identity, along with his admission to a human foible that might cloud his judgment, points to an ambiguity, a tension in the narrative between what is perceived as objective fact and what is imagined as romantic fable. Old Betteredge, a well-liked member of the Verinder household, respected for his loyalty, his competence, and his common sense, is the first of seven confessional narrators, each of whom provides a supposedly objective account of the mystery of the Moonstone. A young English gentleman, Franklin Blake, the novel's central figure, comes up with the idea that the story of the stolen diamond ought to be committed to writing in order to protect the character of innocent people who have "suffered under suspicion already" (495). Along with the family lawyer, Mr. Bruff, Blake believes that if the writers limit their narratives to their personal experiences, then the facts presented will protect the reputation of those who might otherwise be slandered by public opinion. What makes Blake's proposal for a literary project problematic, however, is that even before Betteredge begins his narrative, Collins presents the Prologue, entitled "The Storming of Seringapatam," which pits the evidence of eyewitness accounts against the power of imagination.<sup>4</sup> Just as we can see how Betteredge's admission of a weakness, his racist attitude, colors his account, giving a subjective slant to what might otherwise be regarded as an objective narrative, the Prologue, an extract from Blake's family papers, creates an ambiguity that complicates the testimonial accounts that follow it.

Before I discuss the Prologue, a brief overview of the novel's form, plot, and characters should help clarify my analysis. The detective romance unfolds through a series of narrators who present accounts that intersect as they build on

one another. The testimonials accumulate details until the reader has a complete understanding of what happened to the Moonstone. The surface mystery focuses on the question of who took the diamond from the Indian cabinet where Rachel, Lady Verinder's daughter, had placed it. Different characters contract what Betteredge calls "detective fever" in their search for the answer. While this narrative device advances the plot, it also complicates the novel. It introduces fictional personas blinded by ideological assumptions, sexist and racist attitudes that Blake navigates as he reconstructs the events surrounding the mystery. Collins's representation requires that readers compare the narrators, their motives, attitudes, and beliefs, in order to understand Blake's character growth. The brown face of the Shivering Sand, discussed below, symbolizes the ambiguous aspect of the whole novel, the sense of flux that comes from the author's presentation. Since no narrator knows all that happened, or understands it from a broad perspective, as Blake hopes to do by compiling the confessions into a single narrative, those views can be called partial—that is, limited in scope and shaped by ideology. As I will explain, the Prologue and the Epilogue enclose the confessionals within a framework that magnifies their ambiguous features. Collins's representation probes values that lie beneath the entertaining surface of the detective story, a mystery that provides the vehicle for the author's critique of British culture.

What follows is a sketch of the novel's complicated plot. In the Prologue, we learn that Colonel Herncastle, Lady Verinder's brother, gets possession of the Moonstone during the battle of Seringapatam. Later, after retiring and returning to England, the soldier arranges, with his brother-in-law, Mr. Franklin Blake the elder,

a member of parliament, for the safe-keeping of the diamond. After Herncastle's death, acting as the executor of his Will, Mr. Blake commissions his son, Blake, to deliver the gem to Rachel. While travelling from London to Lady Verinder's house near the seacoast, he is followed by the Indians. Although unsure if they are actually Brahmin priests, he suspects them as thieves. Penelope, Betteredge's daughter and Rachel's maid, spies on the Indians, who arrive at Lady Verinder's house before Blake does. She watches the chief as he pours ink into the hand of the English orphan boy, putting him into a trance, so that he gives them information about Blake's movements. He eludes the Indians, however, by taking the morning train, arriving earlier than expected (512). Upon his arrival, Blake walks to the Shivering Sand, a gloomy, isolated bay not far from Lady Verinder's house. There he finds Betteredge trying to console Rosanna Spearman, the second housemaid, a former thief whom Lady Verinder removed from a female reformatory in London. Upon seeing the young gentleman, Spearman leaves without speaking. Then Betteredge and Blake engage in a long dialogue about Colonel Herncastle's legacy and reputation.

Afterward, while staying at Lady Verinder's home, Blake falls in love with Rachel. During their romance, the lovers decorate the door to her bedroom with an elaborate painting. They finish the artwork just before the arrival of her eighteenth birthday, an event celebrated by many guests, including Dr. Candy, the family physician, Mr. Murthwaite, a renowned expert on Indian customs, Godfrey Ablewhite, a barrister who sponsors a Church charity organization, and Miss Drusilla Clack, Lady Verinder's niece. Ablewhite is the son of a wealthy banker,

Mr. Ablewhite, who is married to Lady Verinder's sister, Corinne. Besides Ablewhite's parents, his younger sisters, the Miss Ablewhites, are there as well. Before dinner begins, Ablewhite, in the rose garden, proposes marriage to Rachel, who turns him down. Afterward, Blake gives her the Moonstone. With the exception of Ablewhite, who acts unimpressed, the diamond astonishes everyone. Then, at the dinner table, Blake starts an argument with Dr. Candy, provoking him by ridiculing doctors (546). Their debate becomes so heated that Lady Verinder intervenes to stop it. When the Indians show up unexpectedly, the Miss Ablewhites run outside to watch them perform tricks. So does Rachel, wearing the diamond in the "bosom of her dress" (547). For protection, Betteredge and Blake position themselves on each side of her. Mr. Murthwaite, recognizing that the jugglers are Brahmin priests in disguise, confronts them, and they depart abruptly.

Later that evening, Dr. Candy, hoping to prove, with a practical experiment, that Blake's opinion about doctors is wrong, gives him an accidental overdose of laudanum, administered by Ablewhite (860). The overdose induces Blake to walk in his sleep. During that episode, he takes the diamond from Rachel's Indian cabinet. Unaware that he is sleepwalking, she watches as he takes the gem. But she does not see Ablewhite, hiding in another room. Blake hands the diamond to him, trusting that he will put it in his father's bank (862). Later, in Frizinghall, Ablewhite secretly pawns it to a jeweler named Septimus Luker, who deposits it in Mr. Ablewhite's bank until the time, one year later, when it should be redeemed. After the loss of the Moonstone, Rachel withdraws from her lover, confining herself to her bedroom most of the time. Later, on the same day that Blake took the

Moonstone, Spearman, while cleaning his room, finds his nightgown with paint on it. In her mind, the paint is evidence that he stole the diamond. It proves to her that he smeared the wet paint on Rachel's door as he was leaving her boudoir that morning. She then takes steps to conceal the evidence. She hides Blake's nightgown by wearing it underneath her daily outfit. She also goes to Frizinghall, where she purchases some linen material that she uses to sew a second gown. She places that garment in the laundry to show that no linens are missing (579).

After the Moonstone turns up missing, Blake calls on the local magistrate, Superintendent Seegrave, to investigate the theft. He upsets the servants by confining them to their rooms while he makes inquiries. During his search, Spearman finds Blake's ring on his bedroom floor. She then breaks house rules for domestic servants by going into the library to return it to him. After Seegrave's investigation turns up nothing, Blake writes to a famous detective, Sergeant Cuff, whom Lady Verinder hires. When Cuff discovers the paint smear on Rachel's door, he comments on its significance as the key to solving the mystery. He then requests that Seegrave leave so that he can work alone. After Seegrave departs, Cuff, from his interrogation of possible witnesses, concludes that Spearman had brushed her dress against the painting, then burned the evidence (585-586). Cuff suspects that Spearman was acting as Rachel's accomplice in a fraudulent scheme to hide the diamond, then collect the reward for finding it. When Betteredge figures out that the detective suspects Rachel as the thief, he threatens him physically, grabbing him by the collar, but regrets his outburst. The policeman, however, remains unruffled. After learning that the housemaid had purchased the linen material, Cuff



figures out that she sewed a second garment and that she hid the original somewhere. After questioning a village family, the Yollands, whose daughter, Limping Lucy, is Spearman's dear friend, he concludes that she hid the garment in a case that she appended to chains and sank in the sea (596). Still thinking that the original article belongs to Spearman, the detective cannot understand why she did not destroy it. The policeman's investigation disturbs both Lady Verinder and Rachel, who refuses to discuss the loss of the diamond with him. In fact, Rachel leaves her mother's home, moving first to her aunt's house in Frizinghall, then later to Brighton, under the guardianship of her uncle, Mr. Ablewhite. Later, Cuff and Betteredge follow the housemaid's boot tracks to the Shivering Sand. After questioning a fisherman, Yolland, they conclude that Spearman committed suicide, that she drowned herself there (618). After that, Cuff retires and goes home to tend his roses.

After Cuff's retirement, Limping Lucy confronts Betteredge on the lawn with the accusation that Blake murdered Spearman. She also tells the steward that the housemaid, before her death, left a letter for the gentleman. The envelope contains a memorandum with instructions that direct him to the location of the chains. After pulling the box from the sea, Blake is shocked to discover that the nightgown, with his name inscribed on it, belongs to himself (743). Even though the garment presents material proof that he took the diamond, he cannot grasp the fact that he is the thief. While Blake is listening to Betteredge read Spearman's letter, Ezra Jennings, Dr. Candy's assistant, shows up unexpectedly. He gives the steward a list of poor people so that wine can be taken to them, a tradition of

charity that Rachel, after her mother's death from a heart ailment, wants to continue. Quite curious about Jennings, Blake later befriends him. After leaving Dr. Candy's house, as the two males are walking toward the moors, Jennings confesses that he has been hounded by slander that has caused his family to mistreat him (798). He also tells Blake that for ten years he has suffered from an incurable disease, while depending on opium to ease his pain. After Blake explains his own predicament, Jennings proposes an experiment that, it is hoped, will prove the young gentleman's innocence. With Blake's consent, after recreating, as much as possible, the conditions that existed on the night that the Moonstone was taken, Jennings performs the experiment. He administers opium to him, like Dr. Candy's accidental overdose, so that Blake walks in his sleep once again. While others watch, he silently removes a mock diamond from Rachel's Indian cabinet.

After Jennings establishes Blake's legal innocence, based on the fact that he was not aware of what he was doing when he took the diamond, he and Rachel are happily married. Jennings, however, wants to be forgotten. He asks that all of his writings, except the diary pages that he gives to Blake, be buried in the casket with him, and that no monument be built to mark his grave (865). Meanwhile, Ablewhite, in disguise, absconds with the diamond. The Indians follow him to London, as does Mr. Bruff's clerk, a boy named Gooseberry, who notifies the police of Ablewhite's whereabouts in a hotel room. When they arrive, they discover that he has been murdered by the Indians, who elude them and return to India with the gem. In the Epilogue, Mr. Murthwaite reports, in a letter to Mr. Bruff, that the Brahmin priests, having lost caste in "service to their god," were

commanded to purify themselves through pilgrimages to the shrines of India. He also says that he saw the Moonstone placed back into the forehead of the sacred deity from whom it had been taken originally. As the Indians leave the shrine, they pass through the “grand white mass of people,” a crowd that closes ranks after the Indians take separate paths through it. From the Prologue to the Epilogue, then, the plot follows a circular pattern, emphasizing the Moonstone’s lasting cultural vitality.

Let us return now to the Prologue. Here Collins portrays two cousins, both military officers, as contrasting figures. The narrator is a character who believes in military discipline and obeys the English rule of law.<sup>5</sup> His cousin, Colonel Herncastle, on the other hand, places as much faith in the fabulous as he does in the tangible realities of daily experience. In fact, the conflict between Herncastle and his cousin comes from the Colonel’s firm belief in a fable, the myth of the revered Moonstone, that everyone else ridicules. According to the legend, the diamond passed through many centuries, from one shrine to the next, from one conqueror to another, always guarded by three Brahmin priests after first being taken from its shrine, the “forehead of the four-handed Indian god who typifies the Moon,” in the holy city of Somnauth, in the eleventh century of the Christian era:

So, as told in our camp, ran the fanciful story of the Moonstone. It made no serious impression on any of us except my cousin—whose love of the marvelous induced him to believe it. On the night before the assault on Seringapatam, he was absurdly angry with me, and with others, for treating the whole thing as a fable.

A foolish wrangle followed; and Herncastle's unlucky temper got the best of him. He declared, in his boastful way, that we should see the Diamond on his finger, if the English army took Seringapatam. The sally was saluted by a roar of laughter, and there, as all thought that night, the thing ended (491).

The narrator of the family paper states that his reason for writing is to explain that his reluctance to befriend Herncastle stemmed from the Colonel's participation in the plunder and pillage of Indian treasures during the assault on Seringapatam. According to the narrator, after breaching the enemy's defenses, the soldiers enjoyed rioting and looting while joking about finding the Moonstone. During this time, the cousins, who had been separated during the preceding fight, were assigned to restore order. Due to the frenzy that inflamed his "fiery temper," however, Herncastle was in no condition to carry out that assignment. He was culpable, in his cousin's estimation, not only because he stole the diamond, but also because he may have murdered the Brahmin priests, disguised as officers in Sultan Tippoo's household, who guarded it.<sup>6</sup> The difficulty, however, is that there was no eyewitness who could say, without a doubt, that he saw Herncastle commit a criminal offense. As Herncastle's cousin entered the room where the supposed theft and murders occurred, he walked past two slain Indians, dressed as officers in Tippoo's guard. He also saw a third, "mortally wounded," at the Colonel's feet, pointing to a dagger, dripping blood, that Herncastle was holding in his hand. The knife housed the diamond in its handle. Confronted with images of carnage and desecration, the narrator assumed that Herncastle had killed the Indians and taken

the dagger. But he also admitted that he had “no proof” that the Colonel murdered anyone: “I cannot say that my own eyes saw the deed committed” (493). Even though General Baird declared afterward that anyone “detected in the fact,” caught red-handed in the act of looting, would be hanged, Colonel Herncastle was not prosecuted. As they were leaving, the narrator solicited an explanation of the incident from Herncastle, who refused to explain his conduct. The cousins parted on unfriendly terms. Herncastle’s reputation for violence and treachery, as attested to in the Prologue, though not proven beyond doubt, explains why Lady Verinder refused to speak with him when he arrived, during one of Rachel’s previous birthday celebrations, before he bequeathed the diamond to her, hoping to make amends with his sister (523).<sup>7</sup>

This is the point in the Prologue where fact and fable become ambiguously confused.<sup>8</sup> By portraying one cousin as the proponent of British law and order, founded on first-hand evidence, and portraying the other as the advocate of Oriental myth, based on the violence and chaos of the imagination, Collins establishes a tension, a binary opposition, between West and East. Although dealing with an event at the end of the eighteenth century, Collins’s dramatization of the mingling of fact and myth is in keeping with a barrage of contemporary accounts dealing with the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. Patrick Brantlinger has described that phenomenon as a “deluge of eyewitness accounts, journal articles, histories, poems and plays,” literature that, he argues, reveals the “racist pattern of blaming the victim” (199-200). As we can tell from both the Prologue and Betteredge’s account of the Indian jugglers, Collins plays off of the public outrage against the sepoys,

Indian mercenary soldiers paid by the East India Company, in order to sensationalize the events of his romance.<sup>9</sup>

The binary opposition that the author establishes between the Orient and the Occident is, of course, a false polarity. In English literature, the romantic imagination has traditionally represented the Orient as a culture marked by disorder, violence, untold riches, and magic. Barry Milligan remarks, “From Medieval accounts of the East to the first English translations of the *Arabian Nights* in the early eighteenth century through the rash of Romantic poems on Oriental themes, the English reading public showed a ravenous appetite for representations of cunning caliphs, sensual sultans, and other exotic characters in Oriental settings thick with an atmosphere of magic and violence” (18). Keeping in mind, then, the tension that Collins establishes among eyewitness testimonials, the supposedly objective accounts of various narrators, and the romantic backdrop, the legend of the Moonstone, that unifies those texts, I will discuss how Collins reveals fractures within British national identity. Those fractures are indicated, initially, by the fact that it is a British officer, Herncastle, whom we see exhibiting the stereotypically “Oriental” characteristic of a wild, violent, romantic imagination. I will first discuss anxieties based on family relationships, followed by those related to gender expectations, racial attitudes, and class ranks. I will end by discussing the role that Ezra Jennings plays in the novel. I will explain how Collins portrays him as a hybrid character, a symbolic healer of cultural wounds.

#### I. Fractures Based on Family Relationships

Rachel's birthday celebration supports the idea of the Moonstone as a symbol of British anxiety about the family because the whole affair goes badly, with petty squabbles, social blunders, and misunderstandings, a blight brought on by the "cursed Diamond," as Betteredge calls it (544).<sup>10</sup> During the party, when Blake gives the gem to Rachel, Lady Verinder is standing, with her back to the company, staring out the window. She is holding the Colonel's Will. Betteredge says, "Was the legacy of the Moonstone a proof that she had treated her brother with cruel injustice? Or was it a proof that he was worse than the worst she had ever thought of him?" (540). This issue, whether Herncastle's gift was a blessing or a curse, is the fulcrum that impels tension in the narrative. The legal document proved nothing about the Colonel's motives, whether he gave his niece the diamond in hopes of receiving his sister's forgiveness, since she believed that he had tainted the family honor, or whether he intended the gift as a means of taking revenge on those who had wrongly accused him. In many English novels of this period, wills, the exemplary legal forms for the perpetuation of social structures and the transmission of family interests, symbolize the fundamental state of society. The inconclusiveness of the Colonel's Will in accounting for his motives points to a flaw in the British national identity. Collins shows us that the British legal system, mired in a deluge of confusing official documents that perpetuate the patriarchal social order, creates anxieties within the upper-class English family.

Before Blake's trouble with Rachel began, for example, Betteredge explained that Mr. Blake the elder was equally famous for his "great riches" and his "great suit at law." The politician had wasted years, as do the principals in

the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-1853), expending time and energy trying to prove his title to a dukedom:

How many years he went on worrying the tribunals of his country to turn out the Duke in possession, and to put himself in the Duke's place—how many lawyers' purses he filled to bursting, and how many otherwise harmless people he set by the ears together disputing whether he was right or wrong—is more by a great deal than I can reckon up. His wife died, and two of his three children died, before the tribunals could make up their minds to show him the door and take no more of his money (501).

As the steward tells us, after the tribunals stopped considering his lawsuit, Mr. Blake, wanting to get even with British institutions that he no longer trusted, sent Blake to another country, Germany, to receive his academic education. While his son was away, even though Mr. Blake distrusted the legal establishment, he continued working within it to prove his claim to the dukedom. In parliament, Betteredge says, Mr. Blake was hoping to publish a “statement on the subject of the Duke in possession,” a document that remained unfinished. Later, Blake, having completed his academic training, but also having acquired some debt, returned to England. He was carrying out his father's commission to deliver the Moonstone to Rachel when he surprised Betteredge and Spearman at the Shivering Sand. After Spearman left, Blake attempted to understand Herncastle, the enigmatic nature of his bequest, by piecing together what his father had told him with what Betteredge knew about the soldier. From the steward, Blake learned that both he and Mr.



Blake, in agreement with the public's view, regarded the "wicked Colonel" as an eccentric outsider. Everyone condemned him, including his "friends and relations," because he had kept the diamond, in "flat defiance of assassination in India" and in "flat defiance of public opinion in England." Rumors had spread about him smoking opium, collecting old books, trying experiments in chemistry, and carousing with slum-dwellers in the streets of London. Hearsay portrayed him, "as in a picture," Betteredge says, leading a "solitary, vicious, underground" life (515). From the steward's description of Herncastle, his fear of assassination, and his criminal reputation, we can see how Collins again, as in the Prologue, ambiguously confuses the perception of fact with the violence of Oriental imagination. The steward also explained that Herncastle had attempted twice, on separate occasions of Rachel's birthday, to reconcile with his sister. The first time, when he appeared in person, Betteredge, following Lady Verinder's instructions, turned him away without an audience. On the second attempt, a clergyman sent a letter to her, stating that the Colonel forgave her, and everyone else, as he lay on his deathbed. Even though the steward admitted that he had seen Herncastle only once, face-to-face, the Colonel's attempts to put things right with his family did not change Betteredge's perception of him as a rogue.

From Betteredge's account, we learn, in other words, that the family we are dealing with is riven by dissensions and is in conflict over its place in society. If we are to take this as a representative upper-class British family, then we must conclude that family patriarchs are most to blame for that agonizing state of affairs because they spend so much time, energy, and money in pursuit of political power

and social status. The death of Mr. Blake's wife, along with that of two of his children, whom he ignores, apparently, while he wages an expensive court battle, suggests that the male head of the household is most responsible for undermining the stability and vitality of the family. The stability is disturbed in part because, in order to carry out his pursuit of status and privilege, Mr. Blake wastes large sums of money enriching lawyers, their "purses filled to bursting," who prey on his vanity. The debt that Blake accumulates while living on the Continent reinforces the point that male power and privilege are supported by expenditures that place a debilitating burden on the family. As we see later, Blake's unstable financial situation becomes an issue in his relationship with Rachel so that she agrees, at one point, to marry Ablewhite (684). Ablewhite's proposal is persuasive, in fact, because Rachel believes that he will provide her with financial security. Blake, on the other hand, still owes money from his investment in a restaurant, and is visited in England by a dun from the Continent.

The pursuit of power by fathers also has unwanted consequences for English society as a whole. As we can tell from Betteredge's mention of "otherwise harmless people," whom Mr. Blake "set by the ears together" disputing his case, his quest for power spreads discord throughout civil society. It disturbs fluid social relationships by introducing contentious legal issues that rend the fabric of society. Collins implies that such disputes devour the collective energy of the British nation so that little, or none, remains to sustain the institution of the family. Betteredge's portrait of Herncastel complements his image of Mr. Blake because it shows how the legal system, rather than working to mitigate anxieties, as it should,

contributes uncertainty and confusion that disrupts the family. The Colonel's Will adds to the suspicion, already attached to him through disparaging rumors, that he is a thief. While everyone knows that Herncastle has possession of the diamond, the Will, a supposedly objective legal instrument, casts doubt on his motives for bequeathing it to his niece. At the birthday party, Betteredge says that Lady Verinder took the "blackest view possible of the Colonel's motives" (541). The letter that the clergyman wrote for Herncastle, in an attempt to intercede for him, implies, too, that the institution of the Church is powerless to allay the anxiety that the legal system creates, and may even contribute to it. The clergyman's letter, like the Will, did nothing to repair the Colonel's relationship with his sister.

During their conversation about Herncastle at the Shivering Sand, Blake told Betteredge what his father had said. When Mr. Blake discovered that his brother-in-law had some valuable papers that might help him win the lawsuit, he visited him "on pretence of welcoming him back to England" (518). Herncastle recognized that Mr. Blake would not risk his reputation, without sufficient cause, by being connected with a pariah like himself. Knowing, then, that the politician had a hidden motive, the Colonel persuaded him to confess his true purpose. Afterward, in a letter, Herncastle proposed an exchange of services. Since he believed that his life was threatened, he proposed that Mr. Blake should safeguard the Moonstone. The skeptical politician did not believe, however, that the "wretched crystal" had any monetary value. Further, if the Colonel's life was threatened, all he needed to do was "apply to the police."<sup>11</sup> Even so, Mr. Blake's low opinion of Herncastle did not stop him from accepting his offer: "[I]f the only

way of getting at the valuable papers he possessed was by accepting a matter of opium as a matter of fact, my father was quite willing to take the ridiculous responsibility imposed on him” (519). After some years had passed, while safeguarding the diamond, Mr. Blake received a letter from his brother-in-law which stated that he was dying and that he needed help making his Will. The politician then sent his legal representative, Mr. Bruff, to him. The lawyer found the Colonel living in a suburban villa, with only his “dogs, cats, and birds to keep him company.” At his bedside, Mr. Bruff, following Herncastle’s dictation, wrote the final clauses of the Will. Blake said, “The first clause provided for the safe keeping and support of his animals. The second founded a professorship of experimental chemistry at a northern university. The third bequeathed the Moonstone as a birthday present to his niece, on condition that my father would act as executor” (519).

Here Collins sustains the adversarial tension established in the Prologue. He sets Mr. Blake’s continuing pursuit of a dukedom, his recurring appeals to the rule of law, against the legacy of the fabled Moonstone, Herncastle’s defiance of public opinion, the image of him as an outcast. That tension is complicated, however, by the bargain that Mr. Blake makes with Herncastle and by the contradictory portraits of the soldier presented by Betteredge and Blake. According to the steward, the Colonel’s friends and family “outlawed him” on the basis of rumor, information that matched the stereotypical image of a common thief. From Mr. Blake’s information, however, the conditions of the Colonel’s life, as Mr. Bruff found him, did not accord with the “picture” of the soldier that Betteredge presented.

Herncastle's altruism, as suggested by his love of animals, his philanthropy, and his interest in the advancement of science, all contradict Mr. Blake's, and the public's, perception of him as a scoundrel.<sup>12</sup> So do his frustrated attempts, first in the flesh, then through inter- intermediaries, the legal system and the Church, to reconcile with his family. From Blake's remark, in which he called himself an "imaginative man," he was inclined to believe that the Indians who had followed him were actual conspirators trying to recover the Moonstone. But the image of the Colonel that his father, and everyone else, accepted as genuine, created doubt in his mind. The ambiguity of the entire situation resembles the image of the shivering sand, with "hundreds of people suffocating under it—all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps" (510). Collins draws parallels, then, between the disordered family, full of tensions and uncertainties, and the legal system, fraught with contention based on its parliamentary laws and documents. That ambiguity runs not only through civil law, as suggested by the Colonel's Will, but also through military law, reaching as far back as Britain's historic relationship with India.<sup>13</sup>

Betteredge does not want to admit, however, that the foundations of the family he serves are made of shivering sands. He is greatly pleased, therefore, when Blake decides to deposit the diamond in the bank in Frizinghall before delivering it to Rachel. He views the young gentleman's firm decision, in contrast to the French, German, and Italian "sides" of him, as genuinely English, as Christian: "Here (God bless it!)," Betteredge remarks, "was the original English foundation of him showing through all the foreign varnish at last! Here was the

Master Franklin I remembered, coming out in the good old way at the prospect of a ride . . . . Saddle a horse for him? I would have saddled a dozen horses, if he could only have ridden them all” (526). The steward responds jubilantly to Blake’s decision because he recognizes that the gentleman, though he had been exposed on the Continent to philosophies that challenged Britain’s assumption of socio-political, intellectual, and racial dominance, remains loyal to his family. Although Betteredge recognizes the condescension and the hypocrisy of Mr. Blake’s conduct, sending his son to school out of the country, while “remaining snug in England, to improve his fellow-countrymen in the Parliament House,” he applauds Blake’s decision to trust in the banking system. The decision confirms his faith in the institutions that his father, a member of parliament, publically endorses. To the steward, Blake’s decision reveals his essence, the “English foundation” that resides beneath the charming façade of foreign “varnish” that he flaunts when he returns to England. The steward regards Blake’s experience on the Continent as a kind of veneer that conceals his authentic English identity. Blake’s decision to deposit the Moonstone in Mr. Ablewhite’s bank, an institution underwritten by British legal and economic authority, dissolves what Betteredge regards as a superficial coat of anti-British sentiment. Indeed, the name *Ablewhite* implies Anglo-Saxon power, the socio-political, racial superiority that Mr. Blake, and the Ablewhites, assume. Blake’s resolve bolsters Betteredge’s ideological belief that the British possess an edge of cultural superiority: social, religious, political, and racial dominance over Others, Europeans as well as indigenous peoples of the empire.

As Betteredge explains later, however, from information that he received in

a letter from Jeffco, attendant to Mr. Blake the elder, Blake's obedience in carrying out his father's commission does not end happily. After the theft of the diamond, when Blake, whom the steward refers to as Mr. Franklin, asks his father for help with Rachel, the politician is much too busy with a private bill to attend to his son's problems:

Mr. Blake the elder was up to his eyes in the business of the House of Commons, and was amusing himself at home that night with the favorite parliamentary plaything they call 'a private bill.' Mr. Jeffco himself showed Mr. Franklin into his father's study. 'My dear Franklin! why do you surprise me in this way? Anything wrong?' 'Yes; something wrong with Rachel; I am dreadfully distressed about it.' 'Grieved to hear it. But I can't listen to you now.' 'When can you listen?' 'My dear boy! I won't deceive you. I can listen at the end of the session, not a moment before. Good-night' (642-43).

Disillusioned by his father's unwillingness to help him deal with Rachel's inexplicable withdrawal from him, Blake leaves London for an unspecified foreign destination, "Europe, Asia, Africa, or America" (643).<sup>14</sup> The elder Mr. Blake's quest for status and privilege subordinates a female's, Rachel's, domestic problems to a male's ambition. His quest also subordinates the needs of his son and his family to his career pursuits. This scenario suggests that the politician subscribes to the nineteenth-century ideology of separate spheres.<sup>15</sup> Blake's abrupt departure to a foreign land implies a shift in his values that began with his inquiry, on the

Shivering Sand, into Herncastle's motives. The parting of son and father, "up to his eyes" in English ink, official paperwork that preserves the established legal order, amplifies the dramatic tension of the narrative. It suggests that Blake is questioning the importance that his father assigns to the perpetuation of male privilege through the patriarchal political system.

Like the narrator of the Prologue, Mr. Blake gives priority to law and order, first-hand evidence, the insular network of formal documents and protocols, what he regards as the facts of experience, over people. As we can tell from the narrator's satiric tone, Mr. Blake's preoccupation, "amusing himself" at home with the "favorite parliamentary plaything," a private bill, implies the ideological blindness that comes from his faith, not in the rule of law per se, but in his ability to manipulate it in order to advance his own interests. Certainly, in order to make the bargain with Herncastle, Mr. Blake deceived him. He outwardly accepted, as a "matter of fact," what he regarded as nothing more than his brother-in-law's fantasy about the diamond. Mr. Blake actually believed that the Moonstone was a "matter of opium," an invention that came from one of Herncastle's narcotic reveries, because he agreed with the popular image of him as a soldier who had acquired the habit, while in India, of smoking opium. In the absence of first hand evidence, Mr. Blake could not believe in the existence of the magnificent jewel. In other words, the politician went along with Herncastle's tale about the diamond, because he wanted the family papers and viewed them as an opportunity to exploit the ambiguities of the legal system. Even though Herncastle's violent treachery in India went against the letter of military law, and



against the spirit of family honor, his conduct, nevertheless, did lead to the family's legal ownership of the Moonstone. Further, since nobody in the family made any attempt to return the gem to the Indians, it is clear that Mr. Blake puts his faith in law and order only as long as they serve, or do not interfere with, what he sees as his family's interests. The undivided attention that Mr. Blake gives here to official legislation, then, ironically magnifies the condition of the legal establishment, contested and chaotic, that we have seen before. His unswerving faith in English jurisprudence shows a disregard for justice in society at large and has devastating consequences, even for the very family whose interests he is supposedly serving. Betteredge's mention, earlier, of Mr. Blake's unfinished paper, his hopes of publishing a statement on the Duke in Possession, is a metaphor that implies the futility of antagonisms fuelled by the endless bickering of legal contests. The fact that Mr. Blake did not win the lawsuit, that it was "unlucky," as Blake says, emphasizes the hapless, uncertain outcome of that squabbling.

In other words, as Collins presents it, the British legal system foments strife and discord that will continue to wreak chaos on the English family, conceivably, into perpetuity. The "flaw" at the center of Moonstone represents the anxiety that exists within the institution of the family, a stress that weakens the foundation upon which the British nation is built, a fracture represented by the constant wrangling over legal documents (520). Collins shows us that the institution of the family cannot be disentangled from the ambiguities, conflicts, and heritage of injustice in English law, and in legal and national history.<sup>16</sup> To put it another way, there is an anxiety here based on the fact that the nation's problems are the family's problems.

They enter into the family, even in its most intimate aspects, the affective relationships of family members, such as the intended engagement of Blake and Rachel. Even though we expect Mr. Blake, as a member of parliament, to draw up legislation, his obsession with a lawsuit that consumes energy over time, while subordinating his family's interests to his public ambitions, illustrates a fracture in the British national identity.

The penetration of the legal establishment into family affairs is dramatized most obviously through the efforts of the police detectives, Superintendent Seegrave and Sergeant Cuff. As I have explained, after Seegrave upsets the servants by confining them to their rooms, Cuff dismisses him, suggesting that he is incompetent because he places no importance on the smeared paint on Rachel's bedroom door. But even though Cuff carries his investigation much further than Seegrave does, in the end, the search that he conducts through rational methods, somewhat like those employed by Edgar Allan Poe's fictional detective, August Dupin, fails to solve the mystery. The difference between Cuff's methods and those of Dupin, however, is that Poe's detective privileges intuition, "poetic" reason, which encompasses "mathematical" reason.<sup>17</sup> Cuff's logical analysis, though it uncovers clues and provides leads, comes up short. What stands out dramatically about his inquiry, then, is not his competence as a policeman, though he is famous for that, but rather the narrow scope of his professional practice, based on the assumption that first-hand evidence and logical proofs alone can untangle any conundrum. For example, during his investigation, Cuff concludes that Rachel engaged Spearman as an accomplice because the young lady assumed that legal

authorities would naturally suspect a former thief, rather than herself, of stealing the diamond (599). When Betteredge figures out that Cuff suspects Rachel, he loses his temper, as I have said, and collars the policeman. After recovering his composure somewhat, the steward still cannot accept the possibility that Rachel is the thief. Betteredge's father-like relationship with her, his having known her since she was a child, and his understanding that her integrity is beyond reproach prevents him from accepting the policeman's accusation. The butler thinks, "Miss Rachel had climbed upon my knees, and pulled my whiskers, many and many a time when she was a child." The tension of this scene comes from Cuff's supreme confidence—"I don't suspect," said Sergeant Cuff, "I know"—an assertion of state authority that staggers Betteredge.<sup>18</sup> Cuff even suggests that Betteredge can collar him again if doing so would help him vent his anger. Betteredge is so distraught, in fact, that even though he resorts to his relaxing ritual of smoking tobacco on the terrace while perusing Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, he cannot calm down.

Here Collins presents an image of state authority attempting to insinuate itself between family members in the private sphere. Cuff makes false accusations about Rachel, ascribing attributes to her, deception and greed, that question both Lady Verinder's and Betteredge's roles as exemplars of her moral education. During the exercise of his official duty, Cuff's complete faith in tangible proofs, the paint smear and the nightgown primarily, lead him to a false conclusion. In a sense, the policeman is blinded by reason as he follows his logic across the moral borders of Rachel's privacy. His investigation is so invasive, in fact, that she leaves her

childhood home and moves to Frizinghall.<sup>i9</sup> In Cuff's estimation, that move casts even more suspicion on her. Betteredge, on the other hand, decides that even if Cuff were King Solomon, he would not be persuaded that Rachel would devise such a devilish scheme. Betteredge's common sense, judgment based on instinct, confirmed by experience, turns out to be right. Even though Cuff presents undeniable facts, that Rachel would not agree to have her wardrobe examined, that she moved from her mother's home, and that she insulted Blake, the person who hired him, Betteredge, somewhat humorously, refutes his assertions: "I am, (thank God) constitutionally superior to reason" (626). In this situation, Betteredge, overcome by "detective fever," turns out to be a better investigator than Cuff does. As the author shows us, the steward trusts his instincts, sympathetic knowledge based on his close acquaintance with Rachel, her moral integrity, across time-- rather than the rational, analytical tools of the detective's search. We should keep in mind, however, that while Betteredge is proven right in relation to Cuff, he is often proven wrong, blinded by ideology, in other situations.

In his professional capacity, Cuff had no sympathetic understanding of either Rachel or Spearman. In contrast to Lady Verinder, and to the matron of the reform school, who said that she was "one in a thousand," Cuff stereotyped the housemaid (507). His perception of her was based on information about her background before she entered the reform school, factual data that elided the harsh circumstances of her family life. Those circumstances included the fact that her father was a gentleman who had abandoned his family (745). Cuff's view of Spearman was shaped by his legal expertise, knowledge that focused on her

underground connections and her talents as a thief at the “top of her profession” (628). In his mind, Spearman’s criminal past made her a logical choice for Rachel’s scheme. But the policeman’s knowledge of her, based on institutional systems of discovery, was much different than Betteredge’s sympathetic understanding of the housemaid. When he tried to console her, on the Shivering Sand, before Blake arrived, she was downcast because she believed that she could never overcome the shame of her criminal past. The housemaid’s woeful tale aroused the steward’s compassion. That provided him with an intimate understanding, similar to his relationship with Rachael, of her unimpeachable integrity (510). After Spearman’s suicide, he even compared her to his daughter, Penelope, as both were the same age (618). Conversely, Cuff’s portrait of Spearman was based on the same sort of thinking that the public used to demonize Herncastle: logical conclusions founded on the supposed facts of eyewitness accounts, then imaginatively rewoven into a pattern of guilty behavior. Through Cuff’s focus on first-hand evidence, Collins shows us how state power, based on impersonal knowledge that is detached from human affection, can create agonizing conflicts within the family in the private sphere. In this novel, that struggle is fraught with even more anxiety because it is intertwined in the national and international history of legal ambiguity and conflicts that we have seen. This is the vexed space that Blake negotiates in order to reunite with Rachel, to find out what happened to the Moonstone.

In order to further magnify the anxieties produced by the relationship between the family and the legal mechanisms of the state, Collins portrays Cuff as having another dimension to his character that he reveals only when he is not

engaged in police work. The author portrays that side through Cuff's hobby, the study and nurture of roses, a private "taste" that has more meaning to him, perhaps, than the dogged pursuit of lawbreakers: "Show me any two things more opposite one from the other than a rose and thief," Cuff told Betteredge, "and I'll correct my tastes accordingly" (569). Even in the midst of his investigation, Cuff took time to enjoy animated talks with Mr. Begbie, Lady Verinder's gardener, about the growing of roses. Betteredge was mystified by these lively conversations because they struck him as incompatible with Cuff's behavior while he was performing his professional duties. Those friendly arguments suggest that the policeman has an intimate, "female" side that is associated with his hobby of growing roses and with the housemaid, Spearman. Her first name, Rosanna, connotes roses, so the association between her name and his hobby suggests that his other side is feminine. Ironically, Cuff could not unravel the mystery because he did not depend at all on that side of his constitution. When the policeman, having decided on retirement, is about to leave, Betteredge sees him walking arm-in-arm with Mr. Begbie, and they are still carrying on their debate. The steward remarks, "Ah, well! I own I couldn't help liking the Sergeant—though I hated him all the time" (637). In other words, Betteredge cannot make sense of the contradiction that he sees in the split between the two sides of Cuff. The steward hates the policeman's professional side, but he likes the private person. Here Collins connects Cuff's female side with intuition, the sort of instinctive knowledge that Blake does not fully understand until late in the novel. When Cuff is about to leave, to go home to tend his roses, he makes three predictions, "prophesies" as Betteredge calls them, that

all turn out true. He tells the steward that he will hear from a village family, the Yollands, that he will hear something about the Indians again, and that he will receive news of a moneylender, Septimus Luker (636). Cuff's predictions illustrate the power of instinct, knowledge that is nurtured by the intimacy of social and familial relations, as Collins presents it.

The author includes the debates between Cuff and the gardener because they present a stark contrast to the formal, traditional channels of male power that the detective's professional work represents. That power failed in the end because the evidence that he depended on could not penetrate the deeper, complex terrain of Rachel's and Spearman's hearts. The detective could not fathom that Rachel refused to talk about the theft because she was protecting her lover. Similarly, Cuff failed to understand Spearman's behavior because his logical analysis could not detect the intangible nature of her feelings for Blake. Her love of the gentleman explains why she blushed when she saw him on the Shivering Sand, and why she left without speaking: "[H]er complexion turned a beautiful red, which I had never seen in it before," Betteredge said (511). Her love of Blake also explains why she entered the library, against house rules, to speak with him, and why she protected him from the law by burying his nightgown in the sea. Spearman's first name, Rosanna, its connotation of roses, symbolizes the fertile, regenerative power and beauty of sympathetic imagination, as Collins presents it, knowledge rooted in the intimacy of social relationships. Spearman killed herself, in fact, because Blake, following Cuff's logic, could not imagine her as anyone other than a thief from the London slums. This is the same sort of thinking that informed his father's

perception of Herncastle. We can see, then, that Limping Lucy's accusation that Blake killed Spearman was true. The policeman failed to solve the mystery of the Moonstone because, unlike his hobby, which depended on an intimate knowledge of roses, on the culture of living things, his professional work depends on his "knowing" Rachel and Rosanna from a detached standpoint, concerned only with publically accepted facts. Collins's portrait of Cuff reveals the contradiction that exists between the stereotypical image, backed and driven by institutional authority, of Others such as Herncastle or Spearman, and the bonds of the family that penetrate deep into the fabric of society. Meanwhile, the opposed sides of the policeman's identity, public and private—emphatically masculine, on the one hand, and yet oddly feminine, on the other—suggest other contradictions brought about by gender expectations.

## II. Fractures Based on Gender Expectations

The contradiction between the gender expectations of Victorian society and the human constitution, that is, what Collins portrays as the instincts and sympathies that drive human behavior, presents another fracture in British national identity. Collins's portraits of the Ablewhites, Dr. Candy, and Mr. Murthwaite illustrate the anxiety that underlies Victorian concepts of gender. In the competition between the two males, Blake and Ablewhite, for Rachel's hand in marriage, for example, Betteredge prefers Ablewhite, partly because his physical features project an image of Anglo-Saxon male superiority. A few days before the birthday celebration, the steward says, "Mr. Godfrey was, in point of size, the finest man by



far of the two. He stood over six feet high; he had a beautiful red and white colour; a smooth round face, shaved as bare as your hand; and a head of lovely long flaxen hair” (534). Collins presents Ablewhite’s tall, robust physique, as well as his Scandinavian features, as the handsome, much admired type of the Northern European male. His “beautiful red and white colour,” the colors of the Union Jack, suggests that he is a figure who represents British national identity. In Betteredge’s view, Ablewhite’s physical features make him a better candidate than Blake for Rachel’s hand. But the steward also favors Ablewhite, a “ladies’ man by temperament,” because of the alluring power of his performance as an evangelical Christian. His eloquent oratory, like that of a stage player, endears him to everyone, especially females.<sup>20</sup>

Collins, however, shows us that Ablewhite’s image is deceptive and his performance a sham. In his charade as a philanthropist, he preys on women like Miss Clack, who is physically attracted to him, with sentimental shows, ostensibly for the support of his charity foundation. A barrister by profession, Ablewhite employs theatrical techniques, physical gestures, and stage props, as well as oratory, to promote himself as a devout Christian (534). His strong, masculine features are alluring to the females in his audience. He adopts a social disguise, then, that allows him to capitalize on his gender role, to entice females, and to exploit them financially and also sexually, as Betteredge implies. His masculinity, wrapped up in the theatrical con-artistry of his social performance, is the chief attribute that gives him the edge that Betteredge attributes to him in the competition with Blake.

In contrast to Ablewhite, the appearance of his younger sisters, the Miss Ablewhites, as the dinner guests arrive, strikes the butler as so unusual that he gives them a nickname:

They were nearly as big as their brother, spanking, yellow haired, rosy lasses, overflowing with superabundant flesh and blood; bursting from head to foot with health and spirits. The legs of the poor horses trembled with carrying them; and when they jumped from their saddles (without waiting to be helped), I declare they bounced on the ground as if they were made of india-rubber.

Everything the Miss Ablewhites said began with a large O; everything they did was done with a bang; and they giggled and screamed, in season and out of season, on the smallest provocation. Bouncers—that's what I call them (539).

The unrestrained vitality of the Bouncers clashes with the stereotype of prim and proper, somewhat reserved, Victorian ladies that is implied in the name *Miss Ablewhites*. Collins's image of the females is freighted with surplus energy because the vitality of two people is compressed within a single identity. Since they are almost as big as their brother, their physical presence alone undercuts the stereotypical image of the female who is inferior, culturally subservient, to Anglo-Saxon males. Besides being physically large, robust like their brother, the Bouncers also shatter gender expectations because they ignore social customs, such as waiting to be helped off of their horses. Collins presents their hurry to join the gathering as a natural impulse that makes any concern for social custom

bothersome and redundant. He portrays the “rosy lasses” as energy that spontaneously flows from nature, uninhibited by culture. They disturb the company with their raucous “O” screams, and their rowdy “bang” behavior. The “superabundant flesh and blood,” the life that they exude, is unbridled instinct, as Collins presents it, that cannot be contained within the bounds of social decorum. After Blake hands the Moonstone to Rachel, the Bouncers kneel on either side of her, “devouring the jewel with their eyes, and screaming with ecstasy every time it flashed on them in a new light” (540). Even though Collins seems to poke fun at the sisters and their philistine attitude, their natural exuberance accentuates the artifice of their brother’s, a swindler’s, social behavior. In fact, Ablewhite is the only guest at Rachel’s party who is not astonished at the diamond. After blurting out a raucous “O” himself, Betteredge says, “He put his arm round each of his sister’s waists, and, looking compassionately backwards and forwards between the Diamond and me, said, ‘Carbon, Betteredge! mere carbon, my good friend, after all!’” The nickname *Bouncers* suits the sisters far better than their polite appellation, *Miss Ablewhites*, because it suggests that they are naturally impelled, like “india-rubber,” away from the ideology of Anglo-Saxon male superiority that their brother embodies. In other words, Collins presents the wholly natural response of the sisters to the Moonstone as a contrast to their brother, who acts as though he is unimpressed by the jewel. Collins implies here that anxiety within the English family stems not only from the intrusions of the legal system, as we have seen, but also from gender roles that empower males.

During the dinner with the Bouncers, a female, Rachel, is seated between

two males, Dr. Candy and Mr. Murthwaite, the famous expert on Indian customs. That physical arrangement presents a visual component that brings into focus conflicting ideological positions within the discussion, marked by awkward “gaps of silence,” that takes place at the dinner table. After Blake gives Rachel the diamond, she wears it around her neck like a brooch. Everyone’s eyes are on her. But the only guests who say anything about the gem are the doctor and the ethnologist.<sup>21</sup> In this scene, Collins’s compelling portrait of the Bouncers, their exuberant spirit, is associated with the figure of Dr. Candy, especially his delight in social entertainment: “This was a pleasant, companionable little man, with the drawback, however, I must own, of being too fond, in season and out of season, of his joke, and of his plunging in rather a headlong manner into talk with strangers, without waiting to feel his way first. In society he was constantly making mistakes, and setting people unintentionally by the ears together.” As the name *Candy* suggests, the doctor’s behavior is marked by a capricious, childlike indulgence in the pleasures of society. His enjoyment of company is so great, however, that, somewhat like the Bouncers, his natural spirit overflows the bounds of social propriety, though he tries to be polite. He creates anxiety, in fact, because he does not accommodate the role that society has established for a professional man of science. We can see this, for example, in the social blunder that he makes when speaking of Professor Threadgall, Mrs. Threadgall’s deceased husband. When given the opportunity, the professor’s wife likes to bring up her husband’s name, referring to him as though he were still alive. Betteredge says that she spoke of anatomy as the professor’s “favourite recreation in his leisure hours.” Not knowing

of the scholar's death, Dr. Candy politely recommends to the lady that her husband should visit some "fine skeletons" at the College of Surgeons. While the dinner guests sit in silence, embarrassed by his remark, Mrs. Threadgall whispers to Dr. Candy that her husband is dead. Unable to hear what she says, the physician adds that the professor can be admitted to the College with a member's card. Following Betteredge's and Rachel's attempts to alert him of his mistake, Dr. Candy, adding even further to the embarrassment of the company, continues to extend his courtesy to Mrs. Threadgall. He asks her for her husband's address so that he can send his card to the professor. The humorous scene concludes as Mrs. Threadgall, not only mortified but also frustrated, informs Dr. Candy, emphatically, that her husband has been dead for ten years. The steward comments, "Excepting for the Bouncers, who burst out laughing, such a blank now fell on the company, that they might have all been going the way of the Professor" (544-545).

This incident contributes to Collins's portrait of Dr. Candy as an unlikely physician who creates anxiety because, regardless of his good intentions, his natural impulses overrun his attempt to conform to gender expectations. The author shows that conflict by contrasting Professor Threadgall's wife, her mounting embarrassment, with Dr. Candy's vitality, figured in his apparent inanity, his clumsy social mistakes. Of course, the physician's social blunder is Mrs. Threadgall's fault, as much as Dr. Candy's, because she assumes that "every able-bodied adult in England ought to know" of her husband's death. With qualities of childlike innocence that place him somewhat at odds, however, with the category "able-bodied adult," Dr. Candy is a victim of her expectation that all males are part

of an imaginary social club unified by gender. This scene accentuates the lack of rapport between the expectations of polite society, presented as respect for the dead, and Dr. Candy's natural vitality. At the end, the Bouncers' loud laughter sets the physician's lively, animated spirit against the gloom of embarrassed silence that falls over the guests at the dinner table. It is the spontaneous pouring out of Dr. Candy's natural impulses, in fact, that keeps him from observing social traditions with the reverence that, the company feels, a venerated figure like Professor Threadgall is due.

Even so, Collins's portrayal of the dinner party suggests that the guests, while they feel obligated to observe social customs, are not too happy with the gender roles that society expects them to play. After the awkward silence brought about by Dr. Candy's social blunder, Betteredge says, "The rest of them were nearly as provoking in their different ways as the doctor himself. When they ought to have spoken, they didn't speak, or when they did speak were perpetually at cross purposes" (545). In other words, the Moonstone, as Rachel wears it in full view of the company, brings out the fact that gender roles reveal chaos and confusion that are disruptive, not only to the family, but to British society as a whole, and to the image, recognized by other countries, of a supposedly civilized nation.<sup>22</sup> The competition of the two males, Ablewhite and Blake, for Rachel's hand in marriage, parallels the "wrangling" of the cousins in India, so that we can see how the confusion related to gender expectations is intertwined with imperial ventures. From these events, we can see how the male-dominated West constructs the Orient as female, as fertile ground for conquest. Even though military law forbade the

plunder of sacred Hindu treasures, expectations of Anglo-Saxon males demanded that Herculio take the Moonstone from what he and his fellow soldiers regarded as inferior people.<sup>23</sup> Because of the natural vitality that frees them from gender expectations, however, Dr. Candy and the Bouncers destabilize the gender binary that portrays the West as male overlords of the East, and thus prefigure, as it were, the return of the Moonstone to India.

Dr. Candy is unable to conform to the role, professional man of science, that is expected of him on this special occasion. On the surface, the physician's lack of discretion seems to contradict the professional competence that, as a male physician, he supposedly possesses. In fact, Dr. Candy's spontaneous behavior disguises his actual scientific acumen. Betteredge explains, "In his medical practice, he was a more prudent man; picking up his discretion (as his enemies said) by a kind of instinct, and proving generally to be right where more carefully conducted doctors turned out to be wrong" (543).<sup>24</sup> At the birthday party, Dr. Candy's casual remarks illustrate the power of his "instinct." He jokingly suggests that Rachel ought to let him burn the Moonstone, because doing so would "spare [her] a world of anxiety" about its safekeeping. As Rachel's experience afterward illustrates, his comment turns out to be prophetic. Dr. Candy clearly bases his judgment of others on hunches, intuitive knowledge similar to Betteredge's common sense, that sometimes contradict the expert advice of professional males such as Sergeant Cuff or Mr. Blake, the famous politician. We can see, then, that Collins's portrait of Dr. Candy is the reverse figure of Ablewhite. The physician's naturalness, the unintended social mistakes that turn some of his friends into

enemies, stands over against the barrister's crowd-pleasing theatrics. Nevertheless, the ground they share is the gender expectations that lead the public to misjudge them. Ablewhite exploits that ground, while Dr. Candy is victimized by it. This is the confusion that gender roles promote, revealing another fissure in the British national identity.

The anxiety brought about by the difference between society's gender expectations and the biological constitution of its members is most apparent in the argument that takes place between Blake and Dr. Candy. Following Dr. Candy's faux pas involving Professor Threadgall, Blake displays his foreign "varnish," as Betteredge calls it. Possibly inebriated, he insults the maiden aunt of the Vicar of Frizinghall, the lord of the manor, and a member of parliament by assuming a cavalier attitude toward them, toward the English values that they embrace. Ridiculing Christian moral virtue, Blake reveals his French side by speaking to the Vicar's maiden aunt on the subject of marital infidelity. Mocking British pragmatism, he shows his German side, the steward says, by talking sarcastically to the lord of the manor, questioning his authority, based on much practical experience, about the breeding of bulls. The best method of producing them, Blake jokes, is to evolve, in the mind, the idea of a perfect bull. He then shows his Italian side by responding facetiously to the politician, who fears that the spread of democracy will undermine the "ancient safeguards" of England. Humorously, the young gentleman says that, in a democracy, "Love, Music, and Salad" will replace those traditional values. While Betteredge regards Blake's verbal wit as an ill-mannered exhibition of his foreign training, the steward



comments that the “English side of him” turns up when he ridicules British doctors. Taking offense, Dr. Candy, in order to defend the medical establishment, subtly leads Blake into a discussion about sleep. He confesses that he has not been sleeping well recently. Their debate then turns into repartee about medicine. When Dr. Candy suggests to Blake that he ought to “go through a course of medicine” for his restlessness, he responds by saying that taking medicine is like “groping in the dark.” Dr. Candy’s retort turns Blake’s metaphor against him. The physician says that he is, “constitutionally speaking, groping in the dark after sleep,” adding that, “nothing but medicine [can] help him find it” (546). Here Dr. Candy reveals his prescience once again, as in his prediction of Rachel’s anxiety, by unintentionally foretelling that Blake will walk in his sleep that evening.

The irony of this dinner table scene is that in his playful but revealing ridicule of British values, in his social blunders, and in his heated debate, Blake displays the same sort of boyish female vitality that Dr. Candy and the Bouncers embody. The author constructs the scene so that Blake’s drinking, conceivably, brings his anxiety to the surface, making it more visible. He reveals his uneasiness by arrogantly debunking traditional English values. In the novel, Collins presents substances that affect Blake’s state of mind, alcohol and opium, as a means of registering character change. Later, Blake drinks grog in the afternoon, so that he can “face it,” that is, look truthfully at himself, while reading Spearman’s suicide letter (743). Both of these situations magnify Blake’s conflicted attempts to come to terms with the role that he plays as a young gentleman. Dr. Candy’s accurate forecasts illustrate the power of instinct, knowledge that is nurtured by the intimacy

of social and familial relations, as in Sergeant Cuff's female side. Blake's dispute with Dr. Candy shows, however, that he does not yet understand that power. Instead, he judges others by what he perceives as their conformity to or lack of alignment with the gender roles that society expects them to play. Ironically, even as he himself is disturbed by those who do not conform to those expectations, he disrupts them. In that sense, he is no different than Mrs. Threadgall. While Blake's affront to the dinner guests is analogous, in some respects, to Dr. Candy's social indiscretions, his playful mockery implies, as well, his underlying dissatisfaction with the patriarchal social order, the legal, political, and religious establishment that his father endorses. Yet even though Blake clearly has misgivings about his own place in society, about the role society expects him to play, he clings to a stereotypical view of gender. That explains his unprovoked verbal attack on Dr. Candy, who does not conform to the public's notion of a competent male physician. Expectations about his own role in society arouse anxieties that account for his fitful sleep and also explain his offensive remarks at the dinner table.

That night, after Rachel sees Blake take the Moonstone from her Indian cabinet, he cannot understand why she withdraws from him. But it is clear that anxiety about his role in society, "groping in the dark after sleep," as Dr. Candy says, prompts his theft of the diamond. The theft represents Blake's ideological blindness, since, at this point, he cannot see beyond the confusion embedded within Victorian concepts of gender. Early in the novel, he places himself, like Ablewhite, in a male role that is disingenuous, that emulates his father's patriarchal beliefs, that subordinates his lover's needs to his own ambitions. One fracture in the British

national identity that Collins presents, then, is based on society's expectation that males and females should adhere to strict gender roles, culturally constructed identities that muffle their natural instincts, which, otherwise, would allow them to know Others from a viewpoint beyond the pseudo-scientific rationality of scholarly experts. From this representation of the upper-class British family, we can see that gender expectations contribute greatly to the anxiety that attends family and social relationships. That anxiety reaches outward from the center to the periphery of empire, then returns to generate violence at home, as we see in Herncastle's fear of assassination and in Ablewhite's death at the hand of the Indians.

### III. Fractures Based on Anxieties about Race and Class

Besides the fracture in British national identity that gender expectations bring about, the unexpected arrival of the Indians, at Rachel's birthday party, hoping to recover the Moonstone, shows that the issue of race contributes, as well, to Blake's anxiety. The dinner party represents development in his struggle to make sense of the shivering sands because the Indians begin to disturb the young gentleman's notion of Anglo-Saxon male privilege. When Betteredge hears the sound of the Indians' drum, he heads outside to warn them to leave, but the Bouncers get there before him: "They whizzed out on the terrace like a couple of skyrockets, wild to see the Indians perform their tricks." When the Indian jugglers arrive with their English boy, the clairvoyant orphan whom they took from the London streets, ostensibly wanting to perform their magic show, the guests gather outside, with excited anticipation, to watch them.<sup>25</sup> As Betteredge explains, before

he could say “‘Lord bless us!’ the rogues were making their salaams; and the Bouncers were kissing the pretty little boy.” Prompted by Mr. Murthwaite’s comments, at the dinner table, about how dangerous Indians could be, both Betteredge and Blake shield Rachel from harm: “Mr. Franklin got on one side of Miss Rachel, and I put myself behind her. If our suspicions were right, there she stood, innocent of all knowledge of the truth, showing the Indians the Diamond in the bosom of her dress!” The steward continues,

I can’t tell you what tricks they performed. . . . I own I lost my head. The first thing I remember noticing was the sudden appearance on the scene of the Indian traveller, Mr. Murthwaite. Skirting the half-circle in which the gentlefolks stood or sat, he came quietly behind the jugglers and spoke to them on a sudden in a language of their own country.

If he had pricked them with a bayonet, I doubt if the Indians could have started and turned on him with more tigerish quickness than they did, on hearing the first words that passed his lips. The next moment they were bowing and salaaming to him in their most polite and snaky way (547).

Here Collins presents a symbolic image of Britain’s hegemonic culture. From Murthwaite’s portrayal of the Indians, the response of three males who want to protect the young lady is understandable. But the steward’s comment on their “suspicions” about Rachel, that she is “innocent of all knowledge of the truth,” suggests that his binary of us and them, though it captures the anxiety, elides the

ambiguity of the situation. Earlier, when Penelope told her father that the Indians were inducing the clairvoyant boy, by pouring “black stuff, like ink” into his palm, to give them information about Blake, the steward placed little stock in her report.<sup>26</sup> Rather than believe that the Indians could work actual magic for their own purposes, he concluded, instead, that they were simply rehearsing their jugglers’ performance, and that they were thieves on the prowl (505).<sup>27</sup> Even after Blake told Betteredge of his suspicion that he had been followed, the steward was skeptical. He could not fathom that the Indians were actual conspirators, even though Blake’s eyewitness account was compelling evidence that they were the incarnation of an ancient Hindu fable (517). Following Mr. Murthwaite’s portrayal of the Indians as a cult of secret assassins akin to thugs, however, the steward now believes that they are religious conspirators trying to recover the Moonstone, and that they will stop at nothing, even murder, to achieve their purpose.<sup>28</sup> This is the knowledge, assumed to be truthful, that incites the males to protect Rachel. Betteredge believes that they must shield her from the Indians’ violent, rapacious natures.<sup>29</sup> Here we can see how Collins amplifies the confusion, as he has done before, between what is perceived as fact, on the one hand, and the chaos of Oriental imagination, on the other, in order to build tension in the narrative. Even though Murthwaite is partly right, since the Indians do want to recover the Moonstone, his belief that their presence endangers Rachel has its basis in Western fables filled with stereotypes of Orientals as savages.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, it does seem that the Indians may have uncanny powers that defy the kind of trust in eyewitness knowledge and scholarly fact represented by Blake and Murthwaite. Murthwaite’s perception is no more certain,

in fact, than the portrait of Colonel Herncastle presented by his cousin in the Prologue, Sergeant Cuff's logical conclusion that Spearman was a thief, or the shivering face of the sands by the sea.

From the author's representation of British anxiety about race, it is clear that the males are guarding the cultural ground that simultaneously subordinates females and racial Others to white male privilege. The instinctive response of the Bouncers, not only their lack of apprehension about the Indians, but also the affection that they show the orphan boy, dramatizes ambiguities within the British assumption of racial superiority. The clairvoyant child represents the prescient power of instinct that we have seen before. As Collins presents it, that power is particularly vital in young people, not only in the Bouncers, but also, as we see later, in Mr. Bruff's boy clerk, Gooseberry. With his "extraordinary-looking eyes," he is the only person, including Cuff, who can track Ablewhite, disguised as a sailor, as he flees to London with the Moonstone (842-855).<sup>31</sup> Gooseberry's formal appellation, Octavius Guy, elevates to the revered status of classical antiquity his instinctive insight into people's motives.<sup>32</sup> Collins uses the innocence of children, or of adults like Dr. Candy, to critique Victorian culture. This explains the affection that the Bouncers show the orphan boy, who takes up a collection from the company, before the Indians depart. As unreserved children, the sisters set no cultural barriers between themselves and Others. Collins portrays their kiss as a spontaneous impulse that cuts through socio-political, legal, religious, and scientific ideologies that the Ablewhites and Betteredge espouse.<sup>33</sup> The "half-circle of gentry" that Mr. Murthwaite skirts around marks the symbolic border of Anglo-

Saxon superiority that the males want to safeguard. But the Bouncers, having already crossed over that insular space, bring into question the viability of Mr. Murthwaite's scientific expertise.

In this event, Collins sensationalizes the detective romance through Betteredge's "picture" of the Indians, a stereotype that presents them, in contradictory terms, as both intelligently deceptive and animal-like, "polite and snaky." The steward's remark that Mr. Murthwaite's words "pricked them like a bayonet" contributes to the sensational aspect of the image. In the aftermath of the Sepoy Rebellion, with accounts of Nana Sahib's atrocities at Cawnpore in wide circulation among Victorian readers, this scene clearly captures the racially charged, sexual resonance of those narratives.<sup>34</sup> The image of the Indians staring at Rachel, as she wears the Moonstone in the "bosom of her dress," echoes the fears inherent in popular accounts of the Sepoy Rebellion.<sup>35</sup> As D.A. Washbrook states, "[T]he security problem revealed by the Mutiny created racial divisions and suspicions which were to last forever" (Porter 419). The author presents a stereotyped image of the Indians precisely because he wants to draw the attention of Victorian readers, I think, to the inauthentic basis of those representations: to look beyond contemporary accounts, assumed by many to be factual, that portrayed them as satanic and animal-like, with the "patience of cats and the ferocity of tigers," as Murthwaite says afterward.

Ironically, it is not the interlopers, but rather the scholar, whose behavior most resembles that of a predatory animal as he sneaks around the genteel company and approaches the Indians from behind. This is the same sort of behavior, stalking

and voyeuristic, as in Cuff's intrusive search, that Mr. Murthwaite displays at the end of the novel. In disguise, he passes himself off to pious Indians, those making a pilgrimage to the holy shrine at Somnauth, as a "Hindoo-Boodhist" (871-872). The ethnologist regards the return of the Moonstone to its ancient shrine as a romantic interlude: "Imagine the moonlight of the East, pouring in unclouded glory over all," he says, as he listens to the "plaintive music played on stringed instruments." Mr. Murthwaite observes the Brahmins from the standpoint of a cultural outsider, a voyeur. Rather than providing authentic knowledge about racial Others, his romantic perspective represents the Western invasion of an epistemological space.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Collins presents Mr. Murthwaite's eyewitness observation of the Indians as information that is reported to Mr. Bruff in a personal letter that he receives from the ethnologist further emphasizes the subjective aspect of his account. We can see, then, how the Epilogue plays off of, and complements, the ambiguous tension of the Prologue. Mr. Murthwaite's surveillance of the Indians, not only at the dinner party, but also later, in India, stands in sharp contrast to the open affection and sense of delight that Rachel and the Bouncers show.

While Mr. Murthwaite influences Betteredge's attitude toward the Indians, the steward's perspective is also shaped by the racist imperialism that comes from his reading of *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>37</sup> Betteredge proudly proclaims Crusoe's wisdom, making allusions to Defoe's novel throughout *The Moonstone*. After Mr. Murthwaite puts an end to the jugglers' entertainment, an action that disappoints the Bouncers, Betteredge quotes Crusoe: "'Fear of Danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger itself, when apparent to the Eyes; and we find the



Burthen of Anxiety greater, by much, than the Evil which we are anxious about” (551). In his typical fashion, the steward endows Crusoe with the authority of a biblical prophet. In doing so, Betteredge does not differentiate between his immediate, lived experience and Defoe’s representation of Crusoe as a fictional character. The steward believes that Crusoe’s adventures, and the lessons he draws from them, reflect the essential reality his own life. Betteredge’s praise of Crusoe reinforces the point that “Fear of Danger” from the Indians is more imaginary than real, or, in other words, that it is founded on ideology.<sup>38</sup>

In relation to Betteredge, we can see that the Indians, though they do not pose an actual physical threat, do reveal a fracture in the British national identity. A “Burthen of Anxiety” weighs down the image of the nation that Collins presents, throughout the novel, in terms of representations of British culture located within print texts: wills, religious pamphlets (such as those that Miss Clack hides in various rooms in Lady Verinder’s house), newspaper accounts, (like the police report that Cuff sends to Betteredge [644]), letters, memoranda, and fictional materials, all of which serve directly or indirectly to subordinate Others to the assumption of Western racial and moral superiority.<sup>39</sup> Paul Rich explains that the Victorians developed a set of stereotypes, directed toward blacks, that portrayed them as “savage and bestial figures who needed to be controlled at all costs and as passive and helpless beings in need of missionary care and protection” (Robb 12). Betteredge’s fear of the Indians, coupled with his sense of paternal protectiveness toward the females, reveals the conflicted impulses within that stereotype woven into the fabric of British culture and society through an array of print texts.<sup>40</sup>

During the dinner party at Lady Verinder's house, the Indians magnify the anxiety that attends upon Blake's and Rachel's relationship because she and the Bouncers trust them, while the three males do not. After the Indians leave, the steward explains that the gentlemen who were watching them, "excepting Mr. Franklin and Mr. Murthwaite," returned to their wine. Then the scholar informs Blake and Betteredge that the Indians are "high-caste Brahmins" who have "doubly sacrificed their caste—first, in crossing the sea; secondly, in disguising themselves as jugglers." For the romantic ethnologist, some mystery lies at the bottom of the Indians' "tremendous sacrifice" of caste.<sup>41</sup> Although he also calls them "a wonderful people," Murthwaite tells Blake and the steward that the Indians "care just as much about killing a man, as you care about emptying the ashes out of your pipe." Fully persuaded by the scholar's account, Betteredge calls them "murdering thieves."<sup>42</sup> Even though the scholar professes to know much about the Indians, his academic understanding, based on first-hand observation of their arcane customs, and on his ability to converse in their language, serves only to perpetuate the stereotype of them as secret assassins.<sup>43</sup> Mr. Murthwaite's perspective thus accentuates the discord between male power, based on pseudo-scientific facts, and female knowledge, based on intuition, in British national identity. While the sudden arrival of the Brahmin priests in Lady Verinder's yard spurs Mr. Murthwaite to act against them, his academic analysis of their religious motives amplifies, even further, the ambiguous interplay between the perception of fact and the chaos of Oriental imagination. But Blake's blank response to Murthwaite's account—he "express[es] no opinion at all" (550)-- suggests that the shivering

sands are fraught with unresolved ideas about race that he must allay before he can solve the mystery of the stolen gem. That night, Blake's sleepwalking episode further indicates that he is having trouble reconciling the stereotypical view of racial Others, advanced by Mr. Murthwaite and adopted by Betteredge, with Rachel's and the Bouncer's sympathetic response to them.

Early in the novel, Blake's association with Betteredge and Mr. Murthwaite shows that he regards racial Others with suspicion and that he does not fully appreciate "female" knowledge that the author presents as being instinctive. Even though Blake's inquiry into Herncastle's motives initiates a process of self-discovery that ultimately gives him a different understanding, throughout most of the novel he remains in the same camp as British patriarchs: the soldiers, patriots, politicians, and advocates of Christian charity who are purveyors of white male privilege. These figures include the narrator of the Prologue, Colonel Herncastle, the elder Mr. Blake, the Ablewhites, Mr. Murthwaite, Miss Clack, Mr. Bruff, and Betteredge. Blake's experience with Spearman, however, gives a jolt to his sense of entitlement that eventually frees him from the fetters of patriarchal power that separate him from Rachel. Blake's intimate association with Dr. Candy's assistant, Ezra Jennings, helps to finish what Spearman started—the shattering, in his mind, of race, class, and gender hierarchies that his male confederates, spiritual advisors, and role models have erected as a barrier against outsiders.

Blake meets Jennings for the first time at Hotherstone's farmhouse. During this scene, while the young gentleman drinks grog, Betteredge reads Spearman's suicide note to him (752). As I mentioned before, Jennings goes there in order to

give Betteredge a list of people in need of charity so that the steward can take them some wine. This family custom contrasts with the pretense of philanthropy that Ablewhite keeps up through his Church foundation. Following Lady Verinder's death, Rachel carries on the tradition, upheld by her mother, of giving wine to the needy. Rachel's benevolence helps to distance Ablewhite's material interests, parading as spiritual devotion, from the genuine compassion for the poor shown by the Verinder females. Despite the legal turmoil surrounding Colonel Herncastle, his philanthropic endowments and his affection for animals also contribute to Collins's portrait of the upper classes, those with ancestral property rights, as authentically concerned, in contrast to the rising middle classes, with the health and well-being of the nation. This is another rupture in the British national identity, based on class ranks, that is entangled with anxieties about race.

The timing of the first meeting between Blake and Jennings is crucial. It takes place at the precise juncture in the narrative between anxieties that have already come to a head, related to class, and those that are still seething, related to race. This is the moment when the young gentleman is beginning to understand, not just logically, but also instinctively, that he is responsible for Spearman's death. When Blake found his nightgown, which the housemaid had hidden in the "japanned case," with his own name inscribed on it, his disturbing shock of recognition laid the groundwork for his curiosity about Jennings. The varnished case ironically symbolizes how Blake was dazzled by his own gentility, so that he could not see the "lady-like" qualities that Spearman possessed (507). The "varnish" that Betteredge noticed earlier, the *savoir-faire* that Blake displayed right

after he returned from the Continent, was part and parcel of the young gentleman's sense of superiority, entitlement, based on class rank. On the Shivering Sand, Betteredge, while observing the change in Blake from a boy to a man, said that he could no longer see his "boy's rosy cheeks"(512). In other words, Blake's experience on the Continent had suppressed his childhood innocence, which included his unthinking acceptance of the cultural categories of race, class, and gender inculcated through his educational training. While Blake, as we have seen, could not perceive the contradictory aspects of the housemaid's character, Betteredge, through sympathetic imagination, did. Even though, at that time, Blake could not penetrate the deeper, uncommon aspects of Spearman's character, his curiosity about Jennings now suggests that he is breaking through familiar cultural patterns, stereotypes that have confounded him up to this point.

After Lady Verinder's death, the assistance that Jennings gives to the sick and the poor, those represented by the English orphan boy, indirectly highlights the self-interest behind Mr. Murthwaite's "scientific" investigations.<sup>44</sup> The compassion that the reclusive doctor's assistant shows for the needy exposes the hollowness of the scholar's pursuit of public acclaim. His fame is based on the public's perception of him as a scientific expert with an insider's knowledge of Others.<sup>45</sup> As we have seen, however, Mr. Murthwaite, unlike the affable Dr. Candy, does not drink wine during the birthday celebration, and, as the orphan boy takes up a collection from the genteel company, he chases the Indians away. In other words, since he is ascetic, impersonal, and detached from human suffering, the scientific expertise that the ethnologist espouses, as Collins portrays it, leaves no room for compassion.

Similar to Professor Threadgall's pedantic, anatomical research of human skeletons, even during his leisure hours, Mr. Murthwaite's persona allows no room for sympathetic knowledge, as he is primarily concerned with collecting so-called facts about Others.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Jennings's act of kindness, taking the list to Betteredge, places the doctor's assistant in the "female" camp alongside Rachel and the Bouncers. While his employer, Dr. Candy, is ill, Jennings does not want the poor to go without wine. On the basis of his sure instincts, Dr. Candy took a chance and hired the outsider. Now the doctor's assistant, by following his employer's example, helping Rachel care for the poor, shows that his sympathy is not feigned, like Ablewhite's, but genuinely altruistic.

On their first meeting, Blake is especially taken with Jennings's physical appearance. In his own narrative, Blake says that Jennings was the "most remarkable-looking man" he had ever seen:

Judging him by his figure and his movements, he was still young. Judging him by his face, and comparing him with Betteredge, he looked the elder of the two. His complexion was a gipsy darkness; His fleshless cheeks had fallen into deep hollows, over which the bone projected like a pent-house. His nose presented the fine shape and modeling so often found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West. His forehead rose high and straight from the brow. His marks and wrinkles were innumerable. From this strange face, eyes, stranger still, of the softest brown—eyes dreamy and mournful, and deeply

sunk in their orbits—looked out at you, and (in my case, at least) took your attention captive at their will. Add to this a quantity of thick, closely-curling hair, which, by some freak of Nature, had lost its colour in the most startling partial and capricious manner. Over the top of his head it was still of deep black colour. Round the sides of his head—without the slightest gradation of grey to break the force of extraordinary contrast—it had turned completely white. The line between the two colours preserved no sort of regularity. At one place the white hair ran up into the black; at another the black hair ran down into the white. I looked at the man with a curiosity, which, I am ashamed to say, I found it quite impossible to control (752).

Jennings's arrival coincides with Blake's awakening knowledge, his "slow and toilsome journey from the darkness to the light," or, in other words, his understanding that Others pay, with suffering and degradation, the human costs of upper-class male privilege. Now he registers the contradiction, based on the difference between the public's stereotypical view of Others and their actual moral and psychological attributes, that he could not detect before in Spearman. In fact, Jennings's symbolic physiognomy presents what Blake formerly regarded as cultural oppositions—youth and age, West and East, white and black. But the doctor's assistant naturally eschews boundaries and hierarchies, compartments of Western ideology that had blinded Blake before. Collins imagines Jennings as possessing a spiritual vitality that undoes cultural boundaries with paradoxical truths. "Innumerable" facial wrinkles, for example, suggest that he is physically

more aged than Betteredge, who is more than seventy years old. But the wrinkles do not imply the physical infirmity and decrepitude that would be commonly associated with old age in the West. Instead, the countless markings contribute to Jennings's stature, the noble grace and dignity that the author associates with classical antiquity. Here the "fine shape and modeling" of Jennings's nose suggests the grandeur of a Roman emperor, Octavius Caesar perhaps. Collins presents the spiritual longevity of the doctor's assistant as most reminiscent of the Orient, of the "ancient races of the East," but that vitality does not belong to one race exclusively. Indeed, Jennings's supple body implies that he is also younger than the steward, that he shares the vitality found in the "newer races of the West," energy portrayed in young people such as the Bouncers, the clairvoyant English boy, and Gooseberry. Collins imagines Jennings's youthful longevity as animated by an ancient, mystical power that existed before nations with imperial ambitions threatened to destroy it.<sup>47</sup> In his essay entitled "Supplement to Bougainville's 'Voyage,'" Diderot, likewise, imagines the natives of Tahiti as possessing a spiritual vitality that is untainted by the corrosive aspects of modern civilization. In his farewell to the European explorers, an old Tahitian man says, "We are innocent, we are happy; and you can only spoil our happiness. We follow the pure instincts of nature; and you have tried to wipe its impress from our souls" (Kemp 154). Jennings's eyes, "dreamy and mournful," as well as the "fine shape and modeling" of his Roman nose, suggest that he is impelled by the instinctive, primitive spirituality that is untouched by culture, that both young people and females, in *The Moonstone*, possess.



Collins's portrait of Jennings's gypsy complexion implies, as well, that he is a hybrid character, whose mixed blood signals a metaphorical mingling both of races and cultures. His father was British, and his mother was born in one the colonies, though Collins does not specify which one.<sup>48</sup> The author also represents Jennings's hybridity through the stark contrasting features of his hair. While black is the "natural colour" of his hair, the white intersects it, "without a border," so that what we see is the image of a jagged line. The genealogical process that results in a loss of hair pigment, as well as a distinct pattern that has no "gradations," is so striking in Jennings that it appears as an anatomical aberration. The irregular line created by that biological process suggests the high anxiety of colonial conquests.<sup>49</sup> The sharp contrast of colors in Jennings's hair implies that social, economic, and religious upheavals are concomitant with the colonizers' conquests of "natural" indigenous tribes. Those encounters are seismic cultural shocks that violently disrupt, and alter, the national identity of both the invader, and the invaded peoples.<sup>50</sup> The jagged line of his piebald hair shows that Jennings's figure subsumes British anxieties, particularly those associated with race and empire, within his hybrid constitution.<sup>51</sup> The overall symbolism of Jennings's physiognomy is consonant with his role in the plot. Even though he facilitates the reunion of Blake and Rachel, and they are grateful for his help, for the larger English society he remains an outsider. Blake's curiosity about the doctor's assistant reveals a sympathetic accord with Others that he has not shown before. But while Blake witnesses Jennings's act of kindness, Betteredge, in agreement with the public, dislikes him and regards him with suspicion (753). The steward's observation of

Jennings, like Murthwaite's view of the Indians, shows that eyewitness accounts often conceal the truth about Others.

Blake happened to meet Jennings for the second time as the young gentleman was leaving Dr. Candy's house. Blake had gone there seeking answers, trying to understand how he could have been the thief the contents of the varnished case had shown him to be. Dr. Candy had sent Blake a letter which stated that he had important information about the birthday dinner. But Blake ignored the request until after he read Spearman's confession and decided to become a detective, to solve the mystery of the stolen diamond himself. During his interview with Dr. Candy, Blake cannot prompt him to recall the information, alluded to with such urgency in the letter, because, on the night of the birthday party, after going out in the rain to check on a patient, the physician had contracted a fever and lost his memory. Afterward, as Blake is leaving the house, he happens to run across Jennings, who arrives there because he has been taking care of Dr. Candy during his illness. The two men strike up a conversation, and, as they stroll leisurely toward the moors, where the doctor's assistant is now headed in order to look after some patients, they talk about memory. It is Jennings's opinion, though Blake disagrees, that some men would be happier if they could forget the past. This comment is motivated by Jennings's tragic history: an unnamed slander that hounded him, problems that he had had with his family, difficulties that he had encountered finding, and keeping, a job in England, as well as his terminal disease.<sup>52</sup> But in contrast to the calloused attitude he had taken toward Spearman, Blake now sympathizes with the Other. As he recalls their conversation, Blake

comments, “I was speaking to a gentleman. He had what I may venture to describe as the *unsought self-possession*, which is a sure sign of good breeding, not in England only, but everywhere in the civilized world” (791). After his disturbing experience with Spearman, as well as his recognition of Jennings’s altruistic concern for Others, Blake’s understanding of what it means to be a gentleman changes. He learns that true gentility has nothing to do with society’s perception, evaluation, or even acceptance of an individual. Rather than having the accidents of birth, class rank, and racial identity, as its foundation, true gentility, as Jennings reveals to Blake, is based on moral integrity that neither seeks nor requires public recognition. Here we can see how Collins portrays the doctor’s assistant, who alleviates Blake’s anxiety about race and class, as a figure who has the potential to heal fractures in the British national identity.

Although Jennings, like Colonel Herncastle, shuns the public that marks him as a pariah, he still volunteers something of his private self to the young gentleman. As they stroll down the roadside toward the moors, Blake says that the doctor’s assistant makes some “inscrutable appeal to [his] sympathies.” During their walk, Jennings picks wildflowers from the hedge. Collins uses this detail to stress the naturalness of the friendship that is growing between Blake and the racial outsider, and this incident recalls the author’s symbolic use of roses in Spearman’s case. Here Collins presents Jennings’s openness, the intimacy of his confession, as wholly natural. He tells Blake that, in order to save Dr. Candy’s life, he went against the advice of two English physicians of “established local repute.” After trying, unsuccessfully, to increase the doctor’s pulse by first giving him wine, then

brandy, Jennings says that he doubled the dose, an act that revived Dr. Candy and saved him. After relating this experience, which caused him to burst into tears, Jennings tells his companion, “Physiology says, and says truly, that some men are born with female constitutions—and I am one of them!” (793).

In this scene, Collins presents the homosocial bond that is developing between the two males as replete with powers of social rejuvenation.<sup>53</sup> From Jennings’s confession of his female constitution, Blake learns not only that gender roles are socially constructed identities, but also that people’s natural, biological impulses often run against the grain of society’s expectations. The cultural remedy that the doctor’s assistant provides for Blake, symbolized by the double dose of alcoholic spirits that he ministers to Dr. Candy, relieves the anxiety created by Blake’s participation in a patriarchal social order represented by his father’s destructive obsession with the legal system, Ablewhite’s charade of religious charity, Betteredge’s sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and Cuff’s and Murthwaite’s detached, impersonal knowledge, driven and shaped by public acclaim. Jennings’s intuitive knowledge, in fact, overturns the asserted wisdom of two prominent English physicians, whose reputations, like Mr. Murthwaite’s, are based on their supposed scientific expertise. In *The Role of the Romanies*, Nicholas Saul remarks, “Obviously, Jennings’ male-female constitution is an implicit reference to the well-known myth of androgyny as utopian human fulfillment” (Saul and Tebbutt 126). The figure of Jennings does echo that of Tiresias, the blind soothsayer of Greek mythology, whose androgyny was the source of great wisdom. But Collins emphasizes Jennings’s female constitution in order to critique the

image of Anglo-British males: to remove Blake's ideological blindness based on taxonomies of race as well as hierarchies of class and gender. In fact, in his first novel, *Iolani; or Tahiti as it Was*, written in 1844 but unpublished until 1991, Collins's image of the outcast prefigures his portrayal of Jennings. Behaving with maternal, "female" instincts, the outcast, who inhabits the primeval forest, cares for a child abandoned by its father, the cruel priest, Iolani (Collins, *Iolani* 87-91).

Later we see that Jennings uses the same power, sympathetic imagination, to complete the blank spaces in notes that he was keeping as he recorded the delirious ramblings of Dr. Candy during his illness. He tells Blake that he filled in the spaces, like solving a "child's puzzle," so that he could relate to Blake the information that Dr. Candy could not remember. The finished notes proved not only that Blake had stolen the diamond, as the contents of Spearman's case had shown, but also that he did so during a trance induced by the opium that Dr. Candy had given him.<sup>54</sup> The fact that Jennings uses the same drug, opium, in the form of laudanum, first induced during Blake's sleepwalking episode, in order to solve the crime, contributes to Collins's portrait of the doctor's assistant as a paradoxical figure.<sup>55</sup> We can see, then, that the removal of Blake's ideological blinders, his complete understanding of the shivering sand, takes place through his association with two figures primarily. The first, as her equivocally gendered name, *Spearman*, implies, is a character from the lower classes who delivers the unsettling shock that is the blow to Blake's gentility, that penetrates his armor of upper-class male superiority. From his intimate relationship with the second figure, Jennings, Blake learns to look beyond cultural stereotypes that weaken the foundation of the

house--ultimately the house of England--where his hopes for happiness with Rachel reside. Through his enormous suffering, unselfish benevolence, and female intuition, features of Jennings's character that arouse Blake's sympathy, the doctor's assistant alleviates the anxiety that disturbs the young gentleman. As Collins portrays him, Jennings has the potent power to repair fractures in the British national identity in general.

From Jennings's role as symbolic healer of cultural wounds, we can see that he is similar to, but also different than, another hybrid figure we have considered in this study, Emily Brontë's Heathcliff. While a dark "gypsy" complexion is one obvious similarity, Saul remarks that Heathcliff matches the literary stereotype, far more than Jennings, of the Romany race, as he readily fits into the Orientalist discourse about gypsies (126). This distinction makes sense because, as we have seen, Collins portrays Jennings so that he overturns stereotypes and shatters cultural categories that confuse Blake. Saul's distinction is valid as far as Heathcliff is concerned, too, because the waif from Liverpool enters into, and becomes a part of, the English family on the moors, while Jennings remains an outsider, even though his father is British. In other words, in *Wuthering Heights*, we can see how Heathcliff symbolically passes on his blood, his cultural identity, through Catherine and Hareton. His masculine gypsy blood actually mingles with that of the Earnshaws. In that sense, he is more "English" than Jennings, whose kind-hearted, female constitution would not commit the violence and revenge that Heathcliff, as a male, unleashes on his enemies.<sup>56</sup> Even further, we can see that Brontë cloaks Heathcliff's birth origins in mystery, while Collins informs us directly about

Jennings's parentage, his colonial antecedents. The reader's awareness of Jennings's birth origins keeps the doctor's assistant imaginatively on the outskirts of English civilization. This is especially true when we consider that Collins merely alludes to Jennings's British father and does not present him as a character with a central role, participating in the plot's action, such as Old Earnshaw—who may or may not be Heathcliff's biological father—plays in *Wuthering Heights*. When considering, in Homi Bhabha's terms, the concept of cultural hybridity, Heathcliff, far more than Jennings, matches the critic's definition. As the central figure, Heathcliff is situated in the "interstices" between cultures, while Jennings remains an obscure outsider.<sup>57</sup> We should add, however, that this view, as it cultural, does not account for the inter-subjective, a relation of self and other, of identity, that Bhabha also speaks of in *The Location of Culture*. He remarks, "[T]he 'inwardness' of the subject is inhabited by the radical and anarchical reference to the other" (24). From that perspective, if we consider Jennings's physical appearance, especially the two colors of his hair, he embodies the sort of "self" hybridity that Bhabha discusses. Both figures should be regarded as hybrid characters, then, because, as racial Others, they question the values, the assumptions about race, class, and gender superiority, upon which Victorian civilization rests.

Collins presents Jennings's female side as uppermost in his constitution because an abundance of that instinctive, childlike power gives him the insight to save Dr. Candy's life, to "recuperate" the house of England, so to speak.<sup>58</sup> Following the trauma of the Sepoy Rebellion, the author suggests that that same power can be harnessed to revitalize the nation, to diminish its anxiety. Later,

Jennings, in order to conduct the experiment, to rehearse the events that took place on the night that the Moonstone was stolen, tells Betteredge to put back the house furnishings as they were that evening. With sardonic humor, Betteredge complains that Jennings, like an Indian juggler, uses laudanum to victimize Blake, and that the doctor's assistant is treating him, the steward, like a "conjurer's boy."<sup>59</sup>

Betteredge's complaints, including the objection that he is a "blind agent," ironically reverse the roles of colonizer and colonized in the novel. From the steward's grudging obedience to Jennings, we can see how the doctor's assistant, with his head "full of maggots," as Betteredge says, symbolically recuperates Lady Verinder's house, the house of England, from the damage inflicted upon it by the theft of the Moonstone. Collins reveals that damage as the consequence of several severe fractures in national identity brought about by the ideology of the Ablewhites (816-820). Jennings's act of cultural revitalization is the energy that returns the sacred diamond to its shrine, that brings the "grand white mass" of people together and allows the ancient Hindu fable, the myth of the Moonstone, to "revolve in the cycles of time."



## Notes

1. All references to the novel are based on Collins, Wilkie. *Three Great Novels: The Woman in White, The Moonstone, The Law and the Lady*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

2. John Whale comments, “Fakirs, snake-charmers, and jugglers fascinated many British travelers to the Indian sub-continent in the early nineteenth century. Troupes of jugglers made frequent visits to London in the first two decades of the century and they were spectacular successes, playing to enthusiastic crowds in Pall Mall and in popular theaters such as the Olympic in Newcastle Street, the Strand.” See Fuford and Kitson 208.

3. As Kate Teltscher explains, “The four Mysore Wars were more extensively chronicled than any preceding Indian campaign.” In 1799, when Tipu Sultan was suspected of forming alliances, a “French force actually landed in Mysore.” Provoked by the French action, the British “stormed Seringapatam and put an end both to the war and Tipu Sultan’s life.” See Teltscher 229.

4. Teltscher explains that contemporary accounts of Tipu’s character were contradictory: “[T]hey are constructed around the figure of the oriental despot and are intended either to substantiate or discredit this stereotype.” See Teltscher 233.

5. D.A. Washbrook states that, in India, the “idea of a rule of law became fatally confused with that of a rule by law under which ‘civil society’ is denied any part itself in formulating those principles; while the state may make law for its subjects, it posits itself as above that law and as unaccountable to it.” See Porter 407.

6. Brian Gardner remarks that there was growing discontent among the ruling families of India: “[O]ne of the most discontented sectors was that of the sepoys, who . . . were not mercenaries in Europe but were mostly high class in society, many of them Brahmins.” For a survey of the mounting discontent of the sepoys, see Gardner 249-252.

7. In Sue Lonoff’s discussion of Collins’s sources, she notes two crown jewels, the Koh-i-noor and the Saucy, with historical parallels to the Moonstone, including connections to India. See Lonoff 176-77.

8. Christopher Herbert notes that the “cultural remoteness” of the setting of the Sepoy Rebellion, in both time and space, contributed to the “unfathomable weirdness” of a war in which fables were viewed as facts and then “taken as the basis for policy.” See Herbert 22.

9. In “Half a Gipsy: The Case of Ezra Jennings in Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone*,” Nicholas Saul regards the novel’s sensational features as a strength of the genre: “In this consists the novel’s appeal as a sensation novel: the occult, Oriental power of the Indians confronts, and apparently conquers, the political and epistemological majesty of the Occident.” See Saul 121.

10. Jenny Bourne Taylor remarks, “*The Moonstone* itself works as a complex model of the mind.” See Taylor, *In the Secret Theater of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology* 177.

11. For a cogent discussion of developments and legislative changes in the English system of policing, see David Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth Century England: Crime Conflict, and Control* (Manchester: Manchester

University Press, 1997).

12. In “Medicine, Gender, and Empire,” Alison Bashford states, “Expressions of medical modernity often took the form of conspicuously large and grand asylums and charitable hospitals, built in colonies of white settlement.” See Levine 121.

13. Perhaps the most glaring example of conflicts brought about by the legal system in connection with India is the trial of Warren Hastings. Beginning in 1787, the court proceedings, as Sara Suleri explains, continued to “accumulate parliamentary time and paper for the next seven years.” See Suleri 49.

14. In “Perils of Certain English Prisoners,” (1857), Collins portrays Mr. Pordage, official representative of the British Government, with his Diplomatic coat, in much the same way that he present the figure of Mr. Blake. The author satirizes the British government’s slavish obedience to the authority of printed texts through the caricature of Mr. Pordage, who privileges symbolic texts, his Diplomatic coat as well as official documents, over human needs. When a small group of people, mostly English, is held hostage, their lives threatened by some cutthroat pirates on an island off the coast of South America, Mr. Pordage informs the narrator, Gill Davis: “I cannot take cognizance of our situation. No memorandum of it has been drawn up; no report in connexion with it has been presented to me. I cannot possibly recognize it until the necessary minutes and memorandum and reports have reached me through the proper channels. When our miserable situation presents itself to me, on paper, I shall bring it under the notice of Government.” See Dickens 276.

15. For a discussion of “separate spheres,” see Leonore Davidoff’s and Catherine Hall’s essay, “Separate Spheres.” In Boyd, Kelly and Robin McWilliam, ed. *The Victorian Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

16. In his discussion of India before the Mutiny, Washbrook explains that the East India Company, in keeping with its sense of India a “static Oriental society,” recruited natives, according to caste, “racial ascription,” and “heritage of blood,” giving them special privileges within the Company bureaucracy. The scholar states, “[A]s instrumentalized by the courts, it [the Brahman caste system, “varna”] penetrated deeper into society, restructuring the relations of public worship, physical mobility, marriage, inheritance, and even property ownership. The Anglo-Hindu law sketched out an immobile, status-bound social order perfectly in keeping with the Company state’s dream of Oriental despotism and European imaginings of a ‘different’ Oriental civilization.” See Porter 414-415.

17. In “The Purloined Letters,” Dupin explicitly privileges intuition, associated with “poetic” reason. So the fictional American sleuth has more in common with Dr. Candy and Ezra Jennings, discussed later, than with Seegrave or Cuff. See Gary Thompson, ed. *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Context, Criticism*.

18. D. A. Miller remarks that detective fiction is always “implicitly punning on the detective’s brilliant *super-vision* and the police *supervision* that it embodies. His intervention marks an explicit bringing-under-surveillance of the entire world of the narrative.” See Miller 34-35.

19. Tamar Heller discusses the “need to assess Collins’s representations

of female sexuality in the context of the complex (rather than monologic) discourses—medical, legal, and literary—about that subject in Victorian culture.” I find that the “subversive energy of female sexuality” that emerges, as Heller claims, from *The Law and the Lady*, is evident, not only in Rachel’s decision to distance herself from Cuff, but also in her rejection of Ablewhite. She refuses him twice: the first time, when he proposes marriage in the rose garden, then later, when she changes her mind after accepting his second proposal. See “Masterpiece Theatre and Ezra Jennings’s Hair: Some Reflections on Where We’re Going in Collins Studies.” In Bachman, Maria and Don Richard Cox, ed. *Reality’s Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins* 365.

20. In his biography of Collins, Kenneth Robinson discusses Dickens’s theatrical tour of 1852. After a performance of Bulwer-Lytton’s comedy *Not So Bad as we Seem* (1851), Dickens sent the playwright a letter praising Collins, who had taken over Dickens’s roles. See Robinson 63-64.

21. Tamar Heller remarks that it is “no accident” that “Rachel is seated between the explorer Mr. Murthwaite and the doctor Mr. Candy. Rachel’s power to voice the novel’s hidden critique of bourgeois marriage is weakened as she is transformed into the object of diagnostic scrutiny.” See Heller, Tamar. *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic*, 150. Although Rachel’s place in the seating arrangement is no accident, as the scholar says, Dr. Candy does not scrutinize her. While Murthwaite does stare at the Moonstone, dangling from her neck, Dr. Candy’s medicine is not a ‘scientific’ venture in the same sense as Murthwaite’s academic study of Indian customs.

22. Philippa Levine states that the British wanted to maintain “prescribed gender roles” in the empire. Issues such as sexuality and gender “brought about critiques of, and dissatisfactions with, colonial rule, and its imposition of alien religious and cultural values.” See Levine 150.

23. As Peter van der Veer explains, in the early 1800s, a tradition of “gendering the Orient as feminine” already existed. “According to this tradition in Western philosophy, Hinduism lacked masculine, world-ordering rationality. Hindus were guided by feminine fantasies and imagination rather than by masculine reason according to Hegel.” See Van der Veer 95.

24. One of Collins’s sources, J. Talboys Wheeler, states, “Instinct is human nature.” He adds that racial characteristics come from “peculiarities of development and history rather than from any original diversity of human nature,”  
28. Wheeler also discusses the religious practices of Vedic Aryans as “child-like.” See Wheeler 13.

25. In “Occult Truths,” Peter Pels explains, “[T]he genealogy of occult interfaces with anthropology in the nineteenth century” began, in the eighteenth century, with Diderot’s and Herder’s interest in shamanism. The scholar traces the career of John Jackson, a “phreno-mesmerist” lecturer, whose participation in the occult “resisted the enclosure of the scientific—particularly the medical—professional establishment.” See Handler, 11-12.

26. Ross C. Murfin comments that the ink the Indian chief pours into the boy’s hand is evidence of Collins’s ambivalence because it suggests two “different-seeming things.” He argues that it is both a dye, India ink, and that it has a sweet

smell, like perfume from the East. See Murfin, "The Art of Representation: Collins' The Moonstone and Dickens' Example." *ELH* 49:3 (Autumn 1992): 662. My argument, on the other hand, is that Collins uses the ink as a metaphor for British power as inscribed in printed texts. The orphan's instinctive powers of perception are stronger than the dominance represented by the inky substance poured into his palm.

27. Pels explains further that John Jackson "was not alone in thinking that the occasional clairvoyant in mesmerist experiments was a sign of nothing more than an as yet insufficiently realized human potential, comparable to extraordinary seers and prophets." See Handler 22.

28. As Lonoff notes, Collins was probably familiar with Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug* (1839). Taylor provides "realistic details of outlandish Indian rituals." Also, in his second novel, *Tippu Sultan* (1840), Taylor "dealt with the events that form the background to the Prologue of *The Moonstone*" 178.

29. Van der Veer comments, "Four elements converged in the way Thugs were imagined by the British": first, the "fact of banditry," second, British disgust for animal sacrifices, third, images of Kali, the Mother-Goddess, "dancing, tongue protruding, with a string of skulls in one of her four hands on the corpse of Shiva," and last, British engagement in eliminating what they considered barbaric practices, such as sati and female infanticide. The critic adds, "The combination of these four elements came together in the imagination of Thugs, bands of bandits who attacked travelers and engaged in the ritual of human sacrifice for Kali." See

Van der Veer 152.

30. In her discussion of “Gender and Empire,” Catherine Hall remarks, “[P]ersistent stereotypes emerged. Hindu men were seen as engaging in unnatural practices, while the women were characterized as passive and over-sexed. Both stereotypes were part of a system of symbolic constitution, ‘of inferior “others” and the enlightened self of Europe.’”

31. Concerning Gooseberry’s perceptive powers, there is an interesting parallel in Diderot’s “Supplement to Bougainville’s ‘Voyage’.” In the conversation between Characters A and B, B tells A that a servant woman, disguised as man, accompanied the crew on the voyage around the world. She remained undetected by any of the Europeans until, upon arriving in Tahiti, the natives “divined her sex at the first glance.” See Kemp 160.

32. Collins’s choice of *Octavius* for Gooseberry’s formal name may be related to the fact that Oriental scholars of the late eighteenth century looked to classical authorities in order to construct a code of law for India. In “The Command of Language and the Language of Command,” Bernard Cohen states that Sir William Jones “deployed a discourse which made a direct connection between the British future in India and the late Classical Roman past.” See Guha 295.

33. In his discussion, “Science Under The Company,” David Arnold explains that the sweeping “intellectual agenda” of the Orientalists was part of an “attempt to bring India and its newly discovered arts, sciences, and history into a closer and more intelligible relationship with Western knowledge in a culture still



dominated, despite its Enlightenment credentials, by biblical notions of the origins of race and language and of the earth's antiquity." William Jones's "discovery of the shared origins of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin" accomplished that goal. See Arnold 35.

34. Herbert provides a brief account, as Brantlinger does, of Nana Sahib's deception at Cawnpore. After promising General Wheeler's troops safe passage down the Ganges river, the Indian leader sent a "small party of butchers . . . to hack to pieces with swords and axes the more than two hundred British women and children prisoners. The victims' bodies that would fit were stuffed into a well, the others thrown into the Ganges." See Herbert 4-5.

35. In "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency," Jenny Sharpe comments, "Thus was the British reading public invited to share the terror of the white settlers and their revenge, as letters, stories, and eyewitness reports slowly made their way back from India," 7. See Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman, ed. *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

36. Speaking of the British conquest of India, Cohen remarks, "Unknowingly and unwittingly they had not only invaded and conquered a territory, but, through their scholarship, had invaded an epistemological space as well." See Guha 325.

37. Timothy L. Carens notes that Betteredge, the guardian of imperial British cultural dominance, uses *Robinson Crusoe*, ironically, to make clairvoyant predictions just like the orphan boy. See Bachman 240-241 and 252.

38. In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams explains that literature is the “process and result of formal properties of a language. The effective suppression of this process . . . is achieved by shifting the concept to an undifferentiated equivalence with ‘immediate living experience’.” Betteredge’s reading of *Robinson Crusoe* illustrates Williams’s point, that equating literature with lived experience is an “extraordinary ideological feat.” See Williams 46.

39. Benedict Anderson remarks, the “convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.” See Anderson 46.

40. Van der Veer states, “[D]espite the marginality of the printed word in nineteenth-century India, it is the privileged connection between printed scripture and nation that is not only adopted by [Benedict] Anderson in his recent theory but also by the ideologues of Hindu nationalism.” See Van der Veer 120.

41. As Susan Bayly explains, at mid-century, ethnologists imposed concepts of race science on their understanding of caste in India: “[F]ollowers of ethnology portrayed India as a composite social landscape in which only certain peoples had evolved historically in ways which left them ‘shackled’ by a hierarchical ideology of caste. Paradoxically, these ‘Brahmanised’ Indians were identified by ethnologists as those who possessed superior ‘Aryan’ blood, meaning they were supposedly descended from the same racial ‘stock’ as the white European, whose key ethnological endowment was the capacity to achieve ‘nationhood’.” See Bayly 128-129.

42. Van der Veer explains, “While this reinvigorated racism in India [after the Mutiny] colluded with the rise of racial nationalism in the metropole, at the level of scientific thought the notion that the higher castes of India belonged to the same Aryan race as the British was widely accepted.” See Van der Veer 49.

43. In his discussion of the development of Hindustani as the British “language of command” in India, Bernard S. Cohn explains that John Borthwick Gilchrist, regarded as the “creator” of that language, favored the study of vernacular, over classical, languages: “What emerges from reading Gilchrist is the idea of the Englishman in India as he who commands, the one who knows how to give orders, how to keep the natives in their proper place in the order of things, through application of ‘real science and practical wisdom’ rather than pedantry and classical knowledge.” See Guha 310.

44. Bayly explains further that a Victorian professional, regardless of his expertise, whether in law, medicine, administration, the military, or even a missionary organization, could “significantly advance” his career “if he could claim that his knowledge was ‘scientific’ and in line with contemporary intellectual and technical trends.” See Bayly 121.

45. In “The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigines,” Peter Pels, speaking of the shift that took place at mid-century from the ethnography of Orientalists to that of Utilitarian reformers, remarks, “In India, ‘otherness’ was everywhere; there, statistics was applied to a society that could, as a whole, be perceived as deviant. For Utilitarians and Evangelicals, this deviance was, of course, primarily symbolized by the ‘despotic’ and ‘superstitious’ authority of kings and Brahmins,

an authority that was enshrined by oriental texts, the pandits that helped to explain them, and the orientalist who relied on both.” See Pels, Peter and Oscar Salemink, ed., *Colonial Subjects: Essays on the Practical History of Anthropology*, 90-91.

46. Pels explains, “[S]cience sought to reach behind everyday phenomena by comparing specimens of species, languages, or forms of civilization. . . . Botany, zoology, and comparative anatomy dissected everyday appearances to get at organs and the structures that made them move.” See Pels and Salemink, 87-88.

47. In his essay on Bougainville, Diderot portrays the vitality of the Tahitian natives as a paradoxical combination of youth and age as we see in Jennings. The old man tells the explorer, “I can run a league on the plains in less than an hour. Your young companions would be hard put to follow me, yet I am more than ninety years old.” See Kemp 156.

48. Kenneth Ballhatchet discusses one stereotype of Eurasians, like Jennings, that the British used to keep them from attaining higher government posts in India: “[T]heir lack of prosperity was often cited as evidence of fecklessness and lack of enterprise, and the fact that few Eurasians attained positions of eminence was often cited as evidence of a lack of ability and energy.” See Ballhatchet 99.

49. Bashford explains that British medicine “aimed to solve or prevent certain bodily conditions and illnesses which imperial expansion, in many cases, had produced in the first place: in particular the introduction of communicable diseases to isolated communities: smallpox, tuberculosis, measles, whooping cough, and more. Sexually transmitted infections. . . were major problems in nearly all colonies . . . .” See Levin 127. The fact that Collins keeps Jennings’s terminal

ailment a mystery helps to associate him, imaginatively, with all indigenous peoples in the British colonies.

50. Regarding seismic cultural shocks to indigenous peoples who were invaded, Peter Burroughs, in his essay, "Institutions of Empire," remarks, "Convenient categories of religion, community, tribe, and caste, (though not class) were superimposed on India; artificial labels like 'criminal tribes' and 'martial races' came into use." See Porter 184.

51. British prejudice against Eurasians, some of whom had shown courage and loyalty to the ruling class during the Sepoy Rebellion, is well illustrated in Ballhatchet's discussion of the case of Josiah Dashwood Gillies, Assistant Surgeon in Madras, beginning in 1855. Allegations against Gillies reveal not only racial prejudice, but also sexual jealousy, as well as issues of class. See Ballhatchet 102--110.

52. Upamanya Mukherjee remarks, "The story of the unjust professional and personal persecution he [Jennings] is forced to undergo merely on the ground of his racial origin, and, of course his birth-history itself, links him to the Indian priests. Just as the mere race and nationality of Indians are enough for them to be labeled as criminals, Jennings has to suffer a similar slander that forces him to act like a runaway convict, seeking out the obscurest of places to try and make a living." See Mukherjee 180.

53. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Sedgwick defines male homosocial desire as the "affective or social force, the glue, even when its manifestation is hostility or hatred or something less emotively

charged, that shapes an important relationship.” See Leitch 2435.

54. Berridge and Edwards explain that the two opium wars, at mid-century, were the origins of the debate, continuing throughout the century, about the medical use of opium: “The disbelief in moderation and longevity and the division between legitimate medical and other non-medical use of the drug were already in the process of establishment.” The debate made its way into the House of Lords. See Berridge and Edwards 174-175.

55. In “Wilkie Collins’s ‘Secret Dictate’: The Moonstone as a Response to Imperialist Panic,” Vicki Corkran Willey remarks that while Collins’s narrative “outwardly champions English values,” it does so with “an expediency of paradoxes that may have surprised its original English audiences: the diamond becomes plunder, opium becomes the instrument of knowledge, and a mysterious hybrid character, Ezra Jennings, saves the day.” See Harrison, Kimberly and Richard Fantina, ed. *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, 228.

56. Heller states that the doctor’s assistant symbolizes the “transgression of the boundary between colonizer and colonized that permitted Jennings’ birth.” See Heller 159. Jennings’s birth origins do not reflect the strong impulse of transgression that we see in *Old Earnshaw* and *Heathcliff*, however. Culturally, Jennings is less “hybrid” than *Heathcliff*.

57. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha writes, “It is the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and the displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.” See Bhabha 2.

58. Spivak discusses how a later scene in the novel “recuperates” an earlier one. The scene in which Mr. Bruff gives Blake a large key to let himself into the garden through the conservatory door, which leads to the drawing room and the music room, Spivak argues, recuperates, with British domestic images, an earlier scene, the theft of the diamond, Rachel’s “jewel.” The critic reads these incidents as a recuperation that repairs Blake’s symbolic seduction of Rachel: “I suggest that the recuperation this scene presents is a necessary part of the novel’s overall project.” See Spivak 325.

59. In his discussion of “radical mysticism,” Van der Veer notes, “[C]lass background does not determine people’s interest in one crucial area that is engaged by radical mysticism, namely, the area of healing and medicine. It is in this field that animal magnetism or mesmerism, herbalism, crystal-ball gazing, and astrology enjoyed great popularity among all classes.” See Van der Veer 61.

Race, Gender, and Epistemology in  
Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*

In his biography of Rider Haggard, Morten Cohen relates an experience that made a marked impression on the young author-to-be while he was living in Pretoria, South Africa, working as an aide to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Theophilus Shepstone. During that time, from August 1875 until he left Africa in August 1881, Haggard was deeply influenced by tumultuous events, personal, social, political, and military, that provided the raw material for the bulk of his fictional works. For example, late in 1878, Cetywayo, the Zulu tribal chief, "panting for war," assembled his forces to "defend their birthright against the white man and his encroaching civilization" (Cohen 46-47). The Governor of Cape Colony, Sir Bartle Frere, fearing an outbreak of native tribes, "demanded the disbandment of the Zulu army" (*Cloak* 75). As columns of British soldiers marched out to face the enemy, they were over confident, with no understanding of the organization and the ferocity of the Zulus. As it turned out, the Africans destroyed the British forces at Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift. The Zulu warriors were victorious, primarily because they implemented the crescent attack, what Lilius Haggard, the author's daughter, described in a biography of her father as a pincer movement with "two horns" (76), a military assault that Haggard portrayed later in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885).<sup>1</sup> About thirty hours after the battle, an old "Hottentot washer-woman," as Haggard refers to her, informed him that Cetywayo's army had "swept down upon the redcoats in Zululand and killed them by the hundreds" (Cohen 48).



The author claimed, however, that it was impossible for the African woman to have known about the outcome of the battle, the distance of two hundred miles being too great for the news to have arrived by horseback. Twenty hours later, a messenger arrived with news that confirmed the statement of the “Hottentot” native.

Haggard’s explanation, for what to him was an extra-ordinary event, was that the natives possessed a “telegraphic method of conveying news of important events of the which the nature is quite unknown to us white men” (*Days* 119).

Haggard’s interpretation of this incident emphasizes the black woman’s hidden powers, her participation in a communications network that exists beyond the ken of “civilized” white men. The author’s perception of the event testifies to his belief that modern “savages” have access to primitive knowledge that is, at least in some ways, superior to that of nineteenth-century technology. Haggard was not alone in his opinion of native powers. Roger Luckhurst remarks, “The discovery of supernatural communications in dispersed theaters of empire suggested to some accumulating evidence of pre-modern powers ‘lost’ to the Enlightenment, but which could be recovered with sufficient study of primitive society” (205).

Haggard’s belief is based on experiences, like that of the African woman, which suggested to him that native instincts had not been muffled by the noise of civilization--the accumulation of information, facts, data, and literary texts that constitute the imperial archive, what Richard Thomas labels the “knowledge explosion” of the nineteenth century (5). The mass of information pouring in from Victorian science and technologies, Thomas explains, created the fantasy of a British empire unified by its “mastery and control of knowledge,” a fantasy that

was “shared widely and actually had an impact on policy-making” (6). Haggard’s experience in South Africa, by contrast, suggested to him that liberal party politicians, like William Gladstone, might benefit from other sorts of knowledge.

Another experience, this one from Haggard’s autobiography, reinforces the first. The author explains that, while on a hunting trip near Lake Chrissie, he got lost on the veld. After giving up hope of being found, he was “miraculously” located by his servant Mazooku, who happened to hear him fire his rifle into the air: “I think that some instinct, lost to us but still remaining to savages, led him towards me over that mighty sea of uninhabited veld. Of course, it may have been pure chance, though this seems improbable” (*Days* 140). These biographical accounts attest to the credibility that Haggard assigned to sources of knowledge that could not be analyzed by any sort of scientific, data-gathering methods familiar to Victorian naturalists, ethnologists, anthropologists, geologists, or astronomers.<sup>2</sup> The author’s primary criticism of Gladstone’s liberal party, in fact, was that it lacked foreknowledge, the ability to predict the consequences of its own policies, or, in other words, the sort of intuitive insight which, he claimed, the natives possessed.<sup>3</sup> Haggard blamed the political turmoil and bloodshed in South Africa, following the retrocession of the Transvaal, on the government’s lack of foresight, which undid everything that his mentor, Theophilus Shepstone, had put in place: “A little more wisdom, a little more firmness of foresight, and these events need never have occurred” (*Days* 122).

Beginning with his early novels, *King Solomon’s Mines*, and, two years later, *She* (1887), Haggard’s fiction reproduces his concerns with different kinds of

knowledge.<sup>4</sup> The author imagined the quest for secrets of the ancient world as an exploration of different ways of knowing, an epistemological adventure reaching beyond the limits of Western rationality. In Haggard's romance fables, British men travel from the supposedly civilized center toward a savage system of belief that has been "lost," buried beneath the nineteenth-century British trust in tangible evidence, the "English people's practical bent of mind, profound respect for facts, and emphasis on empirical experience" (Lightman 26). *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* have been categorized, generally, as "imperial romances," marked by racist attitudes, that were written for men with anxieties about the advent of the New Woman.<sup>5</sup> Despite all the insight to which it leads, however, what the generic label "imperial romance" may obscure is the author's exploration of different ways of knowing in order to critique the British colonial government. In this essay, accordingly, I will discuss Haggard's appropriation of popular notions of Victorian science, the theory of evolution in particular, for literary and political purposes. I will also discuss Haggard's attitude toward race and gender as presented in both early novels. This discussion will show how Haggard's epistemological quest led him to question the very values, the racist and sexist ideology, upon which his own novels are built.

### I. Two Ways of Knowing: A Contrast

With Alan Quatermain, the narrator of *King Solomon's Mines*, Horace Holly, the narrator of *She*, shares the attribute of doubting what he has not experienced, or witnessed, first-hand. Early in the novel, Holly expends much

effort in analyzing the writing on the mysterious potsherd of Amenartas. This ancient artifact had been enclosed in a cryptic chest, which remained unopened until his ward, Leo, reached the age of twenty-five, due to orders of Mr. M. L. Vincey, Leo's father. The elder Vincey, who believed in the doctrine of "change" rather than "death," had claimed that his "sixty-fifth or sixty-sixth lineal ancestor" was an Egyptian priest named Kallikrates. When he bequeathed the chest to his son and placed it in Holly's keeping, he told the Cambridge scholar that the truth of his claim would be "proved to [him] beyond a doubt" (9). After Leo came of age, Holly opened the chest. It revealed not only the potsherd, enclosed in yellow linen, but also a small silver casket decorated with Sphinx ornaments, as well as parchments with Vincey's translations, from Greek into Latin, of the writing on the potsherd. The chest also contained a bag from which Holly takes a Scarabæus, a "stone representation of the sacred scarab beetle of ancient Egypt," and a picture of Vincey's Greek wife, Leo's mother (19). Besides these items, the chest contained a letter addressed to Leo from Vincey, who committed suicide shortly after placing the chest in Holly's care. The letter attests to Vincey's faith in the doctrine of change: "I stretch out my hand to you across the gulf of death . . . yet am I with you in this hour that you read" (20). In spite of this evidence, proofs which collectively testify to Vincey's ancestry, Holly remains skeptical, thinking that he must have been demented. In order to put his doubts to rest, Holly reads the original Greek uncial writing on the relic. Then, after transcribing the Greek into the Latin alphabet, he concludes that Vincey's translation is "both accurate and elegant" (25). He continues his painstaking investigation, which includes reading

hieroglyphics on the artifact, possibly the “cartouche of the original Kallikrates,” as well as an inscription by Vincey’s wife and notes in Greek, Latin, and English. Afterwards, he sifts through translations from earlier epochs, included within the chest, of the inscription on the vase fragment. These translations attest to its passage through time by showing different civilizations from which it has been handed down, from one generation to the next, while remaining in the Vincey family.<sup>6</sup>

After this exhaustive inspection, Holly concludes that the potsherd is authentic. Even so, he places no faith in Vincey’s doctrine of change, and he does not believe Vincey’s tale about a white woman living in Africa who murdered his ancestor, Kallikrates. Haggard endows his narrator with a skepticism that denies the existence of “vital forces” stretching beyond the grasp of Victorian systems of knowledge acquisition, founded on institutional, academic methods of inquiry (21). When Leo questions Holly, asking how his father could have known certain facts about Africa—for instance, coastal bluffs that look like a man’s head and the presence of people who speak Arabic--Holly attributes that knowledge to coincidence. Remaining skeptical, he tells Leo, “[U]ntil I see it with my own eyes, which I am not likely to, I never will believe that there is any means of avoiding death” (34). The reader is thus prepared for Holly’s shock when he discovers She, a white woman who does rule an African tribe, who has put off death for two thousand years, and who did murder Vincey’s ancestor, Kallikrates, whose physical features are an exact match with Leo’s. The last fact suggests that Vincey’s doctrine of change, reincarnation, in this case, is true.<sup>7</sup> Haggard has made use of the character

of Holly, we then can see, as a means of exploding conventional wisdom, philosophical assumptions about the limits of knowledge. This is an outlook that the misanthropic Holly shares with the gregarious Quatermain.

In *King Solomon's Mines*, Haggard had made a similar use of Quatermain's pragmatic skepticism in order to give credibility to other ways of knowing that he identified as native. Like Holly, Quatermain believes that certain artifacts that he has come by, documents that attest to the existence of an ancient civilization, the Ophir of the Bible, are authentic.<sup>8</sup> He explains to Sir Henry and Captain Good, passengers whom he happens to meet on board ship while travelling from Cape Town to Natal, how he came by a map, as well as a letter, both of which were drawn in blood by José da Silvestre, as he lay dying, in 1590 (20).<sup>9</sup> Silvestre, who claims to have seen the diamonds of Solomon's Mines with his own eyes, passed the documents on to his family by way of a slave who found him dead in the mountains and came away with the artifacts. The relics were then put to use by his descendant, Jose Silvestre, whose futile search for the diamonds resulted in his death, but not before he handed over the documents to Quatermain.

The white hunter obviously has faith in the artifacts. When he hears that Sir Henry's brother, George Neville, has gone in search of the mines, he gives Neville's slave, Jim, a note, with directions from Silvestre's map, which points out the route to Solomon's Road (25).<sup>10</sup> Still, Quatermain--whose Kaffir name, Macumazahn, means, "the man who gets up in the middle of the night, or, in vulgar English, he who keeps his eyes open"—doubts what he has not experienced, or seen, first-hand (40). Even though Quatermain believes that the relics are authentic,

he resembles Holly in his doubt that a journey in search of the ruined city with treasures, supposedly unearthed by an ancient race of “Jewish or Phoenician adventurers,” will reveal any secrets of antiquity (15).<sup>11</sup> After Sir Henry proposes that Quatermain take him and Captain Good, a retired naval officer, in search of his brother, the cautious trader answers that he cannot afford go to on any “wild goose chases,” that he has a son to support, and that he cannot risk his life (26). After taking a few days to think over Sir Henry’s proposal, however, Quatermain decides to take the risk if Sir Henry agrees to conditions that provide financial security for himself, his son, and Captain Good (31).

Quatermain’s pragmatism goes hand-in-hand with his skepticism. He is reluctant to leave behind not only the security of his living as a trader, but also the comfort of his conventional ideas about human existence (2). Quatermain’s adventure, his exploration of the African interior, will challenge his assumptions about the unknown, the mysteries of the universe, just as Holly’s quest does his. From the bizarre, incredible events that we have seen so far, then, it is clear that Haggard’s romances challenge, through imagination, the rational basis of Western knowledge.<sup>12</sup> The form of the fables and the zany figures who inhabit foreign landscapes, as we shall see, attest to his interest in different ways of knowing.

After the three adventurers agree to look for Neville, who has not been seen since going in search of Solomon’s Mines, they hire two African workers, a Zulu named Khiva and Ventvögel, a member of the tribe called “Hottentot,” who accompany them. They are later joined by a dignified but enigmatic native, Umbopa, who fails to show Quatermain what he considers the proper deference due

to a white man from a black (40). Haggard establishes a contrast between the two men immediately, while assigning to Umbopa native powers of perception that Quatermain, at this early point in the narrative, lacks. When the white man recalls that he had seen Umbopa prior to this meeting, the black man reminds him that they had met on the day before the Battle of Isandhlwana. Umbopa had tried to warn the Inkoosi, or white chief, a warning that Quatermain ignored, that the British troops were not safe. After Quatermain told the native to leave such matters to “wiser heads,” he thought of Umbopa’s warning later, with regret, following the great loss of life to British soldiers (39-40). At the outset, then, Haggard establishes a contrast, not only between the two men, but also between the two systems of knowledge that they represent. While Quatermain’s skepticism suggests the British penchant for empirical evidence, Umbopa represents the efficacy of native instincts, faith in the unseen, the intuitive apprehension of what cannot be scientifically verified. As events play out, however, and as the white males becomes further removed from civilization, more wrapped up in native affairs, Quatermain shows signs that he is not bound, completely, by empirical evidence, that he is open to other methods of acquiring knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

On the eve of the civil war that breaks out in Kukuanna land, where the adventurers’ quest takes them, for example, King Twala sends his herald to negotiate a surrender with the native insurgents, those who have joined the white men. Twala is allied with Gagool, a witch doctor, against Umbopa, whose refusal to show deference to Quatermain has been explained by the revelation that he is actually Ignosi, the rightful heir to the throne of the Kukuanna tribe. On the



condition that they give up the fight, Twala offers mercy to the rebels who support Umbopa. In response, Quatermain gives his prophecy about the outcome of the battle, telling the herald to return with the information that “before the sun has gone down twice, Twala’s corpse shall stiffen at Twala’s gate, and Ignosi, whose father Twala slew, shall reign in his stead” (180). Quatermain refers to the battle as “The Last Stand of the Greys,” and he comments that the name “Greys” comes from the “milk-white” color of the regiment’s shields, covered in oxhide (116). But the reference also suggests grey hair, a signifier of the veteran status of the warriors, none of whom is “under forty years of age” (200). They make up the ranks of the army’s finest company (185). After the battle, Quatermain states that his prophecy has been fulfilled, as he had predicted: within “forty-eight hours Twala’s headless corpse was stiffening at Twala’s gate” (221). Quatermain’s ability to forecast, so specifically, the duration of the battle and the outcome of the war implies the sort of knowledge, in this case foreknowledge, that the white men must acquire in order to penetrate Gagool’s secrets, to assume her and Twala’s power, and to place the rightful heir, Ignosi, on the Kukunana throne. Haggard portrays the witch doctor as a character possessed of secret knowledge about the origins of creation. In the imaginative foreignness of her grotesque figure, she comes to represent the antithesis of Western rationality. As such, she presents the greatest impediment to the white explorers’ quest to free the natives from King Twala’s tyranny, and she endangers the adventurers during Quatermain’s search for Solomon’s fabled treasure.<sup>14</sup>

In this novel, as in *She*, Haggard’s presentation of two ways of knowing

implies that Europe's unqualified faith in empirical methods, science in the service of British colonial interests, discounts the power of intuitive knowledge. The author regards intuitive knowledge, born instinct, distanced in time and space from the academic and technical mechanisms of modern civilization, as the foundation of religious belief and primitive customs of indigenous people. Proofs based on direct observation often fail to register the significance of so-called superstitions that the natives, for centuries, have held dear. In *King Solomon's Mines*, for instance, the adventurers are beguiled by Gagool, the *Isanust*, or witch-doctor, and almost lose their lives because Quatermain, the pragmatist, intent on locating Solomon's treasure, trespasses on sacred burial grounds. The Kukuanna people worship pagan divinities, three Colossi sculpted in stone, known as the Silent Ones. They guard the entrance to the caves where the corpses of former Kukuanna Kings are preserved. Even though tribal members other than Gagool, Infadoos and Ignosi, will not set foot on the forbidden territory, Quatermain, intent on finding the legendary treasure, is unaware of danger, as the *Isanust* directs the white men through dark passageways of the ice cave. As they explore the burial grounds, tribal knowledge makes a mockery of Europe's unqualified faith in first-hand evidence. Gagool shows the British explorers geological formations, for example, that reach beyond the rational apprehension of nineteenth-century anthropology. Through his portrayal of nature's handiwork, a stalactite pillar with the figure of a mummy carved into it by an unknown artist, and the frozen corpses of former Kukuanna royalty seated around a table with the ice-formed figure of Death presiding over them, Haggard imagines another world that can be penetrated only through

supernatural instinct, an afterlife fashioned from the liquid accretions of what Victorian scientists called “geological deep time” (Brantlinger 168). When Gagool leads the British into the burial chamber, as the three white men study “colossal Death,” Quatermain remarks, “[The mummy] is hewn out of a single stalactite, and, looked at as a work of art, is most admirably conceived and executed. Good, who understands anatomy, declared that, so far as he could see, the anatomical design of the skeleton is perfect down to the smallest bones” (249). The impression of artistic perfection that the frozen figure makes on Quatermain and Good is what takes it beyond the grasp of modern science. Good’s analysis implies that scientists can observe and measure data, but their calculations cannot quantify the impact of art and religion on the human mind.<sup>15</sup>

Because of Gagool’s supernatural longevity, she is linked, as well, to the source of power in nature that creates, destroys, and reanimates life. During the ceremony of the witch-hunt, earlier, the Isanust told the white men, as she smelled blood in order to identify traitors in the Kukuanna tribe, “Your fathers knew me, and their fathers knew me, and their father’s fathers” (135). Gagool symbolically incorporates the imperceptibly gradual processes of geological deep time within her weird physiological make-up. Stalactite formations that grow about “an inch and a fraction to every century” suggest the transformative powers of nature, over time, that she embodies. Haggard opens to view the domain of Gagool’s supernatural powers, which give her an advantage over the white men, who are unable to grasp the depth of her knowledge. The author portrays her as the custodian of nature’s secrets, the female keeper of the “White Death.”<sup>16</sup> The failure of the British males

to value the sanctity of those natural forces, as Haggard presents them, including Gagool's instincts, is what puts their lives at risk. They cannot navigate the ice caves without knowledge that she keeps hidden within her supernatural frame, shrunken and twisted by time and space. Gagool's bizarre figure, in fact, generates a tension in the narrative between the conventional appeal of Western knowledge, based on empiricist, scholarly, and institutionalized methods of inquiry, and the extravagant appeal to fantasy, imagination, and supernatural possibilities.

Of course, by Haggard's time there was already a long tradition, including Michel de Montaigne, William Shakespeare, and Denis Diderot, among many others, of Western writers attributing a similar kind of knowledge, often a sort of inspired intuition, to non-Western peoples.<sup>17</sup> In the nineteenth century, evolutionist and anthropological theories further developed this tradition of primitivism or exoticism within the framework of scientific racism. Despite his supposedly eyewitness testimony to moments of supernatural intuition on the part of natives, it is clear that Haggard's portrayal of Africa and Africans fits into this tradition. In other words, the settings of *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* are wholly imaginary: projections of Haggard's own ideological assumptions, values, and fantasies onto the territory and into the persons of the Other. Before we can examine how Haggard critiques Britain, then, we do have to examine some key aspects of his imperialist romance.

We can see this kind of projection in *King Solomon's Mines*, for instance, through the racial difference that the author establishes between the members of the Kukuanna tribe and its barbaric rulers, who rain down terror upon them. Taking

advantage of hard times, when the tribe was suffering due to war and famine, Gagool used her political power to oust the current king, Imotu, Ignosi's father, by blaming him for the tribe's starvation (112). While Imotu was bedridden with a stab wound, Gagool proclaimed Twala, his twin brother, to be the true tribal chieftain. In order to accentuate the corrupt motives of the leaders, Twala and Gagool, and to distinguish them from the tribe's self-sacrificing members, Haggard contrasts the physical ugliness of the rulers with the corporeal beauty of their followers. For example, he portrays Twala, the pretender to the throne, as a native with a flat nose, one eye, and lips "as thick as a negro's" (128). The diamond that the king wears, ostentatiously, on his forehead suggests that the love of material wealth and power forms one aspect of a racial physiognomy that leaves no room for moral sensibilities. The jewel also signifies Gagool's bribery, as she used it to purchase political influence, to persuade the king to continue barbaric tribal customs, atrocities such as the witch-hunt. In that ceremony, the Isanust would first identify traitors by using her preternatural instincts, smelling their blood; afterward, she slaughtered them. While the moral depravity of the rulers is given shape and substance through Twala's grotesque anatomy and Gagool's shriveled, animal-like body, a "wizened, monkey-like figure," both Ignosi and the Kukuanna women possess physical features that mark them as beautiful according to Victorian cultural standards.<sup>18</sup> Ignosi is "handsome" and "very light-coloured for a Zulu," while the Kukuanna females have lovely, aquiline features: "These women, for a native race, are exceedingly handsome. They are tall and graceful and their figures are wonderfully fine. The hair, though short, is rather curly than wooly, the features

are frequently aquiline, and the lips are not unpleasantly thick as is the case among African races” (117). Besides their aquiline features, which suggest the curved appearance of a Roman nose, admired in the West, we can see that the women’s curly hair, in particular, distinguishes them from stereotypical portraits of blacks with woolly hair. In other words, Haggard portrays the Kukuannas with somatic attributes that mark them as racially white, even though their skin color is black. Quatermain remarks, too, that the Kukuanna women are “well-bred,” and that they “differ from Zulu women, and their cousins the Masai” (117). The sort of imaginative reinvention that we see in Haggard’s depiction of the Kukuannas shows how he projects his imperialist assumptions about the superiority of Anglo-Saxon blood and British culture into African people. The Kukuanna tribe, apart from its leaders, are members of an Anglo-European cultural paradigm. The moral deficiency and inferior blood of the rulers, on the other hand, is represented through corporeal markings, especially Twala’s thick lips, an unpleasant feature, as Quatermain remarks, that is common among African races. In *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, Christine Bolt comments that by the “late nineteenth century race as a biological concept had been confused with a variety of cultural characteristics, such as religion, and, since Victorians held the African cultures . . . to be inferior, the linking of race and culture led to a wholesale condemnation of African tribes as racially inferior” (143).

Similar to the British Isles, Kukuanna land, in Haggard’s mythic imagination, is geographically situated, set apart from other racial, social, and ethnic groups, so that it can sustain the urgent force of its ancestral blood. The

author presents the topography of Kukuanna land so that that imaginary space has distinct geographical bounds, “high mountains that ring-in the land,” as Infadoos, Ignosi’s uncle and the king’s envoy, tells Quatermain (111). The mountains form a natural barrier to invaders. The author presents Kukuanna land as a remote, insular space, nestled in an unexplored sea of African wilderness. That region is impervious to foreign assault as long as it retains its martial energy, a vitality which depends on the preservation of a mythic bloodline.<sup>19</sup> Haggard implies that concept through Quatermain’s comment on the warrior attributes passed through the blood from one generation to the next. “[B]lood will out,” he says, speaking of Sir Henry’s Danish forefathers (5). In the author’s imagination, Ignosi is the rightful heir to the throne of the African tribe because his blood, his cultural identity, is spiritually akin to Western peoples’. We can see that kinship, for example, through his experience as a child, the journey he takes across the mountains and back, after his father, Imotu, is stabbed to death by his twin brother, Twala. Ignosi, speaking of himself in the third person, tells Infadoos, “[T]he son Ignosi became a wanderer again, and journeyed into a land of wonders, where white people live, and for many more years he learned the wisdom of the white people” (139). By speaking of himself in the third person, as though he were telling the history of another, Ignosi shows the great distance he has travelled, not only geographically but also culturally, since being removed from the tribe. Ignosi’s voyage nurtures him, symbolically, on cultural sustenance from the mountains called “Sheba’s Breasts,” so that Greek civilization and Bible mythology form twin foundations of his identity. The journey into Western culture endows Ignosi with the agency of a

white male so that he has the freedom to make leadership decisions, as though he were an Anglo-Saxon chieftain, during the civil war, and in the governance of his tribe (195). He has no trouble, for example, promising Sir Henry, his physical, social, and moral counterpart, discussed below, that after the war he will put an end to the witch-hunts. He also tells Quatermain that he will keep white evils, “guns and rum,” as well as missionaries, who inspire “fear of death” in native hearts, out of his kingdom (284).<sup>20</sup> The author’s portrait of Ignosi, because it projects Anglo-British cultural values into the person of a supposedly black African, illustrates Frantz Fanon’s statement, in *Black Skins, White Masks*, about racist attitudes in a colonial setting. Fanon comments that European culture has imposed the burden of a false identity on the black man: “White civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro . . . the black soul is a white man’s artifact” (14). Fanon’s statement suggests that over time white people have perpetuated a false image of blacks, reshaping their cultural identity in accordance with European values and assumptions. The image that white civilization has invented, historically, as we see in Haggard’s portrait of Ignosi, is deeply disturbing for black people, because it has forced them to live their lives in the agonistic space between white people’s concept of them and their natural, spiritual selves, as given to them, originally, by God. This has happened, Fanon implies, because blacks have had to struggle, particularly in colonial settings, to come to terms with the false image of themselves as inferior beings.

Haggard projects his racist ideology onto an imaginary Africa even further through his portrait of the supernatural power that shields the white men from harm



as they fight in the civil war and explore unknown territory. For example, Haggard's fable echoes the three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* who deceive the protagonist, persuading Scotland's king through half-truths that he is invincible, that "none born of woman shall harm thee." Haggard's African characters use Shakespearian phrasing, "man born of woman," at times, to refer to the white men, whom they regard as supernatural beings from another planet (104-105). The physical, social, philosophic, and moral parallels that the author establishes between Sir Henry and Ignosi, since both figures are presented as leaders of their respective nations, born into the upper class, illustrate how the author shifts Western values onto an imaginary Africa. On the eve of the civil war, for instance, Sir Henry puts on the uniform of a native warrior, the leopard-skin cloak, the black ostrich-plume, the "moocha of white ox-tail," and other gear, so that when Ignosi arrives, dressed in a similar costume, the two men look equally savage, according to Quatermain (184). But some parts of Sir Henry's war panoply, especially the chain armor shirt and the battle-axe, claim the cultural superiority, as Haggard views it, of the West. The adventurers receive the chain shirts and the battle-axes as gifts from King Twala during the ceremony of the witch-hunt, not long after they arrive in Kukuanna land. While examining the "wonderful beauty," the artfully crafted chain links of the magic coats, Quatermain asks Infadoos if the shirts were made in his country. He answers, "Nay, my lord, they came down to us from our forefathers. We know not who made them, and there are but few left. None but those of royal blood may be clad in them. They are magic coats through which no spear can pass" (144). While the supernatural vests suggest the impregnable armor

that Macbeth wears during his sword fight with Macduff, Haggard's fictional editor also presents a footnote which states that modern Arabs still wear chain mail armor taken from corpses of the Crusaders. In Haggard's fantasy, then, the unknown origin of the chain coats, with their highly wrought beauty and almost magical strength, opens an imaginary space for the assumption of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority in the "royal blood" of the white men who now wear the suits and determine the fate of the Kukuanna people.

Haggard's projection of European values onto an imaginary African setting can also be seen in his drawing of Kukuanna living arrangements. After Quatermain offers further proof of the adventurers' supernatural power by shooting an antelope, an act that he presents to the natives as killing an animal with a "noise," the British follow Infadoos for some time until they come upon a kraal. The kraal is a large enclosed space with huts, encircled by a "wide fosse," which houses the native women. Haggard's drawing of this settlement highlights its symmetry and spaciousness, features that distinguish it from Zulu living quarters, as Quatermain explains:

The gateway of this fosse is spanned by a primitive drawbridge, which was let down by the guard to allow us to pass in. The kraal is exceedingly well laid out. Through the centre runs a wide pathway intersected at right angles by other pathways so arranged as to cut the huts into square blocks, each block being the quarters of a company. The huts are dome-shaped, and built, like those of the Zulus, of a framework of wattle, beautifully thatched with grass; but, unlike

the Zulu huts, they have doorways through which we could walk.

Also, they are much larger, and surrounded by a veranda about six feet wide, beautifully paved with powdered lime trodden hard (117).

Some aspects of this enclosure, the moat-like trench surrounding the kraal and the drawbridge, in particular, resemble distinctive structural parts of an Anglo-Saxon castle. Those features, along with others, such as the right angles of its pathways, large doorways, and verandas, suggest that Haggard, as he imagines the setting, creates an intersecting pattern of English-style living quarters and Zulu dwellings, a British courtyard imposed on an African village. Unlike the smaller entrances of actual Zulu huts, the enlarged doorways provide convenient access for Kukuanna warriors, whose physical dimensions--“many stood over six feet three or four”—proclaim their extraordinary martial vitality. Even though the housing settlement is surrounded by a fosse that guards against foreign invaders, the British explorers, whom the blacks call “white men from the Stars,” are shown into the private quarters of the natives and treated with hospitable kindness by the Kukuanna females.

This portrait, in which the author draws an African community with the accouterments of an English fortress, implies Haggard’s ideological stance, the paternal character of British imperialism in which white males safeguard colonial interests and indigenous people who look upon them as superior beings, as benevolent gods. The author’s fantasy carries with it a sense of entitlement that is both racist and sexist, as we can see in the behavior of the Kukunna females, “as well-bred in their way as the habitués of a fashionable drawing-room.” While the

African women display a sort of proper English decorum, as they observe the white males walking toward the huts, they are also fascinated by the “snowy loveliness” of Good’s legs, while admiring his skin, which is “exceedingly white” (118). Haggard’s portrayal of the adventurers, recuperating leisurely in the native huts from their arduous journey, creates a sexual tension between the European males and the black females, a tension that anticipates the Captain Good / Foulata romance we see later. While the explorers rest in the huts, we learn that the black women attend the white men, serving them food and drink, and they appear inside the men’s quarters the next morning with “no false shame” (125). Haggard sells his racist and sexist ideology to the reader through his representation of the naturalness of the sexual interest that the black females show for the white males, as they observe them in their private rooms.

Haggard’s portrayal of the romantic relationship between Captain Good and the native girl, Foulata, further illustrates his values.<sup>21</sup> In that plot strand, King Twala recognizes Foulata, in a ceremonial dance, as the most beautiful tribal maiden and intends to sacrifice her to the pagan gods, the Colossi. Having witnessed the King’s brutality before, and so knowing what he has in mind, however, the white men commit to a scheme that they hope will not only free the maiden but also convince the disgruntled chiefs, those unhappy with Twala’s murderous regime, to join Ignosi. Captain Good, on the spur of the moment, thinks of showing the natives that the voyagers from beyond the earth, as the white men are regarded by the Africans, can “darken the moon,” a display of power strong enough to compete with the witch-doctor’s supernatural art, strong enough to

compel their loyalty. Good, “a bit of a doctor,” having passed a course of medical instruction, locates an almanac that forecasts a lunar eclipse for the following night (36).<sup>22</sup> Even though Quatermain is skeptical, commenting that “eclipses are queer cattle to deal with,” the three men agree to perform the ruse, in which they pass off their knowledge of astronomy, the almanac’s prediction of the time that the eclipse will happen, as the supernatural power to affect the motion of celestial bodies. The following night, at the critical moment, when Scragga, King Twala’s son, is about to kill Foulata, she begs for mercy, complaining that she will not have the chance to bear male children: “Prince Arthur’s appeal to the ruffians who came to blind him was not more touching than that of this savage girl” (166-167). Quatermain’s reference here to Prince Arthur, which comes from Shakespeare’s *King John*, Act IV, Scene 1, adds pathos to the event because Victorian readers would connect Foulata’s plight with that of the youthful Arthur, imprisoned by his uncle in France. The plot of *King John* reinforces the idea that King Twala is a self-serving pretender to the throne, a traitor to both his family and his country. When Captain Good shows signs of indignation because Gagool and Twala remain unaffected by Foulata’s plea for mercy, she responds instinctively and clings to his “beautiful white legs” (167). The white men’s hoax works, of course, as the natives are frightened by the eclipse, and scatter, believing that they will perish in the darkness that has killed the moon (171).<sup>23</sup>

In this scene, Haggard magnifies the sexual tension we have seen earlier between white men and African females. Foulata’s ambition to bear male children, while it may correspond to the elevated status of men in actual African tribes, also

suggests Haggard's sexist values. The submissive girl, prostrate before Good, depends on him, as a dominant white man, to free her. The phallic symbolism of his white legs reinforces that image of male power. As Haggard's allusion to Prince Arthur suggests, Foulata shares as much, or more, with fictional characters of English drama, as she does with African females. Haggard presents similar imagery of female submissiveness later, after the civil war, when the wounded Good falls sick and Foulata nurses him back to health. Even though Quatermain, a misogynist, like Holly, objects to Good's romantic tendencies, he comments on the unusual spectacle of the native girl ministering to the Captain: "Women are women, all over the world, whatever their colour. Yet somehow it seemed curious to watch this dusky beauty bending night and day over the fevered man's couch and performing all the merciful errands of a sick-room swiftly, gently, and with as fine an instinct as that of a trained hospital nurse" (20). Since Good has received training as a physician, and since Quatermain's son is studying in London to be a doctor, his comment is significant. His casual observation shows how the author projects his values into an imaginary African woman through the portrayal of Europe's gender hierarchy. Quatermain imagines Foulata in the role of an English nurse, so that the "instinct" to care for her lover matches the duties that she performs ministering to patients, especially those of the male gender, obligations developed through professional training provided by institutions of nineteenth-century Europe.

What adds significance to Haggard's presentation of an imaginary Africa is the epistemological aspect of it. In the lunar eclipse incident, and elsewhere, European science comes across as less authentic than native intuition because

Western technology is marked by a theatrical component. Earlier, when the adventurers encountered the party of warriors sent to meet them, as they approached Solomon's Road, the natives were amazed by Captain Good's apparent magical power. They perceived him as a supernatural being because of his eye-glass, the "transparent eye," and because of his false teeth. After he removed the dentures from his mouth, then put them back, the natives mistook them for real teeth, believing that the white man could, at will, detach and reattach parts of his own anatomy (107). For the reader, the humor of this event magnifies its theatrical aspects but also demystifies the attempts of the white men, afterward, to impress the natives with shows of power. During the same scene, for example, when Quatermain shot an antelope, telling Infadoos that he killed it with a noise, his behavior looked like more hollow theatrics, comparable to Good's flourishing of his false teeth before the natives. After that event, when Sir Henry, wanting to intimidate King Twala, killed an ox with his express rifle, he was flaunting modern technology as a show of power. But neither Twala nor Gagool was threatened much by that display, although the king did recognize the military value of the weapon (132-134). In these scenes, British technological power comes across as sleight-of-hand, rather than genuine power, because the white men's motives are transparent. Likewise, the astronomical event does little to establish the white men's superior power, even though the natives are frightened and run away. What the natives observe directly, the shadow of the earth moving over the moon, does not produce reliable evidence, as that event is misinterpreted by them. This situation is ironic given the fact that Quatermain, the skeptic, places so much faith in

empirical data. Gagool, in fact, is not impressed by the white men's supposed supernatural power. She says that she has seen eclipses before. Further, in order to convince the Africans of their power, the adventurers resort to a farcical incantation in which they quote lines from the "Ingoldsby Legends," recite verses from the Old Testament, and address the moon with phrases from a popular romance (169-170).<sup>24</sup> Haggard's drawing of this scene contrasts white power, based on European science, Good's training as a doctor, and the almanac's prediction, with native intuition, the sort of fore-knowledge Ignosi exercises when he warns Quatermain that the English troops are in danger. By comparison, European knowledge is clearly less penetrating and reliable than that of the natives because it depends on theatrical elements that a magician might employ. Even though Ignosi trusts the British, he is amazed at their claim to supernatural power. His surprise contributes to the disingenuous feel of the event: "[C]an ye do this wonderful thing," he asks, "or were ye speaking empty words to the men?" (160).

Foulata's intuitive knowledge, by contrast, is different than the showmanship of the white men. We can see that difference when she sacrifices her life to save them. In the ice caves, she fights with Gagool, who stabs her to death, but the struggle causes the Isanust to be crushed beneath a falling trap door. As Foulata lies dying, she asks Quatermain to translate her words so that Good will understand them: "Say that if I live again, mayhap I shall see him in the Stars, and that—I will search them all, though perchance there I should still be black and he would—still be white." The maiden's dying words suggest the theme of reincarnation that Haggard develops more fully in *She*. But her last words also



reflect the author's racist and sexist attitude. The black woman's instinctive knowledge tells her that, even in the afterlife, the cosmic future when primitive tribes will have evolved toward what the author regards as the higher civilization of the British, different races will still exist, races that remain separate and unequal: "[T]he sun may not mate with the darkness, nor the white with the black" (260-261).<sup>25</sup>

## II. Knowledge that Complicates Imperialist Assumptions

Even though, owing to his racist and sexist values, we can understand Haggard's support for the imperial project, an undertaking justified, in part, by the avowed purpose of promoting the moral progress of racial Others, his fiction also suggests that he was not entirely comfortable with the belief that the British were the most civilized people in the world.<sup>26</sup> In his novels, the author expresses, through contradictory impulses, his dissatisfaction with Western culture. In his portrayal of the adventurers' experience in the ice caves, for example, Gagool's devious actions compromise the atmosphere of sacred superstition that Haggard had established before within the native burial grounds. After leaving the cathedral-like tomb of Kukuanna royalty, the witch-doctor directs the British to Solomon's treasure, but, as she does so, she also mocks their assumption of superior knowledge. She first points to the stone slab, the door that opens the treasure chamber. However, because the door has not yet been raised, Quatermain stares at the solid rock, slightly bewildered, somewhat perturbed by Gagool's jest. While laughing at the white men, though pretending that no joke was intended, she releases the lever

that opens the door but keeps the whereabouts of the mechanism hidden from view. Gagool's behavior is enigmatic. As she leads the white men to the treasure chamber, she ridicules them, while also guarding the secrets of the cave. Her puzzling actions suggest the counter impulses within the author's view of the West. As she invites the adventurers to enter the room, the witch doctor pretends to defer to their professed superior status, referring to them as "my lords" and "white men from the stars." At the same time, however, she recounts the story of their predecessor, Da Silvestra, whom, she says, may also have come from the stars, presenting his experience as a warning, saying that anyone who enters the chamber "will die within a moon." Her apparent deference is actually a mockery of their assumption of superior knowledge. By explaining, not long before she buries them alive within the chamber, how Da Silvestre was deceived by a female, just as she is deceiving them at that very moment, Gagool ridicules their imperial masculinity and their assumption of cultural superiority, which is reduced here to the base motive of greed. The Isanust does not state directly that she was the female who killed Da Silvestra, but she insinuates as much. She says that she gave to Twala the diamond that the European explorer took from the cave, adding that this is the same jewel that the king wore until Quatermain took it (253). Gagool also taunts the white men by suggesting that they might eat and drink the diamonds. Then, as the British stare at a chest full of jewels, she tricks them by tripping the lever, allowing the door to come down, imprisoning them within the room. The author's presentation of Gagool's antics, not only how she manipulates the door in order to confound the men, but also how she secretly scoffs at them, deflates the sense of sacred

knowledge and power that Haggard had established earlier. We see that the witch-doctor is capable of beating the British, if only temporarily, at their own theatrical game, even as she also claims knowledge beyond their ken, thus revealing a contradictory impulse within the author's attitude toward British civilization.

Within his novels, this revisionary scene is the result of a consistent contradiction between Haggard's commitment to a racist and sexist ideology, on the one hand, and his commitment to ways of knowing that run against those values, on the other hand.<sup>27</sup> In *She*, the author's divided loyalties are revealed through his portrayal of the central figure as a white woman who commands all knowledge of Victorian science, yet who uses that power to satisfy personal ambition, as Gagool does.<sup>28</sup> As Holly becomes acquainted with She, his skepticism gradually gives way to the acknowledgement of vital forces that exist beyond the grasp of Cambridge scholars like himself, "fossil friends," as he calls them, whose habits of thinking have become inured in the long-established, well-respected channels of academic inquiry (54). Near the end of the novel, for example, She, also known as Ayesha, leads Holly, Leo, and their English servant, Job, to the caves of Kôr in order to breathe the sacred Fire, the force that animates all life. She explains that, two centuries before, she had acquired her mastery of nature's secrets from the hermit, Noot, an aged philosopher: "[F]or the man was wise and very ancient, and by purity and abstinence, and the contemplation of his innocent mind, had worn thin the veil between that which we see and the great invisible truths, the whisper of whose wings at times we hear as they sweep through the gross air of the world" (185).<sup>29</sup> By flattering Noot, who knew the secrets of the Spirit of the World,

Ayesha appropriated his knowledge: “Then did I beguile him with my beauty and my wit, and flatter him with my tongue, so that he led me down and showed me the Fire.” Ayesha explains that she did not step into the sacred flame at that moment because she was afraid that Noot might kill her if she did so. As She relates her experience, she scoffs at Noot’s wisdom, his belief that “man was born to die.” When Holly discovers tangible proof of Noot’s having actually lived, she mocks the hermit: “Behold what remainth of Noot and the wisdom of Noot—one little tooth” (185). She explains further that, after his death, she returned to the sacred flame, hidden in caves near the temple of Kôr. By stepping into the Fire, she prolonged her life for two thousand years.

The sacred Fire is, of course, another example of the imaginative exuberance that inspires Haggard’s imperial romances, providing entertainment as well as challenging Western concepts of how knowledge is acquired. But this incident complicates the author’s ideology because it presents a white female who holds, at least for a time, enough knowledge and power to overcome the assumption of white male supremacy in the West. Even though Haggard portrays Noot as a native, his figure is based on the European stereotype of the ascetic monk, the religious scholar who withdraws from society, who relinquishes material possessions, devoting his life to abstinence and contemplation in order to cultivate his spiritual essence. Through nothing more than mere flattery, however, Ayesha persuades Noot to divulge his ancient secrets, including the whereabouts of the Life Force. In that sense, she mocks the West’s tradition of Christian faith and sacred knowledge, accumulated over centuries, testimony of its moral progress. The author presents

Noot's tooth as an archeological discovery, something like dinosaur remains, implying that the concept of evolutionary moral development, upon which British civilization rests, might be nothing more than an illusion, as the hermit has vanished and She has taken his place.<sup>30</sup> This event clearly presents a division of Haggard's loyalties. While Ayesha explains how she took advantage of Noot, she leads the white men, at the same time, toward the sacred Fire. Her behavior resembles that of Gagool because, like the Isanust, she keeps her true purpose undisclosed as she leads them through precarious caverns and bewildering tunnels. Ayesha intends that both she and Leo, the incarnation of Kallikrates, whom she slew in a fit of passion centuries before, should breathe the sacred Fire so that they can live together for centuries to come. Even though the white queen is immolated, rather than rejuvenated, by the whirling pillar of flame, so that her plan fails, ultimately, her behavior complicates the author's values. Her mockery of Noot and the fact that She is the leader, the one who knows the way and conducts the white explorers through treacherous caves, presents a counter impulse in *She*, as we see in *King Solomon's Mines*.<sup>31</sup> Ayesha's deception of Noot and the explorers creates a tension in the narrative, then, between the emphasis, in Western philosophy and religious discourse, on rational methods of academic inquiry, and the uncanny aspects of imagination, far more capable of penetrating the mysterious origins of life than analysis and investigation, based on empirical evidence, according to Haggard.

Within the novel, we can see another division of loyalties, as in She's flattery of Noot, through her changing relationship with Holly. The author portrays

Ayesha's female beauty as so alluring that it overcomes the scholar's skepticism, based on rigorous academic proofs, the kind we see when he studied the documents from Leo's chest. When Holly first entered She's boudoir, inside the extinct volcano, for example, he refused to crawl before her, as Billali, her servant, the snowy-bearded tribal father, advised him to do. Holly adamantly refused to lower himself to a savage female. With racial patriotism, he thought, "I am an Englishman. . . . why, I asked myself, should I creep into the presence of some savage woman as though I were a monkey in fact as well as in name?" (His colleagues called him "gorilla" or "Baboon" because of his ugly physical appearance.) The fact that he refused to show deference to the queen implies his cultural evolution and, metaphorically, the development of the Anglo-Saxon race from a condition of barbarism to the moral high ground of European civilization.<sup>32</sup> Later, however, despite the fact that his fellows at Cambridge called him a misogynist, and even after he spied on She's "unholy rites," as she ministered to the corpse of Kallikrates, which she had preserved in caves beneath her chamber, the scholar says, "I worshipped her . . . . I would give my immortal soul to marry her." Then, as Holly goes on his knees, She takes satisfaction in her capacity to rule males. She calls that sadistic pleasure the right of her sex (128). In this scene, female beauty and, by implication, women's sexuality are capable of overturning masculine skepticism, reason, and science. In other words, there is a suggestion here that sexuality as such is a primitive and virtually supernatural force, and that the most highly evolved society may not really be so highly evolved at all. Holly's attraction to She's beauty, her primitive sexuality, as Haggard portrays it, puts him

on the same level as the savage queen, undoing the moral development that he represents, just as, with flattery, she brought Noot down from his lofty spiritual plane. She's fatal allure even disarms Leo, whose physical beauty and curling yellow hair mark him as the epitome of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority (142). Even after She has murdered Ustane, the native girl who embraced him when he first arrived in camp, he cannot keep from loving her (153). Despite Holly's and Leo's aversion to Ayesha's barbaric cruelty, discussed below, the fact that they fall victim to her supernatural, radiant beauty presents a counter impulse within the narrative.

In *King Solomon's Mines*, we can see how Haggard collapses, as he does in *She*, the layers of cultural evolution that the Victorians had erected between themselves and the natives. Some Victorian anthropologists, including E.B. Tylor, regarded contemporary natives as primitive survivals of earlier epochs, but Haggard's experience in South Africa, in which he viewed the Zulus as victims of the lack of foresight on the part of Gladstone's government, and the friendships that the author made with natives there, may have contributed to the division of loyalties within his fictional works.<sup>33</sup> Haggard's presentation of the concept of fate in the earlier novel, for example, suggests a counter impulse in his writings. Although the belief in fate was identified, in the nineteenth century, with Eastern racial and ethnic groups, Haggard presents that philosophy as a means of depicting the white men and the Africans as being similarly threatened by intangible forces of the hostile world that they inhabit.<sup>34</sup> Early in the novel, for example, when a character named Khiva, a Zulu, attempts to save Good, who is being chased by an elephant, the incident turns into a horrifying spectacle. After the Zulu boy, as

Quatermain calls him, throws his assegai, or spear, at the beast, the enraged animal seizes him, places his foot on Khiva's chest, then, with its trunk, "[tears] *him in two*." The white men respond, as we might expect, with complete shock. They rush the elephant and fire their weapons until it falls dead. Umbopa, on the other hand, shows no emotion: "Umbopa stood contemplating the huge dead elephant and the mangled remains of poor Khiva. 'Ah well,' he said presently, he is dead, but he died like a man!" (55). The contrast between Umbopa's response to the death of the Zulu and that of the white men shows how Haggard dramatizes the concept of fate, making it appear stereotypically "Oriental." Nonetheless, during their African adventure, the white hunters are subject to the same cosmic force, as the author presents it, that ended Khiva's life. Umbopa's apparent indifference suggests that he perceives Khiva's doom primarily as an event that can be best understood, and accepted, as a natural phenomenon, as a consequence of the Zulu's fate rather than as an act of self-sacrifice, as such behavior is viewed in the West.

While, from a Western perspective, Umbopa's comment may come across as callous, his stoic resignation gives him the same attitude toward death that Sir Henry, trapped in Solomon's treasure chamber, presents later, while facing what he believes to be certain doom. After dividing the small portion of food and drink left to them by Foulata, Sir Henry says, "[L]et us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" (263). Sir Henry's cavalier attitude about what he perceives as his own imminent death provides an answer to Quatermain's rhetorical questions, given earlier, about expeditions into the unknown. After Quatermain tells Sir Henry what conditions must be agreed upon before he will consent to the journey, the trader says, "What



was the fate of the old Dom da Silvestre three hundred years ago? What was the fate of his descendant twenty years ago? What has been your brother's fate? I will tell you frankly gentlemen, that as their fates were so I believe ours will be" (32). Even though the white men do not die, as Quatermain predicts, his questions, as well as other references to fate, change our perception of the adventurers' journey to something akin to a religious experience. Speaking of the author's religious beliefs, Wendy Katz remarks, "Haggard's fatalism is a form of religious eclecticism. Although he sometimes expresses a traditional Christian point of view, he is just as likely to espouse an unorthodox one. . . . At times he seems as open to Buddhism or Islam as to Christianity, and the very fluidity of his ideas makes his fatalism difficult to define" (87).

Katz's insight about the ambiguity of the author's religious belief points to a contradictory impulse, connected to his representation of fate, in *King Solomon's Mines*. The sense of Oriental fatalism is especially evident at the end, when the explorers happen to run across Sir Henry's brother, living in the desert outside of Kukuanna land. Their fortunate discovery strikes the reader as something directed by the inscrutable workings of fate rather than the logical accomplishment of a goal that the British had set for themselves. That feeling is heightened by the fact that their search for Neville, after they become involved in Kukuanna politics, slides into the background. The sense of some unknowable force, inherent in the foreign surroundings, shaping their destiny, is further reinforced by the fact that the search for Neville gets side-tracked by the quest for the diamonds. Since the adventurers seem to lose track of their primary goal but locate Neville anyway, that fortunate

discovery instills an even stronger feeling that fate is directing the lives of the adventurers. The Eastern concept of fate reveals a counter impulse in the narrative because, in terms of religious philosophy, it puts whites and blacks on an equal footing. The explorers' discovery of the body of the old Dom, Da Silvestre, in the mountains, as they approach Solomon's Road, illustrates further how the narrative collapses the notion of Western moral superiority by aligning the fate of a European with that of an African, the servant, Ventvögel. Quatermain refers to Da Silvestre's corpse as a "sad memento of the fate that so often overtakes those who would penetrate into the unknown" (91). After that reflection, Sir Henry places the frozen body of Ventvögel and the corpse of the Portuguese explorer beside one another, as though they were twins, subject to the same inexorable workings of fate. Since Haggard places the European and the black man on the same level, not only in physical but also in ontological terms, their common experience reveals the strength of the allure that other ways of knowing had for him, even though that attraction threatened his imperialist values.<sup>35</sup>

Besides the ambiguity related to Haggard's religious belief, his narratives present a thinly veiled critique of British politics that similarly complicates his imperialist ideology. As a white queen with enormous powers at her disposal, She is comparable, in some respects, to Queen Victoria.<sup>36</sup> This analogy holds together, particularly when we consider that the Amahagger, with their "aquiline" features and physical beauty, are, like the Kukuannas, culturally white. For example, Amahagger males have "magnificent build[s]," most being above six feet tall, while the women are "good-looking," with "well-cut features" and curly hair that

is, notably, “not crisped like a negro’s.” The author implies his skeptical attitude toward British politics, however, because the white queen has overturned what is natural, in Haggard’s view: what the sons of Kôr represent. She has elevated the females in status, giving them political freedom at least equal, if not superior, to that of the males. While Ayesha has emasculated Amahagger males, beaten them down psychologically from fearless warriors to sullen slaves, forced to perform all of the manual labor of the village, the females are almost happy (62).<sup>37</sup> They even smile sometimes. The women of the tribe are not downcast, as the males are, because they are “not only upon terms of perfect equality with the men, but are not held to them by any binding ties” (57). Also unlike the males, some females wear a “yellowish garment” that marks their superior rank. The yellow material, a lasting fabric taken from the tombs of Kôr, recovers its “snowy whiteness” when washed and bleached (127). The material is highly valued by the tribal members, as it represents the wisdom of the sons of Kôr, a civilization buried deep within prehistory, a social group even more advanced than the ancient Egyptians in the scientific art of preservation. Since only the high-ranking members of that community, headed by Tisno, King of Kôr, were given the privilege of being embalmed, it is clear the Ayesha appropriates the yellowish material to symbolically represent the patriarchal authority of that extinct race, to transfer power from the males to the females of the tribe.

To the extent that She is a kind of parody of Victoria, with her long rule over a wondrous Empire, Haggard’s novel can be read as questioning her legitimacy. In order for She to sustain her image as an omnipotent goddess, she

must remain concealed within her bower within an extinct volcano, hidden, except on rare occasions, from the view of the natives. That distant dwelling helps her to dominate her subjects because it allows her to perpetuate an image of herself as a sovereign who is impervious to Nature's destructive forces. Ustane, however, believes that She has been deceiving the natives. The native girl guesses that Ayesha's female descendants have been impersonating her over time. Holly says, "What she [Ustane] believed was that the Queen chose a husband from time to time and as soon as a female child was born, this husband . . . was put to death. Then the female child grew up and took the place of the Queen when its mother died" (63). Ustane's belief that She's power over the blacks is based on duplicity is seemingly contradicted, however, by impressive displays such as her "blasting" with electricity those who disobey her. Those acts suggest that she actually is immortal, all powerful and all knowing. The narrative presents a tension, then, between Ustane's intuitive sense that She is deceiving the natives, as the adventurers in *King Solomon's Mines* attempted to do, and the supernatural hypothesis that underpins the quest as a whole. Since Haggard, in his empire of the imagination, rides along with She, that tension is never resolved. In fact, Ustane's claim amplifies the conflict between the author's imperial ideology, founded on empirical evidence, and the other ways of knowing—and other conceptions of nature and culture—to which he is drawn.

Haggard's presentation of a fabulous setting that is imaginatively associated with British accounts of Africa but also detached from it in time and space provides him with an artistic device so that he can remain committed to the imperial project

while also expressing his dissatisfaction with the British government. In the romances, Haggard's convergence of mimetic with mythic elements gives him the freedom to critique British politics, filtering his comments through an unfamiliar, imaginatively foreign, landscape. For example, in *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors*, the author, without a fictional screen, warns the British government, directly, against interfering too much in native affairs. He states that customs such as polygamy are so "ingrained in the life of the natives that there is no way to satisfactorily eliminate [them]." Thus, he adds, even though it may be possible to conquer the savages, "I do not believe that they will be converted" (58). In *King Solomon's Mines*, on the other hand, the author's criticism of the government is cloaked in the figure of a native. Ignosi advises the colonial government against meddling in religious beliefs that promote a peaceful view of death, that do not inspire fear in the natives, as Christianity does, with the unhappy prospect that they might burn in hell. Thus, during Ignosi's farewell to the adventurers, he promises Sir Henry that he will not allow any white men to "cross the mountains, . . . no traders with their guns and rum. . . . I will have no praying-men to put fear of death into men's hearts" (284). Haggard's fables provided him the freedom to criticize, not only democratic reforms endorsed by Gladstone, but also the participation of females in political affairs that only males, the author believed, should control.<sup>38</sup>

Since Queen Victoria's empire, like that of She, was built on imagination, the natives' perception of the British monarch as commanding virtually supernatural forces, such as railways, ships, guns, and electricity, we can see how Haggard presents Africa as a screen to critique Gladstone's government. When

Holly converses with She about religious and political changes that have taken place during the centuries that she has been awaiting the return of Kallikrates, for example, Ayesha proposes that she use her powers to dethrone the Queen of England. Both Holly and Leo object, however, explaining that present-day monarchs have changed. Rather than being feared, the Queen of England is “venerated and beloved by all right-thinking people in her vast realms.” Holly goes on to explain, however, that real power no longer rests with the monarch. In a democracy, he says, the people, the “lower and least educated classes of the community,” wield the power (169). Holly therefore agrees with Ayesha’s comment that democratic societies, having “no clear will of their own,” end up worshipping tyrants. To the extent that this anti-democratic argument is suggested, the idea that Britons are more highly evolved than other peoples disappears. This collapse of the stages of evolution that existed, supposedly, between the British and indigenous people goes along with She’s undoing of Noot’s spiritual elevation as well as Holly’s and Leo’s helplessness, as they worship her savage beauty. In other words, it is implied here that the British populace is a mob, comparable to the Africans, whom Ayesha pacifies and controls through symbols and theatrical shows in keeping with the performance of the adventurers in *King Solomon’s Mines*.<sup>39</sup>

We can see another example of how Haggard’s political critique complicates his imperialist ideology by considering Holly’s and Quatermain’s views of what it means to be a “gentleman.” For instance, even though Billali crawled, in an undignified manner, before Ayesha, Hollys says, “Billali is a gentleman at the bottom.”<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the question of what it means to be a true

gentleman is one that Quatermain poses, early-on in *King Solomon's Mines*: "And, besides, am I a gentleman? What is a gentleman? I don't quite know, and yet I have had to do with niggers—no, I will scratch the word 'niggers,' for I do not like it. I've known natives who are, and . . . I have known mean whites with lots of money . . . who are not" (3).<sup>41</sup> When we couple the trader's comment with the fact that Haggard, in his auto- biography, says that natives know, "by a kind of instinct," what a true gentleman is, it becomes clear that the author is not comfortable with the Western notion of gentility based solely on distinctions of wealth, rank, and race (*Days* 66). For Haggard, the concept of a gentleman should be enlarged to include a universalized condition of dignity that blacks, as well as whites, may possess. The author's conception of what it means to be a true gentleman, then, contributes to our sense that his loyalties are divided.

Haggard's values are further complicated as he presents incidents in his novels that illuminate the savage impulses of the supposedly civilized white men. In *She*, for example, the white queen goes against the laws of nature, as understood in the West. Shortly after the British explorers arrive, problems arise between them and some of the Africans because She gives more freedom to the women of the tribe than she gives to the male warriors. Ayesha governs through matrilineal descent, an arrangement that permits the Amahagger women to choose a mate, in contrast to the men, whom the white queen has emasculated and reduced to slaves. Before Holly and Leo actually meet She, who remains hidden in her mountain refuge, a "diabolical woman" of the tribe seeks revenge on the explorers, because their servant, Job, had rejected her amorous advances. Carrying out a plan of fatal

seduction that she and some of the warriors had put together, the woman slyly caresses Mahomed, while placing a noose over his shoulders. He is another servant, an Arab, whom the white men had hired for the journey. At the same time, ruffians grab Mahomed's legs and attempt to place a "hot-pot" on his head. When Quatermain sees what is happening, a fierce battle breaks out between the British and the blacks (69). During the attack, the primitive instincts of the British rise up, "that awful lust for slaughter which will creep into the hearts of the most civilized when blows are flying," so that they overcome their would-be assassins, primarily with physical prowess but also with the aid of pistols. Holly shoots the African woman who had provoked the battle, but the bullet pierces Mahomed, who dies. Ironically, the "merciful accident" saves him from the hot-pot, from natives who intended to devour him, as cannibalism was an "ancient and honorable custom of their country" (117).<sup>42</sup> The fact that Mahomed, a black man, is saved from the hot-pot by Holly, a white man, only by being killed by him, is an important event because it points to ambivalent elements within Haggard's ideology of race and gender.

Some days later, after Holly meets She and tells her about the battle, the queen is angry because members of the tribe defied her strict orders, conveyed to them, earlier, by Billali. Her command was that the white visitors should not be harmed. Casting blame on all those who participated in the bloody fracas, She calls together a tribunal, actually a mock court, and presides over it in order to punish the offenders. The ostensible purpose of the trial is to determine the guilt or innocence of those who took part in the battle. But it is clear from the outset that She has



already determined that those who fought with the white men should be punished, because, as she says, her “slightest word” is law. When a “fine, broad-chested fellow” attempts to defend himself and those who participated in the battle, he offers a reasonable explanation, stating that She’s command applied only to the white men, not to Mahomed. The speaker states further that the group, in keeping with tribal custom, intended to devour him. The defendant also asks for mercy, though he expects none. Despite his sensible appeal, Ayesha sentences the combatants to the torture cave, condemning them to death, in other words, while a group of “silent guards, robed in white and armed with great spears and daggers,” stands in attendance (117). Even though some members of the tribe did engage in combat with the whites, defying She’s command, her governance actually precipitated the battle. The freedom that she granted women to choose a mate allowed the diabolical woman to make amorous advances toward Job. His rejection of her incited her revenge against the British and resulted in the conspiracy to hot-pot Mahomed. Ironically, in the tribunal, She capitalizes on the anarchy that came about from her own governance by creating a spectacle, making an example of those who disobeyed her, supposedly. The mock trial visibly divides the tribe into two groups, those who obey her, represented, symbolically, by the white-robed guards, and those who do not follow the exact letter of her commands. In other words, She establishes a legal code, based on the assumption of white racial superiority and impelled by her capricious moods. Naturally, because the queen is so powerful and so willful, she refuses to acknowledge any ambiguity that comes about as a result of her governance. Even though the blacks were not at fault, She

condemned them to death, with the mere semblance of justice, reinforcing the edict that her slightest word is law. The judgment ceremony shows how She blames Others, blacks of her own tribe, making it appear that white people are superior to them and always in the right. Even though the white men's pistols gave them a clear advantage in the combat and caused the death of Mahomed, Ayesha shifts the blame onto the blacks, entirely.

This incident complicates Haggard's ideology because it gives sympathy to native Africans, both Mohamed and a number of blacks within Ayesha's tribe. The event of the Arab's death confuses the author's values because, even though Holly, a white man, killed a black man, that shot saved him from the tortures of cannibalism. Mohamed's accidental death creates sympathy for a black man whom Job had spoken of earlier, in derogatory, stereotypical language, as a filthy, smelly "blackamoor" with "thieving ways" (37). The reader's sympathy also goes out to the defendants in Ayesha's mock trial because she condemns them, with no consideration for mitigating circumstances. For example, She ignores the fact that her command created a loophole that left Mohamed unprotected from her tribe. She also overlooks the fact that the white men had the advantage of modern weapons. In his "Diary of an African Visit" (1914), Haggard wrote, in a long letter to Lord Gladstone, about the injustices that whites perpetuated against the natives: "They are people whom we have broken and not mended. . . . The ultimate argument was the gun" (Siemens 157). The sentries, dressed in white robes, emphasize, symbolically, how Ayesha sustains power by keeping racial "whiteness" on her side, making it appear superior, even though she acts in a morally despicable,

vengeful manner. This event clearly presents an ambivalent feature of the narrative, especially since the author rides along with She, the boundless “empire of the imagination” that she rules. Even further, Ayesha’s supernatural ability to blast her enemies is much like the explosive gunpowder that colonizers used in wars against the Africans, guns that Haggard, in his diary, connects with injustices perpetrated by the British against the natives.<sup>43</sup>

This incident, the battle and the trial the follows it, recalls another event, that in which She, centuries before, chose Kallikrates as her spouse. When he rejected her in favor of Amenartus, Ustane’s spiritual ancestor, Ayesha killed him in a fit of passion. His refusal explains the cruel vengeance that she exacts from Amahagger males. That sort of governance conflicts with the wisdom of the sons of Kôr, who not only honored one patriarch, by preserving his memory with a sculpture, the “pictorial representation of the death, embalming, and burial of an old man with a long beard,” but also revered the family, founded on patriarchal values (92). The author reveals his ideology when Ayesha takes Holly on a tour of the tombs of Kôr, where he observes, within a charnel-house piled high with skeletons, a mother and child:

There, robed in white, down which her blue-black hair  
was streaming, she slept her long last sleep, and on her arm,  
its face pressed against her breast, there lay a little babe. . . .  
It took me back across the dim gulf of the ages to some happy  
home in dead imperial Kôr, where this winsome lady girt  
about with beauty had lived and died, and dying taken her

last-born with her to the tomb. There they were before us,  
mother and babe, the white memories of a forgotten human  
history speaking more eloquently to the heart than could any  
written record of their lives (123).

This scene foregrounds the value Haggard placed upon the stereotypical Victorian ideal of domesticity, centered on the maternal “angel in the house.” It also suggests Noot’s wisdom, the continuance of patriarchal values, presented here as the bond between mother and child, even into the next world. That domesticity, with its “white memories,” has been forgotten, however, erased by She’s reproductive barrenness across time. Although, in order to maintain power, She gives nominal allegiance to the sons of Kôr, her ambition to indefinitely prolong her life subverts what the author regards as the natural condition of humankind. Haggard’s portrayal of Ayesha here reveals his sexist, but not his racist, values. By contrast, She’s arbitrary justice, condemning the blacks to the torture chamber after the battle, shored up her racial power because, symbolically, it made “whiteness” look morally superior. The battle and the trial that follow reveal a conflicting impulse within the author’s ideology because, even though he presents She’s capricious exercise of power as a peculiarly female attribute, her torture of the native combatants is so heinous and arbitrary that it shifts sympathy to the blacks. That shift creates ambiguity in Haggard’s imperialist ideology, as it muddies the racial component of the queen’s white power. The author expressed that sentiment, originally, in his political treatise, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors*: “The white man has no right to ‘exterminate’ or mistreat the Zulu and take his lands, and call it

‘the advance of civilization.’” The only justification for taking the natives’ land, he argued, was to “elevate them and wean them from savage customs” (221).

Haggard’s symbolism of racial whiteness suggests, on the one hand, She’s barbaric sentencing of the blacks and, on the other hand, his patriarchal ideology of angel in the house. That contradiction points to several complexities within his ideological position. For example, the author presents She, the white female, as peculiarly vengeful, in a markedly female way, yet he portrays the white men eagerly plunging into a primitive blood lust in the battle with the Amahagger. Their lust is comparable to the primitive sexuality that they are reduced to by She’s beauty, so that, once again, the white males are on the same level as the so-called savages. Furthermore, Haggard portrays She as a barren, undomesticated female, who stands in contrast to Holly’s evocation of the female ideal. But the white queen is also presented as very attractive and as superior in intelligence and grandeur to the most “loving” native females, even Ustane, the native girl who loves Leo and sacrifices her life for him, as Foulata did for Good. Even further, Holly makes assumptions about what is natural, in terms of customs and beliefs, condemning cannibalism, for example, and the ritual of animal sacrifice, called “Give me a black goat,” that takes place afterward (147). But the narrative as a whole relies upon supernatural machinery, as in the sacred Fire that purifies the spirit. Another complication is that Holly is devoted to the modern, scientific exploration of ways of knowing on which the British empire supposedly rests, but Haggard’s writings are deliberately *unscientific* and *unfactual* works of imagination, like She’s empire. Their presumed appeals to British readership must appear more like that of the

superstitions, supernatural beliefs, of the natives and thus present a subversion of imperialist ideology, which these novels represent as fantasy. Overall, then, we can see that She is a highly ambivalent figure, both desired and loathed, by Holly and the natives. However, as the author of the novel, Haggard is in the position of She, maintaining an “empire of the imagination.” That empire is marked by contradictory impulses that the author could not have been completely conscious of. After the battle and the trial that follows, in fact, Ayesha attempts to justify her cruelty by explaining that she does not rule by direct force but rather by inspiring a sense of terror in her subjects: “My empire is of the imagination,” she says. Her attitude signals the less apparent impulses that exist side-by-side with the author’s racist and sexist values in the novel.

Another element that signals contradictory tensions in both early novels is the role that sense perception plays in each. For example, it is ironic that She, even with her clairvoyant power, her ability to look into a vessel of water and see the white men approaching, does not know that her lover, Leo, is a member of that group (102).<sup>44</sup> Even after Leo, having been wounded in the battle with the tribe, falls sick with a deadly fever, Ayesha, though she possesses a potent drug that could cure him, does not sense that her lover has returned. In fact, she ignores him until he is almost beyond reviving. Just as She is about to give him the drug, she is shocked to discover that Kallikrates has come back to her in Leo’s “noble shape.” Afterward, when it becomes clear that he will survive, She tells Holly that her “wisdom could not err,” that she knew her lover would return. But she also confesses that her knowledge is limited: “Yet see how ignorant I was! See how

small my knowledge, and how faint my strength! For hours he lay here sick unto death, and I felt it not” (134). She’s failure to know, instinctively, that Kallikrates has returned is the opposite, of course, of Ustane’s spontaneous recognition of Leo when he first arrived in camp. As the spiritual reincarnation of Amenartas, Ustane possesses the natural gift of instinctive knowledge, a power that reached across a two-thousand-year chasm of time, in order to reunite with her lover. That intuitive sense is stronger than She’s “perfected telepathy.” Even though that magic allows her to gaze into people’s minds, because she has no conscience, it leaves her powerless to read what is in their hearts. In any case, Ustane’s intuition stands in contrast to the use of empirical science by the British, making it a blunt instrument that cannot detect the spiritual significance of intangible, unseen forces in the universe, and so it implies the author’s dissatisfaction, at least in some respects, with the notion of Europeans as the most civilized people.

We can see further the tension that sense perception presents in the narrative when Billali leads the adventurers from the Amahagger camp to Ayesha’s private chamber, some distance away, within the extinct volcano (107). Living in this cave, She has guarded her supernatural magic by applying the science of eugenics, by developing a race of attendants, deaf mutes, who could not reveal what they knew about her.<sup>45</sup> Before that experiment, Ayesha had attempted to breed a “race of giants.” She says, however, “[A]fter a while Nature would no more of it, and it died away” (104). Her fear that outsiders might learn her secrets, then turn that power against her, prompts her to blindfold Holly, Leo, Job, and Ustane when Billali escorts them from the encampment, across an ancient roadway, constructed by the

original inhabitants of Kôr, to meet the white queen.<sup>46</sup> As the group follows the road above the ancient canal channel that leads to She's dwelling, Holly, facing a precipice, says that they find themselves "looking into the mouth of a dark tunnel that forcibly [reminds him] of those undertaken by our nineteenth-century engineers in the construction of railway lines."<sup>47</sup> At this point, Billali, following She's orders, makes sure that everyone is blindfolded so that, as Holly says, "we should not learn the secret of the paths through the bowels of the mountain." During this trip, Holly's sense perceptions are keenly aroused. He feels "an eerie sensation" and hears the "tramp of the bearers and the rushing of the water." Afterwards, the air begins to get "exceedingly thick and heavy," causing the group to choke. As they move on, Holly says, "[T]he air got fresher again, but the turns were continuous, and, to me, blindfolded as I was, most bewildering. I tried to keep a map of them in my mind" (89).<sup>48</sup>

Ayesha's efforts to sustain her power by breeding a race of giants, the deaf mutes who attend her, the precautions she takes against being seen, and the step she took, through blindfolding, to ensure that her visitors could not find their way back to her dwelling, underscore the author's belief that the only sort of knowledge that can be trusted totally is what comes from the senses. Even though Ayesha has the power of Victorian eugenics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, and anthropology at her command, she knows that human sense perception is strong enough to overthrow her. The precaution of blindfolding the explorers, not only the white men but also a member of her own tribe, accents what Haggard portrays as the primacy of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge. Nonetheless, there is a



tension here between the author's presentation of what can be gathered through the senses, empirical evidence, on the one hand, and the appeal to extra-sensory perception and supernatural powers, on the other. That tension parallels the simultaneous attraction in his narrative toward British imperialist values and toward some sort of exotic, primitive alternative.<sup>49</sup> That divided loyalty also parallels the tension between this narrative's realist trappings and its romance form.

The narrative's divided loyalties are even more evident in *King Solomon's Mines*, particularly near the end the explorers' quest. The three adventurers manage to escape from the caves where Gagool has led them, primarily because, with only a few matches to light the dark passageways, they are forced to depend on senses other than sight to escape. While they are trapped in the treasure chamber, Good feels a draft of air that comes from a place in the floor, the location of a stone ring, and they use it to free themselves by pulling up a huge boulder that gives them access to the staircase leading out: "He [Good] rose and stamped upon the place and a flame of hope shot up in our hearts. *It rang hollow.*" Sense perceptions, sound and touch primarily, allow the British to escape starvation in the treasure chamber. Still, they remain trapped within the maze of cave tunnels, not knowing where to turn, that is, until Good feels another draft and suggests that they go against it, since "air draws inwards, not outwards" (272). As the men grope their way through the darkness along the rocky walls, perplexed by a "stone labyrinth that led nowhere," suffering from extreme thirst, Quatermain says that he hears the "faint, murmuring sound" of running water. It is the naval officer, Good, however, who again instinctively navigates the unknown terrain. The other two follow as he

“smells” the water, then falls into the river with a “*Splash!*” Good’s infallible sense perception proves to be the explorers’ salvation. After pulling him from the subterranean river, their throats burning like “limekilns,” as Quatermain says, they drink their fill. Then, after retracing their steps down the tunnel, they see the “faint glimmering spot” of light that comes from a jackal hole where they crawl through to safety, smell the “sweet air,” and roll in the “wet soil.” Quatermain comments, “Surely, some merciful Power must have guided our footsteps to the jackal hole.” His religious reflection reveals the author’s ambivalence, the tension between sense perceptions that the explorers depend on in order to escape from the caves, and the super-natural “Power” that, he says, “guided our footsteps.” Here Quatermain suggests that “natural knowledge” of the senses has a supernatural basis, just as She does. The narrative maintains an ambiguous relation, then, between natural and supernatural causation. That tension reproduces Haggard’s ambivalence toward Western knowledge as opposed to other ways of knowing, buried, like the adventurers themselves, deep within the underground caverns of his imaginary empire.

From these two early romances, then, we can see that, in one vein, Haggard goes along with the scientific racism and the new imperialism of the late Victorian period. The author’s racist and sexist ideology is especially evident from Good’s relationship with Foulata and from Haggard’s representation of the sons of Kôr. Nevertheless, other ways of knowing, as portrayed in Quatermain’s foreknowledge, in Gagool’s preternatural instincts, in Ustane’s intuition, and especially in the supernatural machinery of *She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed* exert a strong attraction on

Haggard, so much so that they significantly complicate his ideology, presenting contradictions, ambiguities, ambivalences, and confusions within his works.

Despite those counter impulses or, perhaps, owing to them, these novels are particularly compelling. While focusing on Haggard's epistemological journey, I may not have conveyed the imaginative force of his narratives, accentuated by bizarre, often loony, figures, as well as humorous elements of the plot. The author presents Captain Good, for example, as a figure who has an obsessive concern for maintaining the trappings of civilization in the midst of a savage wilderness. He insists on the ritual of shaving each day and wearing civilian clothes rather than the more appropriate apparel of a hunter. His eyeglass and his false teeth, too, represent civility and technological know-how in the West. The contradiction between Good's desire to maintain the accoutrements of civilized society and the fact that he must remain only half-dressed, that is, with his white legs always in sight of the native girls, is an example of the conflicting impulses that drive Haggard's invention of quirky, often humorous characters. In other words, Good strikes us as a humorous figure because he is a product of the author's simultaneous allegiance to British patriarchy and impulse to break free from that ideology. Similarly, although Gagool is not humorous, like Good, she is certainly a zany figure. Her shriveled, monkey-like body and her bizarre behavior, smelling the blood of traitors and making sinister incantations, show that she, too, comes from conflicting impulses within the author's imagination. Gagool's grotesqueness, in fact, is the imaginative counterpart of She's terrible beauty. We can see how those seemingly unrelated figures come together as one at the end of *She*. When Ayesha is

consumed by the sacred flame, she shrivels up, “no larger than a monkey. Now the skin was puckered into a million wrinkles” (194). Gagool’s weird character anticipates, in other words, the ambivalence that we find in She.

The ambivalence, though not the humor, is also apparent in Haggard’s portrayal of Leo’s and Ustane’s relationship. After she defies the white queen and tries to run away with him during a festival, Ayesha kills her. Even though the romance between Leo and the native girl depicts a standard element in the imperialist imagination--the assumption among white men that native women were at their disposal, and were, of course, sexually attracted to them--the relationship between Ustane and Leo suggests that Haggard is playing out his ambivalence about racial difference. This idea is supported by Brian Street’s comment on Good’s relationship with Foulata. He remarks that Haggard’s portrayal of Foulata coincides with racial theories of the day, particularly De Gobineau’s warnings against miscegenation. At the same time, the author’s sympathies for the black and white lovers, the critic says, conflicts with those theories (100). Haggard’s ambivalence about race goes along with the tensions that we see elsewhere in his narratives. Since Ustane, like Foulata, is adoring of and sacrificial toward the white man, we might go so far as to suggest that one of the elements that goes into Haggard’s attraction to other ways of knowing, and his discontent with British knowledge and science, is a fantasy of erotic dominion over a powerful but ritually subordinated sexuality that he associates with native women but also with an escape from Western conventions of respectability and responsibility, including the responsibility of imperial governance. This is the sort of fantasy that we find, for

example, in Herman Melville's portrayal of Tommo's uninhibited romantic freedom with Fayaway, in *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian life* (1846). We find it, too, in Paul Gauguin's adventures in Tahiti and in his paintings. In Haggard's imperial romances, then, we can also glimpse, however confusedly, the limits of empire.

## Notes

1. All references to the text come from H. Rider Haggard. *King Solomon's Mines* (London: Penguin Books, 1994).

2. In his discussion of Victorian knowledge at the periphery of empire, Roger Luckhurst remarks, "Here, narratives concerning occult relation, uncanny methods of communication and instances of telepathic rapport abounded. 'The further one travels out from the centre towards the periphery, the more uncertain is the knowledge that is to be encountered, and the more important (and unclear) is the resonance of each piece of information'" (200). See Roger Luckhurst, "Knowledge, Belief and the Supernatural at the Imperial Margin."

3. Speaking of Haggard's political views, Andrea White notes that he was "bitter about Gladstone's concessions to the Boers and Britain's subsequent loss of the Transvaal at Majuba Hill in 1881" (83). See Andrea White, "The Shift Toward Subversion: the Case of H. Rider Haggard."

4. All references to the text come from Harry M. Geduld, ed. *The Annotated She: A Critical Edition of H. Rider Haggard's Victorian Romance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

5. Many scholars discuss Haggard's works from the point of view of male anxiety about the advent of the New Woman. For critical interpretations based on that premise, see, for example, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Heart of Darkness" in *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. Vol. 2 *Sexchanges*. See also, Anne McClintock, "Maidens, Maps, and Mines: The Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial South Africa." Other scholars

who take the same line of reasoning include Deirdre David, Elaine Showalter, Barri J. Gold, and Terence Rodgers.

6. Shawn Malley comments, “By inscribing this particular evolution on the sherd, Haggard re-creates the evolution of Western civilization through time and space. The sherd is a kind of Rosetta Stone, a linguistic road map to the past, whose transcriptions chart the major Western historical migrations” (281). See Shawn Malley, “‘Time Hath No Power Against Identity’: Historical Continuity and Archaeological Adventure in H. Rider Haggard’s *She*.”

7. Carolyn Burdett states, “Reincarnation and the concept of spiritual evolution with which it was associated in Theosophical doctrine provided a model of harmony and hierarchy capable of shoring up Haggard’s crumbling faith in a democratizing Britain and a struggling empire” (222). See Carolyn Burdett, “Romance, Reincarnation and Rider Haggard.”

8. Richard F. Patterson explains that, according to the author’s daughter, Liliias, “Haggard himself believed that Phoenicians mined gold in the vicinity of Zimbabwe until they were massacred” by indigenous tribes who learned their wisdom (114). See Richard F. Patterson, “*King Solomon’s Mines*: Imperialism and Narrative Structure.”

9. Anne McClintock interprets the map as a representation of the female body. See Anne McClintock, “Maidens, Map, and Mines: *King Solomon’s Mines* and the Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial South Africa.”

10. For some discussion of the map as the possession power through knowledge, see Lindy Stiebel, *Imagining Africa: Landscape in H. Rider*

*Haggard's African Romances.*

11. Heidi Kaufman argues that Haggard reveals his anti-Semitic beliefs through his reference to King Solomon. See Heidi Kaufman, “*King Solomon’s Mines?: African Jewry, British Imperialism, and H. Rider Haggard’s Diamonds.*”

12. For a discussion of the imperial romance genre, see Laura Chrisman, *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism, and Transnationalism.*

13. As Luckhurst explains, “Official imperialist discourse allied itself with the powers of Enlightenment, but where the writ of modernity reached the limits of Western power, leaving behind the supports of governmental, military or scientific institutions, and technologies of communications, doxai became a more locally responsive discourse, and the line between positive knowledge and folkloric belief became blurred” (200).

14. Gail Ching-Liang Low remarks, “While Gagool is a figure of evil and cunning, she is also marked as wise beyond the capabilities of ordinary men by virtue of her skill in divination, and her longevity and accumulation of knowledge across centuries” (77). See Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism.*

15. Robert Fraser remarks, “In staring at those gaunt, irresistible effigies trapped in their symbolic ice, Quatermain, Curtis, and Good are not assuaging academic curiosity about an exotic people. They are confronting specters of themselves” (35-36). See Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, and Conan Doyle.*



16. Fraser states, “The macabre death-in-life of this tableau of one-time kings represents an entombed civilization, ossified by history into a bizarre condition of synchronous stasis. . . . The extreme reactions evinced by the explorers, . . . are not those of men faced with alien presences, so much as of people confronted by an aspect of their own past that they dare not face” (35-36).

17. In his essay, “Of Cannibals,” Michel de Montaigne extols the virtues of so-called barbarians, whose “original naturalness” surpasses that of other peoples who have been “changed artificially” by contact with Europeans: “[T]he laws of nature still rule them [cannibals], very little corrupted by ours; and they are in such a state of purity that I am sometimes vexed that they were unknown earlier, in the days when there were men able to judge them better than we” (185). See Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters*.

18. Anne McClintock notes that “[m]onkeys, in particular, were deployed to legitimize social boundaries as edicts of nature: Fetishes straddling nature and culture, monkeys were seen as allied with the dangerous classes: the ‘ape-like’ wandering poor, the hungry Irish, Jews, prostitutes, impoverished black people, the ragged working class, criminals, the insane, the female miners and servants, who were collectively seen to inhabit the threshold of racial degeneration” (155). See Anne McClintock, “Advertising in the Empire.”

19. White notes that Haggard feared a “degeneration that leaves England militarily unprepared, a belief that, in fact, subverts democratic values being promoted at home” (87).

20. Adrian Hastings states, “The first Baptist missionaries to the Congo

arrived in 1879 on a boat loaded with gin. Earlier missionaries had arrived on slave-ships. Now 'legitimate' commerce had been substituted. In place of slaves, gin" (78). See Adrian Hastings, "Christianity, Civilization, and Commerce."

21. Patterson remarks, "When a native girl happens to fall in love with a white man, she almost always dies. The reason for her death is not merely racial; marriage is unmistakably presented as a betrayal of masculine camaraderie" (116). Deirdre David comments, as well, that "Foulata possesses the sweet compliance of the *National Geographic* savage" (193). See Deirdre David, *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing*.

22. For a discussion of the multiple uses of Victorian almanacs, see Katherine Anderson, "Almanacs and the Profits of Natural Knowledge."

23. Andrew Lang, Haggard's friend and collaborator on one novel, states that it is "power," as we see in the white men's ocular demonstration, rather than some idea of the Infinite, that generates religious belief: "Early religions, in short, are selfish, not disinterested" (213). See Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth*. Brian Street argues that the reaction of the natives to the eclipse ultimately presents them as conforming to the popular stereotype of the 'savage' even though not all of the natives accept the Englishmen's show of power as authentic (62). See Brian Street, *The Savage in Literature: Representations of 'Primitive' Society in English Fiction, 1885-1920*.

24. *The Ingoldsby Legends, or Mirth and Marvels* (1864) were written by Reverend Richard Harris Barham and illustrated by George Cruikshank among others. They are humorous Gothic tales with grotesque figures. The allusion to the

legends is suitable in this case because it accents the fabulous, somewhat humorous aspect of the white men's show of power.

25. For a thorough discussion of hybridity and racial theories of the day, see Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. See also, Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How A Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution*.

26. Many critics point to contradictory elements in Haggard's novels. Chrisman, for example, states that Haggard was "no single apologist for Natal colonial expansion. He was instead, acutely ambivalent about the processes of capitalist modernization" (40). Stiebel argues, too, that within his novels, "beneath the cover of narrative convention and fictional characters, some contradictory part of Haggard is free to show more humanity and humility, more fears and pessimism as to the outcome of the imperial project than the public, imperialist Haggard could allow" (45).

27. Stiebel remarks, "On the one hand, Empire was about information gathering, laying secrets bare by mapping, naming, classifying, and yet on the other the attraction of the colonies lay in their ultimate unknowability, their secrecy" (44).

28. Burdett describes She as a "materialist": [S]he is depicted as a scientist, not a mystic. She is a linguist, a chemist, a geologist, an astronomer and a practical eugenicist. She is, above all, an adept, a knower of occult law." The scholar goes on to say that She "pits her materialism against both his [Holly's] empiricist common sense and her terror of supernatural forces" (226-227).

29. Low notes that She's knowledge is "derivative rather than originary" due to her seduction of the sage Noot, a hermit" (65).

30. For a concise discussion of the popularizing of Victorian evolutionary anthropology, see Douglas A. Lorimer, "Science and the Secularization of Victorian Images of Race."

31. Stiebel remarks that caves in Haggard's works "always suggest anxiety on many levels . . . linked to the contradictions and ambiguities of the contemporary world" (46).

32. As Haggard was reading E.B. Tylor's "science" of anthropology when he wrote *King Solomon's Mines*, Peter J. Bowler's comment about Tylor applies here: "Tylor saw anthropology as a 'reformers science' since it allowed one to detect and if necessary eradicate 'survivals' of ancient customs still embedded in modern society. But he shared the prevailing view that there was only one path of social and cultural development to be followed by all . . . . Rather than invoke interaction between divergent cultures, Tylor preferred to assume parallel evolution up a single hierarchy of stages, thus preserving the Victorians' sense of their own cultural superiority" (36-37). See Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past*.

33. Besides Mazooku, Haggard's close relationship with Umslopogaas, another native, is well documented in biographical accounts of the author. Angela Poon argues that Umslopogaas is a fetish figure in the author's novels: "The portrayal of Umslopogaas is subject to a fetishistic logic of representation where the indulgence in voyeuristic pleasure dovetails with simultaneous attempts to

manage anxieties about the black man” (147). See Angelia Poon, *Enacting Englishness in the Victorian Period: Colonialism and the Politics of Performance*.

34. Alan Sandison remarks, “Indeed it is Haggard’s presentation of them [the natives] as being under the same doom as the Europeans and sensitively aware of the fact that results in the remarkable degree of identification of native and European spiritual life” (31). See Alan Sandison, *The Wheel of Empire*.

35. Fraser notices a similar sort of leveling that takes place when Sir Henry, preparing for battle, dresses as Ignosi does: “It is as if the ‘racism’ of which Haggard’s detractors sometimes accuse him is blotted out by a ‘sizeism’ that cuts right across the cultural and linguistic divide sustaining this ill-matched pair of giants in a condition of uneasy Darwinian parity” (32).

36. Andrew Smith remarks, “On an overtly political level, if in *She* Ayesha had appeared as a rival to Queen Victoria, it was only because she seemed like an exaggerated version of her. There Ayesha was a Queen with grand imperial ambitions, isolated in a profound and lengthy state of mourning for her lost love, and to a contemporary reader these parallels with Victoria must have been quite clear” (110). See Andrew Smith and William Hughes, ed. *Empire and Gothic: The Politics of Genre*. Low states, too, that She is the “negative image” of Queen Victoria because Ayesha rules through “terror and fear” (64-65).

37. Speaking of Haggard’s political views, White states, “Rather than reaffirming the values of the dominant culture as adventure fiction had done, this writing registers a discontent” (87).

38. Haggard criticizes the government for allowing females such as Lady

Florence Dixie too much influence in political affairs, especially since some of them, according to the young writer, wanted to reinstate Cetywayo as Zulu tribal chieftain, solely on the basis of his manly appearance, 2. See H. Rider Haggard, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors Or, Remarks on Recent Events in Zululand, Natal, and the Transvaal*.

39. In *Cetywayo and His White Neighbors*, Haggard relates the story of how Shepstone summoned an image of the Queen's huge fleet coming across the seas to fight the Zulus, thus averting a war. Cohen refers to this incident as a "mock threat" that, he believed, Shepstone was incapable of making (38).

40. Bowler's comment on evolutionary anthropology sheds light on Haggard's portrayal of Billali and Holly. The scholar remarks, "The blacks in Africa could be seen as having adapted physically to a tropical climate, while at the same time preserving a primitive mental and physical state long surpassed by the races which had continued to evolve in a stimulating environment" (120).

41. In his biography of Charles Darwin, Adrian Desmond discusses the "hardening of attitudes toward blacks," supported by anthropologists such as E.B. Tylor. From Tylor's perspective, blacks could only evolve into gentleman quite slowly due to the need for "accumulated education and technological prowess, which took centuries to acquire" (365). Even though Haggard, while he was writing *King Solomon's Mines*, was reading Tylor's works, apparently, he did not agree completely with the anthropologist's view of blacks. See Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How A Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution*.

42. William J. Samarin notes that “even if such ritual cannibalism was practiced, it was far from what was said to have taken place.” The scholar attributes the “almost universal belief among the whites in the cannibalistic orgies of central Africans” to racist attitudes among Europeans (100). See William J. Samarin. *The Black Man’s Burden: African Colonial Labor on the Congo and Ubangi Rivers, 1880-1990*.

43. In his discussion of Haggard’s neglected diary, Lloyd G. Siemens explains that whenever Haggard visited the grave sites of the British, the Boer, and the Zulu, the experience “trigger[ed] in Haggard a poignant lament for the dead, culminating typically in an apostrophe on the futility of racial or cultural aggression and the vanity of imperial ambition” (156). See Lloyd G. Siemens, *Rider Haggard’s Neglected Journal: ‘Diary of an African Visit.’*

44. Luckhurst notes, “Clairvoyance, the ability to view events at a distance, was a power ‘fashioned out of strong affection or some other relation’ and might be made to work as an intelligence-gathering device” (128).

45. Patrick Brantlinger explains that Charles Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton, coined the term “eugenics” in 1883: “Galton drew from Darwin’s work the conclusion that the blind mechanism of natural selection could be brought under control by human selection or eugenics” (193). See Patrick Brantlinger, “Imperial Gothic: Atavism and the Occult in the British Novel, 1880-1914.”

46. The near extinction of the people of Kôr, due to pestilence and famine, four thousand eight hundred and three years after the founding of the city,

according to the Priest Junis (122), suggests the Darwinian view of evolution as discussed by Brantlinger: “Social Darwinists argued that nature’s constant laws mandated the extinction of all unfit creatures and species to make room for new, supposedly, fitter ones” (15). See Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930*.

47. Michael Adas explains that, as early as the 1830s, “European colonial administrators and missionaries came to view railroads, steamships, and Western machines in general as key agents in their campaign to revive ‘decadent’ civilizations in Asia and uplift the ‘savage’ peoples in Africa” (72). See Michael Adas, “The Machine as Civilizer.”

48. Felix Driver, while discussing how much Scott Keltie’s maps of central Africa, based on Henry Morton Stanley’s travels, changed contemporary views and knowledge of the African interior, states, “Yet Keltie’s maps did not and could not, tell all. For central Africa had long been a site of European imaginings; it was in this sense less a great blank than a reservoir of myth and fantasy, for explorers, novelists, and anti-slavery campaigners alike” (120). See Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*.

49. Smith argues that Haggard’s novels show “two, seemingly irreconcilable impulses.” One comes from the author’s lament for the decline of Britain’s status as a colonial power, and the other is the exploration of a new identity politics: “My central claim is that death and the possibility of an after-life in Haggard’s writings, anticipates a post colonial space in which all kinds of races and classes co-exist” (104-105).



## Afterword

The British image of empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, as presented in the novels of this study, is marked by a number of ambiguities and contradictions that do much to reveal the ideology of each author. When we consider how the writers' concepts intersect with one another, some meaningful connections emerge. Those crossing points cast some new lights on the overall image of the British empire, particularly as it relates to Victorian cultural hierarchies based on race, class, and gender.

In a broad sense, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* shares common ground with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, because the assumption of both novelists is that British civilization, based on the ideology of Anglo-Saxon racial dominance and the belief in Christianity, is superior to all others. In their representations, both authors promote middle-class values, strong family bonds in particular, and they denigrate the upper classes by associating them with racial Others. In doing so, both Thackeray and Brontë reveal their racist attitudes. Thackeray, for example, ridicules upper-class politicians, like Mr. Pitt, who adopt phony religious sentiments in order to advance their careers. The author satirizes them by showing how self-interest drives the so-called humanitarians to support the abolition of slavery and to make political alliances with missionaries. According to the author, the hegemonic power of the propertied elite, impelled by vanity and grounded on hypocrisy, erodes the moral, social, political, and economic foundations that British society should stand upon. In the novel, he associates upper-class women with

“savages”— African blacks, Jews, Creoles, and American Indians—in his generalized subordination of racial Others, several of whom he portrays with demeaning stereotypes, as he does Miss Swartz. Thackeray suggests that foreign Others exist beyond the pale of Anglo-British culture, and he associates their racial repugnance, as he portrays it, with the upper classes in order to accentuate the corrupt motives of the latter. Thackeray mocks Lady Southdown and Lady Emily, for example, with satirical portraits that equate them with savages, not only foreign Others but also people of the British working classes, whom the female politicians present to the public, hypocritically, as worthy of Christian philanthropy. In his view, upper-class women who participate in politics are hypocrites, because, in order to advance their careers, they ignore the maternal instincts that make them most suitable as domestic caregivers.

In contrast to upper-class vanity and hypocrisy, Thackeray presents middle-class values as authentically Anglo-British. Those values are represented by the O’Dowds, primarily, but also by Colonel Dobbin, since his attitude changes at the end of the novel. Recognizing that his pursuit of Amelia has been a bootless waste of energy, he gives up his illusions about her. Ironically, disillusionment frees him from the barren ground of upper-class vanity, they marry, and he becomes a devoted father. As the self-effacing Dobbin and the O’Dowds are loyal soldiers of the British empire, they display the sort of national leadership that the author admires. In his portrayal of the O’Dowds, he plays, somewhat, on the stereotype of the drunken Irishman, but he goes beyond that to show how they are caring, intelligent, and devoted to one another. The O’Dowds display the authentic family

bonds that are missing, in the author's representation, within upper-class families. His humorous portrayal of Mrs. O'Dowd shows that she possesses the maternal instinct to care for her husband and for his regiment, as she attends to the soldiers' needs, like a strong-willed parent. Her spontaneous vulgarity, an overflow of robust vitality, trumps upper-class snobbery, so that she serves the English nation unselfishly, far better than "heroic" soldiers, like Lieutenant Osborne, who seek only promotions and glory. Thackeray's otherwise quite conventional assumptions about English racial superiority, then, exist in an uneasy tension with his critique of British culture and society. The directions in which his fiction is driven by his ideological assumptions about clan and gender make his characters appear visibly puppet-like, or even valueless, and so his novel might seem to be at odds with itself as it assumes a racial superiority that it simultaneously shows to be unwarranted. His comparison of aristocrats to so-called savages, in other words, may in the end serve not only to mock the institution of class hierarchy but also to upset his own concept of savagery.

Brontë, too, in order to degrade the wealthy, compares them to foreign Others. She compares the ambition of the propertied elite to the heathen worship of idols. She uses racial markers to show that, in actuality, upper-class women are inferior to members of the middle classes. Like Thackeray, Brontë presents what she regards as wholesome domestic values as the greatest good. She portrays them as natural passions and contrasts them with the institution of European marriage, which exists primarily as a means of advancing the privileges of the governing classes. Romantic love, according to Brontë, only masks the sadistic impulses

that underlie the institution of marriage, as practiced in the West. Even further, some Anglican ministers, hypocrites like Reverend Brocklehurst, are complicit with the ruling classes in their quest for power, since those clergymen participate not only in the material indulgences of the wealthy but also in their wanton sexuality. Brontë's satiric portrait of the sadistic Brocklehurst, who takes pleasure in punishing his students, suggests Thackeray's influence because the "black-marble" clergyman has exaggerated, almost monstrous, qualities that border on caricature. But Brontë does not depend, generally, on caricature, as Thackeray does. In *Vanity Fair* he ridicules those who feign Christian virtue by portraying the objects of their supposed compassion, foreign Others and members of the British working classes, as ludicrous figures, especially in the titles of Lady Emily's pamphlets. Brontë, on the other hand, while she does ridicule Christian hypocrites, emphasizes far more what she believes true religious faith is and how Jane, the heroine of her spiritual autobiography, discovers it through her spiritual progress. Ultimately, Jane's faith comes from the knowledge gathered from all of her experiences, both within and outside of the Church, not only from exemplars of Christian faith, like Helen Burns, Miss Temple, and St. John Rivers, but also from longings and struggles that temper her character, so that she comes to know God by intuiting His presence in the cosmos. Brontë portrays the revelation of Jane's true identity as the organic evolution of her spiritual self from the imaginative curiosity of a child, spurred by resentment as an outcast in an upper-class family, to the wisdom and happiness of an adult in a genteel, middle-class family.

While Thackeray's and Brontë's attitudes toward race and class, as presented

in these novels, are similar, their main point of departure is how they portray gender relations. Clearly, Thackeray suggests that the responsibility of all females is to nurture their families. By showing how the participation of women in the political sphere is perverse, he reveals his fear of females, like Becky Sharpe, gaining too much socio-political power. So his novel contributes, ideologically, to the subordination of women in Victorian society. In *Jane Eyre*, on the other hand, Jane's spiritual progress shows women not only as natural caregivers but also as capable of socio-economic self-reliance and freedom of religious belief, and thus possessing an independence of mind and spirit that Thackeray denies females. Even so, there is an ambivalent feature in Brontë's representation, because Jane admires St. John Rivers. She considers, however briefly, the possibility of marriage to him. Still, she responds to Rochester's mysterious summons and marries him instead. This ambiguous element suggests that while Brontë desires more freedom for women, she also places some value on the traditional, patriarchal establishment of Great Britain. In order to solve that problem, to give Jane agency, the author presents a racial Other, Bertha Mason, as a savage who burns Rochester's mansion to the ground. This incident ultimately empowers Jane, as it gives her the opportunity to revitalize and reclaim the gentleman at Ferndean, so that he is incorporated into Brontë's ideology of middle-class gentility, founded on education and self-help, on the teachings of nature, God's laws, and on Christian virtues, such as humility, forgiveness, compassion, and generosity, rather than on the ownership of property. Near the end of the novel, the inheritance that Jane receives from her uncle is presented as being natural and right, because it accords with the Christian

teleology of the narrative. Her reward is a divine intervention that finally reveals Jane's true identity as a full-fledged member of Rivers's family. The inheritance also puts right the unjust treatment she received as a child. Even so, Jane's inheritance presents a contradiction because her uncle made his money, at least indirectly, from the ownership of slaves in Jamaica, where his firm in Madeira had business relations. Jane's condemnation of slavery, where she compares the injustices she faces to this condition, do not match up with her financial windfall.

So Brontë is trapped in the contradiction that class antagonism, along with imperialist loyalties, presents to a would-be moralist—that is, the violence that they perpetuate. That violence opposes, of course, the Christian principles that she espouses. Since she presents Bertha Mason, a white Creole, as a stereotypical black female—animalic, “mad,” sexually overdriven—the author's racism, like that of Thackeray, is obvious. But her commitment to imperialism is more apparent than his is because of her portrayal of Rochester in Jamaica and Rivers in India. Thackeray's loyalty to the imperial project, on the other hand, can only be inferred. It is suggested through his portrayal of racial Others who serve the British by perpetuating their fantasies; through his description of the exotic allure of remote colonies; through his advocacy of genuine Christian principles, aligned with the middle classes; and through his depiction of “good” soldiers who serve the empire. Still, Thackeray's critique of the upper classes presents a contradiction. The laughter of the wags who ridicule the rising merchants, such as we see in snobs, like Jos Sedley, or smug aristocrats, like Mr. Pitt, suggests a democratic impulse on the author's part that contradicts the racist and sexist elements in the narrative.

Unlike Charlotte, Emily Brontë, in *Wuthering Heights*, presents racial Others, associated with Heathcliff through the ambiguity of his birth origins, as producing a wholesome change in traditional Anglo-Saxon values. She portrays Heathcliff as a gypsy gentleman whose enigmatic character revitalizes the decadent gentry on the moors because he strikes out, with vicious animosity, against the established hierarchies of race, class, and gender. We have seen how, in *Emma*, Jane Austen presents the gypsy encampment as an ambiguous space that threatens closely policed class ranks, and we have also seen how Charlotte Brontë presents Rochester's gypsy disguise as a means of negotiating the ambiguous space that lies between the middle and the upper classes. In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë locates that cultural difference, represented by the figure of the gypsy, not on the fringes of civilization but within the midst of the landed gentry, within their cultural borders, as a means of disrupting patriarchal values. Since Heathcliff is perceived by upper-class families, the Earnshaws and Lintons, as alien, sprung from the unknown darkness of empire, his power to disturb ancient traditions, based on the myth of pure blood, is especially potent. Imaginatively, his figure accretes foreign Others, so that his ambiguous racial identity undoes cultural foundations and regenerates them. The fact that Heathcliff, as a youth, feels injustice, somewhat like Jane Eyre but with more angst, gives him sympathy at the outset. Afterward, however, when he repays his tormentors, his violent acts are repellent. His brutal treatment of Isabella, for example, is especially disturbing. In that regard, because he carries out his revenge with such enormous appetite, as compared with his innocence and primitive vitality as a child, his figure is more complex than that of Jane. Still, from

a symbolic standpoint, we can understand Heathcliff's violence because Isabella, like Linton Heathcliff, represents the genteel values that he must eradicate before he can bequeath his cultural vitality to the younger generation, Hareton and Cathy. We can see, too, that Heathcliff's violence allows him to create himself anew, as Frantz Fanon's discussion of violence in colonial settings suggests.

Even though, when it comes to race, they are far apart, ideologically, the Brontë sisters agree on the significance of behaviors that they regard as "human nature." While Charlotte Brontë's portrayal of foreign Others is demeaning to them, she places importance on what is natural, original, open, and spontaneous in human behavior. Emily's representation of humanity in *Wuthering Heights* shows that she, too, has a high regard for what is natural and spontaneous, even though we might think of Heathcliff as the misanthropic incarnation of the unhuman. He is unhuman in the sense that he brings to light and assaults the ideological foundation of various institutions-- legal, religious, political, familial, and educational--that uphold the "human" qualities that Brontë subverts. Even so, from the standpoint of social class and education, her representation is no less ideological than that which she undermines. For instance, she suggests that progress for the working classes can be achieved through literary knowledge passed on to them by the upper classes, as we can see in the Romantic image of Cathy teaching Hareton how to read.

The values of the Brontë sisters match, too, in their representations of the inter-imperialist rivalry between France and England. Both authors degrade French culture, as we see in Charlotte's portrayal of Mr. Rochester's sordid liaison with Céline Varens and in Emily's portrayal of Frances. She represents another diseased



branch—of a formal education that reinforces the callous aspect of class ranks, and is associated with the conspicuous consumption of commodities-- that Heathcliff removes, symbolically, from English civilization.

Even further, Emily, in keeping with her sister's portrayal of upper-class marriage, reveals the sadistic impulses underpinning romantic love, as we see in Heathcliff's relationship with Isabella. This theme is present in *Vanity Fair*, too, in Becky's predatory affairs, for example, and in Dickens's serial publication of *Great Expectations* (1860-61). In that novel, the author's portrayal of Jagger's housekeeper, Molly, a "wild beast tamed," contributes to the subtheme of sadist impulses that underlie romantic relationships. The fact that Dickens presents the housekeeper as a gypsy suggests, once again, how Victorian authors, at mid-century, use the figure of the gypsy to pry apart the locked gates of Anglo-Saxon traditions. We can see, then, that the Brontë sisters share certain ideas about what constitutes human nature but differ in their views of what racial groups should be regarded as fully human. Charlotte's representation violently exorcizes, from the category of fully human, Creoles and Indians of the Asian subcontinent. On the other hand, while changing its substance and meaning, Emily reverses the direction of that violence. In doing so, she opens a space for racial Others to regenerate Anglo-Saxon civilization.

By comparing values presented in *Wuthering Heights* with those shown in *The Moonstone*, we can see that Emily Brontë and Wilkie Collins share common ground. While Collins presents fractures in the British national identity, based on family relationships, gender expectations, racial attitudes, and class ranks, he shows

how the very legal system of Great Britain violates the sanctity of the English family. Even though Blake asked Sergeant Cuff to investigate the mystery of the stolen diamond, his search is not welcomed by Lady Verinder and Rachel. The policeman's logical methods, taken to their extreme ends, come across as an insensitive invasion of their domestic harmony and privacy. Even though Cuff puts Blake on the right track and they discover Spearman's suicide note, his rational methods are misdirected because they elide the human element—that is, the house maid's love for Blake, how her feelings for him impelled her actions. This scenario, in which a working-class woman has the audacity to imagine a relationship with a gentleman, reminds us of Jane and Rochester, so that we can see how Collins, like Charlotte Brontë, helps to legitimize greater power and freedom for Victorian women. Despite Betteredge's sympathy for her, however, Spearman drowns in the shivering sand, Collins's metaphor for the dehumanizing network of socio-political, legal, and moral entanglements, based on upper-class privilege, that swallow and suffocate the working classes, females, and foreign Others in Victorian society. Before he can reunite with Rachel, Blake must learn that he is part of that hegemonic quagmire and accept the blame for his participation in it.

Collins's portrayal of the invasive aspects of English civil law on the family extends to military law, by way of Britain's historic relationship with India. We can see, for example, how Colonel Herncastle, after stealing the Moonstone, becomes estranged from his relations: his cousin, a soldier who, along with Herncastle, fought the Indians at Seringapatam; his sister, Lady Verinder; and his brother-in-law, the politician, Mr. Franklin Blake. The ambiguities that surround Herncastle's

character, the conflicting reports about him after he takes the diamond, parallel the ambiguities of the legal system that spreads its noxious tentacles throughout the family domain. Herncastle's theft is so confounding that it interferes with the engagement plans of Rachel and Blake for some time. As a member of parliament, Blake's father represents the entrenched authority of the patriarchal political system. He shows how the legal establishment bogs down society with costly, seemingly endless, disputes over property. Due the wrangling and unethical scheming on the part of Mr. Blake, which leave him no time to deal with his son's and Rachel's problem, Blake is disaffected from him. The Moonstone itself represents the fracturing of relationships that comes from the invasion of the legal system, represented, in particular, by the legal instrument of the will, into the family. Collins's portrayal of the legal establishment shares something with Emily Brontë's representation of it, because she presents it as a demonic force, as a sort of gothic specter that substitutes unhuman for natural relationships among family members. We can see this, for example, when Heathcliff turns the law to his advantage, as he takes possession of the Grange, on the basis of Edgar's will, a legal document that passes the Grange to the gypsy gentleman, because Edgar has no male heir. Both Edgar's and Herncastle's wills show, then, how the legal system mires English families in archaic laws and patriarchal customs.

In contrast to Britain's historically corrupt and onerous legal system, Collins presents intuition as a highly desirable, efficacious attribute that is strongly developed in females and especially acute in children. We know, for example, that Sergeant Cuff has a "female" side, symbolically associated with roses. Collins

presents Cuff's intuitive, female side when he makes accurate predictions about what will happen in the course of Blake's continuing efforts, after the policeman retires, to unravel the mystery of the stolen gem. By portraying Sergeant Cuff as having dual aspects to his character, Collins undoes gender stereotypes. He shows that human experience is most rich and productive when people, depending on both sides of their physiological make-up, are not limited by gender expectations. The author's portrayal of Cuff's female side anticipates the entrance into the narrative of Ezra Jennings, a gypsy whose female side is strongly pronounced. It is only through Jennings's intuitive intelligence that Blake finds out that he stole the precious Indian jewel, a cultural icon, from Rachel herself.

But the link between Cuff and Jennings, based on their instinctive perceptions, is reinforced by Collins's portrayal of Dr. Candy. His bungling, often humorous behavior causes Blake to underestimate his prescient character. Because the young gentleman, at first, has no understanding of the power of intuition, placing worth, instead, only on conventional attitudes toward gender, he argues with the affable Dr. Candy, whose medical practice thrives because he depends on his instincts. Collins's portrayal of the debate between Blake and Dr. Candy anticipates the two ways of knowing that we find in Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, because early on Blake puts faith in Cuff's rational methods and in Mr. Murthwaite's supposedly expert, eyewitness testimony about Indians but finds out afterward that Dr. Candy's instinct and Jennings's infallible intuition provide the only means of solving the Moonstone mystery. As Dr. Candy defies gender stereotypes, he reveals a fracture in the British national identity. Along with

that, he also represents the power of human instinct to understand Others and to solve social problems on the basis of that knowledge. This idea is also suggested by the Bouncers, who have no fear of the Indian jugglers and the clairvoyant English boy, who show up at Rachel's party, looking for the diamond. Because the "strolling conjurors," as Betteredge calls them, find the child, "a hungry, ragged, and forsaken little boy," in the streets of London, and because he helps them find the sacred symbol of their culture, the child's psychic perception reminds us of Heathcliff, his extraordinary power of cultural regeneration. Collins's representation of the potent import of intuitive knowledge echoes, too, Charlotte Brontë's portrayal of Jane's sense of God's presence in the cosmos, as well as her failure to heed His warnings in Rochester's garden.

So Cuff's and Dr. Candy's roles in the narrative, as figures who possess female intuition, set the stage for the entrance of Jennings, whose striking features signal his hybridity. He collapses polarities, such as youth and age, male and female genders, white and black racial categories, that Western culture is built upon. His faculty of perception, like that of the boy detective, Gooseberry, is uncanny. Collins invests the figure of the gypsy, as Brontë does Heathcliff, with almost supernatural powers that undermine Western stereotypes and undo cultural hierarchies. Considering Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity, as it applies to both figures, we can see that Heathcliff's power to dismantle cultural categories is even greater than Jennings's is, however. As the biological son of Old Earnshaw, perhaps, Heathcliff exists in the interstices, between cultures. Jennings, on the other hand, though he works on behalf of the British and resolves Blake's problem,

remains a cultural outsider. At the end of the novel, Collins portrays the three Brahmin priests as racial Others who put right the cultural violation done to them by a British soldier and by Ablewhite, another figure, whose name, like the names “Herncastle” and “Betteredge,” suggests that he represents the cultural ideology, power and privilege, of Anglo-Saxon males.

So Collins’s representation of empire in *The Moonstone* compares favorably to that of Brontë in *Wuthering Heights*, because both writers present racial Others who not only expose the corrupt foundations of British power, underwritten by the legal system, but also defy that hegemony with innate qualities of heart and mind. *The Moonstone* shows, too, how the violence associated with imperialism can circle back, with unexpected consequences, against those who participate in colonial oppression. That reversal recalls Heathcliff’s violence against his oppressors, except that, in his case, the violence originates both within and outside of the family. His disruption of traditional values, then, is even greater than that of the Brahmin priests.

As shown in Haggard’s novels, his interest in epistemology complicates the imperial ideology that scholars have attributed to his works. In *King Solomon’s Mines*, the author projects his predominately racist and sexist values onto a wholly imaginary African setting and African tribe. A ring of mountains encircles the Kukuanna encampment, sequestered within the wilderness, presenting an insular fortress in the jungle. In essence, Haggard reproduces a little Britain, protected from its enemies, not only by its natural barrier but also by its martial prowess, owing to its mythic pure blood. In order to critique the British government, the

wrong-headed decisions of Gladstone, as he regards them, the author veils his criticisms by having a native, Ignosi, articulate them. He is the rightful heir to the Kukuanna throne, but his cultural identity is Anglo-Saxon. So he represents Haggard's political voice, the sort of insight, based both on first-hand experience and on intuition, that he would like to see put in place in the governance of Africa. The author admonishes the government for allowing missionaries to interfere with native religious beliefs and for allowing commercial interests, guns and rum, to disturb their peace. Haggard marks the usurper, King Twala, with ugly physical traits, portraying him as an African with inferior blood, in order to distinguish him from the tribal members, who possess beautiful, aquiline features. He portrays the Kukuanna leaders, both Twala and Gagool, as cruel and corrupt, given to bloody purges of the tribe. In keeping with the author's imperial ideology, then, Sir Henry, who inherited his extraordinary strength in combat and his martial valor from his Danish forefathers, leads the native rebels to victory over Twala's troops.

The author's racist and sexist attitude is evident, too, in his portrayal of Captain Good's relationship with the native girl, Foulata, and in his white legs, alluring and always visible to the native women. Haggard portrays black women so that they are at the disposal of the British explorers, sexually. This racist portrait recalls Thackeray's depiction of Osborne's relationship with Miss Pye, his mistress from St. Kitts, because, in both cases, the white men assume that their racial superiority gives them sexual license, accompanied by freedom from responsibility, when it comes to black women. Even though Haggard does not satirically ridicule racial Others with demeaning caricatures, as Thackeray does, his

ideology reiterates the racist and sexist values we find in *Vanity Fair*, because, for Haggard, foreign Others exist, primarily, to fulfill the fantasies of the Anglo-British.

But even though *King Solomon's Mines* clearly does present racist and sexist elements, the label "imperial romance" that scholars have given this works, populated by bizarre figures, either cruel and misshapen, like Gagool, or barbaric and beautiful, like She, elides the epistemological components of them. The narrators, in both novels, doubt the existence of what cannot be apprehended by the senses, and their skepticism prepares the reader for the fabulous discoveries that come later in the narratives. In *King Solomon's Mines*, when the trio of white men go looking for Sir Henry's brother, they are diverted from their primary goal, not only by the civil strife brewing in King Twala's camp but also by Quatermain's curiosity about Solomon's legendary treasure. Those diversions give Haggard time and space for his epistemological quest, an adventure that reveals contradictory impulses within his imperialist sympathies. In the novel, the author's epistemological journey presents two ways of knowing: on the one hand, tangible, first-hand knowledge, associated with British empiricism, and, on the other, intuition, which Haggard links to native instinct and foreknowledge. His presentation of a sort of inspired intuition among the natives, while it is part of a tradition that reaches as far back as Montaigne, recalls Collins's representation of intuitive powers among females, children, and gypsies. Haggard's depiction of foreign Others who possess extraordinary intuitive powers corresponds to Collins's portrayal of that faculty.

The complication that arises from Haggard's representation of intuitive



knowledge among native peoples, however, is that it contradicts the racist and sexist components of his novels, suggesting that his loyalty to the imperial project is divided. The division is evident, for example, when the white men attempt to frighten the natives with their “magic,” actually Western technology and science. The adventurers first try to intimidate the tribal leaders by showing them the lethal power of their rifles and, afterward, with an ocular demonstration, a hoax, based on their ability to predict a lunar eclipse. But the tribal leaders are not impressed by theatrical displays. The failure of the white men’s theater complicates Haggard’s racist ideology, because it suggests that the natives may be astute, not as simple-minded as the explorers assume. Another complication arises when Gagool leads the adventurers to King Solomon’s treasure, buried deep within the ice-caves, the sacred burial grounds of the Kukuannas. The behavior of the quirky witch doctor is puzzling because, all the while that she is taking them to Solomon’s hidden chamber, she mocks their pretense of superior knowledge. By trapping the white men within the treasure chamber, the Isanust shows that her theatrical talents are a match for theirs, at least temporarily. Haggard’s presentation of Gagool’s enigmatic behavior undermines the sense of superstitious reverence that he had established before, within the ice-caves. So this event again complicates his imperial ideology. Even further, near the end of novel, when the white men escape from the subterranean tunnels, the author shows how much faith he places in sense perception, associated with British empiricism, because the white men depend largely on their senses to get out of the caves. Even so, there is ambiguity here because Quatermain attributes their escape to some miraculous, supernatural cause, rather than to human

agency. This ambiguity suggests, again, that Haggard is not entirely comfortable with British knowledge, based on empirical evidence, so that he reaches for some other way of knowing, rooted, significantly, in the imagination.

In *She*, Ayesha's "empire of the imagination" presents several ambiguities and contradictions that complicate Haggard's racist ideology, suggesting that his loyalty to the imperial project is divided. Through his presentation of the sons of Kôr, the author shows his racist and sexist values, as he did in the earlier novel. In fact, She appropriates the authority of that extinct, patriarchal civilization so that she can retain power over her tribe, the Amahaggar. She has reduced the male warriors to abject drudges and elevated the females, socially, so that they are equal in status with the males. This scenario, which reverses what is natural, according to Haggard, represents Thackeray's worst nightmare, his fear of females gaining too much socio-political power and freedom. We can see, too, how Haggard's ideology of the "angel in the house" accords with the domestic values that Thackeray espouses. The difference, however, is that he associates those values with the middle classes, while Haggard represents upper-class figures, Holly and Leo, as natural heirs to the leadership of British society.

But even though Haggard's imperial ideology is quite evident, counter impulses that complicate his values crop up throughout the narrative. One complication comes from his portrayal of She's encounter with the hermit, Noot. In that event, She's, a white woman's, flattery is enough to overturn Western religious faith, based on centuries of academic inquiry and sacred knowledge. She's mockery of Noot recalls the deceptive behavior of the zany witch doctor. When Ayesha

leads Holly and Leo through bewildering caverns to the Sacred Fire, she conceals her motive from them, as Gagool did with Quatermain and his companions in the ice-caves. This situation complicates Haggard's ideology because, in the narrative, he rides along with She. In other words, he builds her imaginative empire with supernatural machinery so that she can penetrate the source of immortal life. Yet that machinery challenges his own racist and sexist ideology, based on the empirical knowledge of Anglo-Saxon males, like Holly and Leo, who represent the most advanced civilization, supposedly, on earth. Their battle with the Amahaggar, as it brings their primitive blood-lust to the surface, casts doubt, in fact, on the notion that British civilization is superior to those considered not to have evolved at all. Haggard's ideology is complicated even further by Holly's, the skeptical scholar's, admission that he wants to marry She, a savage queen. Despite his refusal to bow before her, at first, Holly's attraction to her primitive sexuality overturns the high moral ground he stands on, underwritten by reason and science. In the scene in which Holly goes on his knees before Ayesha, stating that he worships her, Haggard suggests that sexuality is a primitive, supernatural force and that Western civilization may not, in actuality, be as advanced as it believes. Despite the draconian measures that She adopts in order to dominate males, both Holly and Leo cannot keep from falling in love with her. Their helplessness before a white queen presents a counter impulse in the narrative that clearly complicates the author's sexist attitude. Another complication comes from the fact that, even though Holly's pursuit of truth is based on scientific ways of knowing, Haggard's novels present to Victorian readers fantasies in which the imagination appears more

penetrating and full of truth than empirical investigation. His audience must have regarded his works as more akin to native superstition and supernatural belief than to the so-called facts of science. Haggard's ambivalence toward race, as presented in his portrayal of Leo's relationship with the native girl, Ustane, and elsewhere in the narrative, suggests, too, how his epistemological quest is driven, perhaps, by a fantasy of freedom from respectability and imperial governance. This presents another complication, then, suggesting how Haggard's quest for knowledge is fraught with ambiguities and confusions.

These complications, as well as other ambiguities discussed in the final chapter, while they present counter-impulses in Haggard's early novels, also suggest how the works analyzed in this study as a whole present an image of empire that is riven with ideological differences. In considering the overall portrait of the British empire, we can pair Thackeray with Charlotte Brontë, because their novels have strong racist elements, and we can pair Emily Brontë with Collins, because their novels overturn traditional cultural values. Even so, those pairings, like the label "imperial romance," are somewhat misleading. They gloss over many differences in the representations of the five authors, associated with historic traumas, like the Sepoy rebellion, for example, and gradual shifts in cultural attitudes. Since the general political tide of this period was toward more democratic freedoms for Anglo-Britons, even as attitudes toward race, from the 1840s to the 1880s, became more rigid, the complications of Haggard's novels point, appropriately, to the clash of ideological differences that we find in the overall portrait of the empire. Haggard's ambivalent portrayal of She points, too, to the

divisiveness, animosity, and violence that are concomitant with the assumption that Anglo-British civilization is superior to all others.

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