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The British Empire and Victorian Literature and Culture



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VICTORIAN NETWORK: GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the first issue of this exciting new journal, *Victorian Network*. The journal, with generous support from the AHRC, provides a central forum for postgraduate students to publish their work, offering an important insight into the cutting-edge of Victorian Studies at the present time. The title *Victorian Network* represents Victorian culture in terms of interconnectivity rather than discrete ideas, disciplines and institutions. Links in the period between literature, history, painting, religion and science have been well-explored, but what 'Network' highlights, it seems to me, is a more interactive, vibrant, and essentially socialised sense of structures of connection. It also speaks to the value of facilitating *Victorianist* networks. The production of the journal itself brings together an editorial team of postgraduate students, working with a different guest editor for each issue, and will continue to involve new generations of postgraduate students in its development. Its online format opens it up to international consultation and more interactive possibilities, and allows it to be produced with relative speed, ensuring the relevance of the articles. At the same time, the journal retains the rigorous critical screening of a tightly ordered peer-review process: *Victorian Network* draws upon an international pool of postgraduate peer-reviewers.

The theme chosen for this first edition, 'The British Empire and Victorian Literature and Culture', is especially well-suited to the aims of the journal. Postcolonial studies has reached a crucial transition point. A generation into its existence as a discipline, it risks being seen as of diminished relevance to a twenty-first century world supposedly moving beyond concepts of national identity. Yet the spread of globalisation in today's hyper-connected networking world, and the ongoing reminders of the institutional and psychological legacies of colonialism in current-day political events, make awareness of new directions of research into the British Empire and the networks that created, fostered, and ultimately dispersed it all the more urgently necessary. *Victorian Network* offers the perfect forum for this process in its capacity to showcase and energise the present directions of graduate research for an international readership.

One of the journal's distinctive features is its willingness to use its online presence to look beyond academia and consider a wider range of readers, in particular the school students who will be themselves shaping the directions of intellectual thought – in and out of universities – in the years to come. The Humanities are coming under enhanced pressure to foster specifically professionalized functions and demonstrate their relevance (a sometimes narrowly-definable term) to the larger community – pressure which many scholars feel has troubling implications for the discipline. The editorial board's commitment to *Victorian Network* as both an academic forum and a pedagogical tool achieves this relevance without sacrificing intellectual and critical standards and the integral value of research for research's sake. The 'Victorian Wire' section of the website thus contributes to the productive

traffic of ideas between higher education institutions and the general community, as well as training the future generation of academics to present their research in accessible and relevant ways. I can attest to the scrupulous care and academic zeal with which the editorial team and their reviewers have approached the inaugural issue, and the finished product makes an impressive start to this significant project.

This first issue of *Victorian Network* opens in late nineteenth century Africa, with two articles which use imperial adventure novels to expose the deeper ideological underpinnings of colonial power struggles. The £50 prize for the best article is awarded to Jane Ford's 'Spectral Economies at the Anglo-African Margin: Bertram Mitford's Predatory Politics of Consumption'. Ford connects concepts of *fin de siècle* fall and degeneration with economic structures and theories, arguing that Mitford exposes 'the circularity between the rapacious economies at the end point of civilisation and the savage daughter at its genesis'. Her striking analysis of an underrated author links Gothic literary motifs with crucial questions of capitalism and consumption, and makes a persuasive equation between cannibalistic savagery and economic processes at the height of supposedly civilised European society. J. Stephen Addcox, in 'Inoculation and Empire: Cigarette's Healing Power in Ouida's *Under Two Flags*', takes Ouida's classic adventure novel as a means through which to explore the medicalisation of Victorian imperial thought – and the imperial underpinnings of Victorian medical thought. Arguing for the heroine Cigarette's function as an 'inoculation' who heals, cures and immunised the exiled protagonist to return to British aristocratic domesticity, Addcox insists that inoculation has 'a deep historical importance to colonial and post-colonial discourse, especially with respect to women, sexuality, and medicine'. Focusing upon the early Victorian period, Peta Beasley parallels two generically fluid texts, Jane Porter's exploration tale *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* (1831) and Georgiana Molloy's letters detailing her new life in 1830s Australia, in 'Georgiana Molloy, Jane Porter and the Significance of Exploration Narratives for New Beginnings in a Strange Land'. Beasley focuses on the emigrant's experience of settler colonialism, but emphasises this experience as a partly literary one: Porter's text offers Molloy a model through which to articulate and realise her new life. The final part of the journal returns to the *fin de siècle*, now considering London in its self-perpetuating role as imperial metropolis.¹ Qi Chen's 'Aristocracy for the Common People: Chinese Commodity in Oscar Wilde's *Aestheticism*' introduces a type of 'Orient' under-explored in postcolonial scholarship: the influence of China and of Chinese arts on British artistic fashion and thought. Imperial trade and zones of influence (often, as in China's case, enforced by British military pressure), together with industrial development, opened up a greatly expanded world of commodities. Wilde's Aesthetic theories, Chen contends, could invoke china as a symbol both of past aristocratic glamour and of present-day bourgeois domestic access. As a conclusion, Theresa Jamieson's examination of

¹ See Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) and Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation' in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation*, ed. by A. Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

classic *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction, ‘Working for the Empire: Professions of Masculinity in H.G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* and R.L. Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’ argues for a vital correlation between national identity and the health of the Empire. The admirable anxiety of Victorianist and postcolonial scholars to explore subalternity and otherness has at times led to a critical disregard of supposedly ‘normative’ identities, a disregard that, ironically, risks implicitly conceding their social centrality. Jamieson, by contrast, insistently ‘makes strange’ middle-class masculinity by highlighting it as the crisis point for diagnoses and expulsions of degeneration.

Finally, as part of *Victorian Network*’s interest in the opening-out of classic texts to wider audiences, the £25 prize for the best short outreach article goes to Gillian Nelson’s ‘Vampiric Discourse in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*’ (available here: <http://www.victoriannetwork.org/index.php/vn/pages/view/wire>). Nelson offers a fresh perspective on a popular cultural trope which has often been taken as a model for colonial power relations. She reads *Wuthering Heights* as offering a distinctive model of symbiotic vampirism through Heathcliff and Cathy’s relationship, a vampirism turned monstrous by social and cultural pressures rather than by its own nature.

The theme of imperial consumption central to Ford’s ‘Spectral Economies’ echoes across this issue of the journal as a whole. ‘As literary studies and art history have turned the gaze of scholarship from makers to audiences’, noted Craig Clunas in 1999, ‘so social, economic, and cultural historians have over the past two decades increasingly focused on the consumer and not the producer’.² *Victorian Network* shows the cross-disciplinary progress of this transition in a powerful fusion between audiences and consumers. These articles go well beyond merely monetary readings of imperial power relations, instead placing consumption as a dynamic psychological experience, and one which cannot be separated from its surrounding networks of financial, cultural, literary, and even emotional economies. While the journal covers the whole ‘Victorian’ period, the prevailing emphasis upon the *fin de siècle* suggests heightened interest in an imperial period of immense economic and cultural expansion but also intensified vulnerability. These articles address questions of what it means to consume – physically and mentally, what price is paid for so doing, what are the networks which sustain consumption and what are the ways in which capitalism and consumption mutually sustain each other. This topic is all too relevant to our immediate concerns as a society in the midst of economic upheaval, but forms part of a more long-standing modern querying of the consumption central to our social functioning, and the often elided institutions of production which support our day-to-day lives.

Ideas of consumption also feed into the volume’s preoccupation with the body and bodies, something in which can also be discerned recent critical interest in the

² Craig Clunas, “Modernity Global and Local: Consumption and the Rise of the West”, *The American Historical Review*, 104.5 (1999)

<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/104.5/ah001497.html>> [accessed 28 July 2009], para.1 of 17).

materiality, particularly the imperial materiality, of the Victorian world.³ Addcox's 'Inoculation and Empire' uses the infiltrating, infecting, but ultimately inoculating female body as a locus for its exploration of the extent to which the practices and the language of nineteenth century medicine were infused with imperial and patriarchal discourses of knowledge and power. Nelson's discussion of vampirism in *Wuthering Heights* brings together consumption and the body into one chilling package, even while she traces more positive constructions of vampirism as a symbiotic and sustaining, not draining, force. Jamieson's consideration of the imperial body and imperial labour insistently links these to her constructions of masculinity.

A further element of the networks of empire, still at times neglected even with audience-centred scholarship, is the active role played by readers and concepts of reading, and particularly the self-reinforcing representative processes whereby the traveller absorbs models of empire from their reading and then in turn brings those models to bear on their own experience. Beasley's 'Writing a New Life' places a woman reading another woman's supposed life of a male explorer and coloniser as central to the construction of colonial life. Finally, I would also single out the willingness of the contributors to avoid monolithic views of Orientalism and nineteenth century empires and instead to see the British Empire as a *British* Empire, one which partially defined itself against other imperial aspirations (as Addcox notes in relation to France), and one whose aesthetic models could be shaped by even more alien traditions (as Chen notes regarding China), as well as one whose colonial structures took very different directions (as we see with Ford's Africa versus Beasley's Australia). These articles offer a remarkable variety of approaches to the overall theme of the British Empire and Victorian Literature and Culture, but they are brought together, above all, by their authors' capacities to transcend disciplinary and theoretical boundaries and to view the British Empire in terms of networks of economics, physicality, reading, and power.

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³ See esp. Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003) and Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006).

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SPECTRAL ECONOMIES AT THE ANGLO-AFRICAN MARGIN: BERTRAM MITFORD'S PREDATORY POLITICS OF CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

This article examines the work of critically neglected colonial writer, essayist and cultural critic Bertram Mitford, with particular reference to his novel *The Sign of the Spider* (1896). Taking an economic approach to *fin de siècle* imperial politics, I argue that Mitford offers an important yet sadly overlooked counter-narrative of imperial expansionism. To an extent, Mitford undermines figures like H. Rider Haggard whose narratives betray a particular insensitivity to the depredatory conditions of Empire. Exploring Derridean formulations of Hauntology, I suggest that Mitford's success lies partly in his 'spectralisation' of fiscal realities. The narrative, featuring apparitions of erstwhile economies, allows for a dialogue between past and present that problematizes Britain's position in global markets at the *fin de siècle*. I further illustrate that Mitford's depictions of anthropophagy offer a scathing cultural critique of late nineteenth-century imperial enterprise. From the indigenous tribes in an evolutionary state of economic nature to the merchant or financier at the end point of our financial evolution, 'economic man' shares a primal, archetypal desire to consume. In conclusion, I suggest Mitford attempted both to destabilise the popular myth of Britain's 'beneficent' patronage of occupied South Africa, and bravely to undertake the work of inheriting the legacy of Britain's predatory economic past.

The imperial romance, beset with notions of improbable wealth, speculative gain and the agon of financial conquest, has become a favourite amongst critics in the burgeoning discourses of Victorian literary economics. Indeed for colonial adventure writers such as H. Rider Haggard, the potentialities of hidden wealth and financial risk play an imperative role in the allure of the imperial adventure. As Francis O'Gorman points out, Haggard's fixation with the possibilities of wealth contributed to, and was part of, the 'discourses of gentlemanly capitalism' at the end of the nineteenth century.¹ Yet beyond the trials of the British gentleman-hero exists an account of imperial economics that transcends this sense of wonderment, exposing the more sinister underbelly of imperial expansion.

The author, essayist and cultural critic, Bertram Mitford (1855-1914) was a contemporary of Haggard's. Largely neglected by critics, Mitford's narratives have yet to assume their rightful place in the discourses of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century. The tales, deservedly minor classics, offer a challenge to the jingoistic sentiment prevalent in the imperial romance and, unlike the counter-fictions of figures like Olive Schreiner, signify dissent at the very heart of the colonial office. Like Haggard, Mitford served in the colonial civil service and spent much time

¹ Francis O'Gorman, 'Speculative Fictions and the Fortunes of H. Rider Haggard', in *Victorian Literature and Finance*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 157-172 (p. 158).

working and travelling in Zulu territories. It is not known in exactly what capacity he was employed, but it would almost certainly seem that Mitford was occupied in a less prestigious role than Haggard, for as Gerald Monsman points out, no record of his appointments exist in the Colonial office records in London.² Whilst the stylistic parallels between the two authors are patent, no trace of Haggard's fascination with the conditions of wealth and the seemingly limitless possibilities of the new market economy can be detected in Mitford's narratives. Rather, colonial hostility and capital violence punctuate the pages of his tales, as do scenes of rapacious slaughter. At the heart of these imperial adventures is a dark and deeply politicised account of the financially motivated aggression that characterised relations between Boers, British and the indigenous populations of Africa. Mitford's narratives were undoubtedly fuelled by the chaos unfolding around him. Indeed, the last decades of the nineteenth century saw many troubling political and fiscal developments in colonised South Africa. By the time *The Sign of the Spider* (1896), Mitford's most successful novel, appeared in print, the relations between the British settlers and the Boer community had long been in crisis as the Transvaal government intended to capitalise on the influx of British merchants, entrepreneurs and 'chancers' following the discovery of goldfields in Witwatersrand. The message from the Transvaal was clear: to exploit the prosperous landscape, to feed from the profits of imperial conquest, was itself to become victim, to become part of the great economic food-chain.

For Mitford, this sense that the economic market was one characterised by predatory forces was acute. Indeed, *The Sign of the Spider*, the novel that forms the basis of this discussion, reveals within the prevailing economies of the period the enactment of a new kind of savagery: a savagery operating not in the cannibal tribes of the Cape, but in the specifically late-Victorian market economy. Cleverly juxtaposing 'new' economic man, consuming the spoils of imperial conquest, alongside the bestial savage who 'came forth to eat up other tribes', Mitford undermines the illusion of 'civilised society'.³ He writes: 'It was a primeval idyll, the wandering of these two – the man, the product of the highest *fin de siècle* civilisation; the other the daughter of a savage race. Yet in such wandering, savage and civilised were curiously near akin' (p. 216). Lexically speaking, Mitford's application of '*fin de siècle*' consciously evokes a weight of cultural meaning, not merely the end of a century but a decadent finale. As Robert Mighall points out, around the time when Wilde's immortal lines '*fin de siècle, fin du globe*' appeared in print, *fin de siècle* was

² Gerald Monsman, *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier: The Political and Literary Contexts of his African Romances* (Greensborough: ELT Press, 2006), pp. 268-284 (p. 273).

³ Bertram Mitford, *The Sign of the Spider: An Episode*, ed. by Gerald Monsman (Kansas: Valancourt, 2008), p. 138. Further page references will be given parenthetically in the text. In *The Insatiability of Human Wants* Regenia Gagnier discriminates between 'economic man' at the beginning and end of the nineteenth century. She argues that at the former, man was driven by the desire to 'produce', production being the sole end of economic behaviour. By the end of the century, this psychology was usurped by the desire to consume; economic man's 'advanced stage of development was signified by the boundlessness of his desires'. I use the term 'new economic' man in deference to Gagnier's second and productivist understanding of economic behaviour. See Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 20.

seen to herald ‘an impending collapse in standards’, the re-enactment of the fall of classical civilisations.⁴ Mitford capitalises on these notions of the fall, exposing the circular relationship between the rapacious economies at the end point of civilisation and the savage daughter at its genesis. In taking this perspective he was certainly not alone. In *Degeneration* (1892) Max Nordau notably prophesied a turbulent transition into contemporary civilisation; he argued ‘one epoch of history is unmistakably in its decline, and another is announcing its approach. There is a sound of rending in every tradition, and it is as though tomorrow would not link itself with to-day’.⁵ Yet, unable to penetrate the fog of cultural proximity, contemporary reviewers of Mitford’s novel paid little heed to his imperative insight into the economics of imperial, *fin de siècle* Britain, but rather disregarded the text as a ‘book for boys’, its author a mere ‘horror-monger’.⁶ Indeed, since the novel’s publication in 1896 it has received little attention. Gerald Monsman’s introduction to the recent Valancourt reprint of Mitford’s text (2008), alongside his appendix on Mitford in *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier* (2006), provides a much needed, yet insufficient, counter to this critical neglect.⁷

In this essay I present Mitford as an important minority voice in *fin de siècle* imperial politics; one who, far from acting as a mere extension of Haggard, problematizes the jingoistic sentiments prevalent in the imperial narratives of the age. In a sense I argue that Mitford’s texts operate within Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s model of ‘Minor Literature’. Born of a recognition that the literary output of Franz Kafka stood as a subaltern voice in the cultural politics of his day, this theory seeks to redeem minor literatures from the reductive interpretive practice that regards these fictions as somehow lesser examples of a major form. Identifying three characteristics, Deleuze and Guattari point out that ‘Minor Literature’ is characterised by ‘the de-territorialization of language, the connection of the individual to political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation’.⁸ Minor Literature is not qualified by the employment of a minor language, but the de-territorialization of a ‘host’ language: the propensity to claim territory, forge minority space *within* a major one. Modifying this principle with reference to Mitford, I suggest his narratives do not seek to de-territorialize language, but rather the established stylistic conventions of the imperial fictions of the age. Indeed, whilst the parallels between Mitford and authors such as Rider Haggard are patent, an elemental understanding of ‘minor literature’ guides us from the impasse of regarding their literatures as ideologically akin. Mitford was not merely apprenticed to Haggard’s school of popular romance, as some critics seem to indicate. His narratives, whilst sharing stylistic similarities,

⁴ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. by Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2000; repr. 2003), p. 171; for Mighall reference see Notes to this edition, p. 249.

⁵ Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, translated from the second edition of the German 1895 text, with an introduction by George L. Mosse (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 5.

⁶ ‘Literature’, *The Leeds Mercury*, 11 December 1896, p. 13 and ‘Reviews’, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 December 1896, p. 7 respectively.

⁷ Monsman, *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier*, pp. 268-284.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; repr. 1993), p. 18.

ventured where Haggard's did not, to reveal the truth behind imperial expansionism and to challenge the patriotic notion of Britain as a great 'civilizing' nation.⁹ It is not merely this de-territorialization of its host-genre that qualifies Mitford's narratives as 'minor literature', but in accordance with Deleuze and Guattari's criteria, the 'political immediacy' of his works and the tendency to organise these principles in a 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. Put differently, the almost caricatured predominance of politics and the narrative investment in 'collective' values signposts the text not as a hackneyed or third rate imperial romance, but as part of a literature that makes its 'minor use' of the genre a statement against the predatory spirit of *fin de siècle* imperial economics.

Paying particular attention to questions of imperial finance, I argue that Mitford employs a kind of 'spectral economy' in which the narrative present is haunted by apparitions of erstwhile economies, from the primitive appetites of early man, to the newly redundant 'science of scarcity'. In this sense Mitford crudely anticipates Derridean formulations of spectrality. The Spectral operates not merely as a gothic device in Mitford's texts, but importantly represents an epistemology troubled by the (re)appearance of non-linear economic realities: a philosophy that is embellished in Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1994). Indeed, if we are to learn to live, argues Derrida, we must inherit from the 'borderlands'; that is to say, we must 'learn spirits', we must identify the indistinct figures and ideologies that haunt the margins of experience.¹⁰ Written in the aftermath of Soviet Communism, and shortly after Francis Fukuyama's theorisation of the 'End of History', Derrida's text occupies an analogous socio-political space to Mitford's.¹¹ To be 'haunted' necessarily requires sight of the peripheries of a cultural moment and indeed, for Derrida, the demise of Soviet communism signalled the 'passing over' of cultural ideologies associated with the movement into the margins of collective memory. For Mitford, it was not merely that in the approach to the new century the many faces of Victorian finance had made a ghost-like reappearance (which, in a sense, they did), but moreover the new hegemonic dominance of consumerist values had resurrected a predatory, more primordial economic past.¹²

⁹ With the exception of Gerald Monsman – who is perhaps the only scholar to address Mitford's *oeuvre* with true regard for its importance to our literary heritage – critics invariably refer to Mitford's work with sole reference to his resemblance to Haggard. Malvern Van Wyk Smith, for instance, argues that Mitford's work is 'a highly saleable blend of Haggard's exotically inventive romance and the Victorian public school adventure', see Malvern Van Wyk Smith, *Grounds of Contest: A Survey of South African English Literature* (Kenwyn: Juta Press, 1990), p. 24.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge, 1994; repr. 2006), p. xvii.

¹¹ Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, 16 (1989), 3-18.

¹² Lawrence Birken, Gagnier, and others point out that at the end of the nineteenth century productivist ideologies had been largely abandoned; economic growth and an emerging emphasis on 'the consumer' in economic theory and practice defined the psychology of finance at the end of the nineteenth century and beyond. For a more detailed explanation see 'Introduction' in Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants*; see also Chapter One 'The Dissolution of Political Economy' in Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance 1871-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 22-39.

Hardened by the abuses of ‘genteel poverty’ and a hateful marriage, Mitford’s hero, Laurence Stanninghame, heads for the Cape to make his fortune in Johannesburg’s ever pending ‘boom’ (p. 42). After initial success in the stock market, Stanninghame suffers financial ruin as the fledgling economy experiences an unexpected slump. Left with no choice he enters into a perilous slave hunting expedition into the country’s interior. Haunted by thoughts of his ‘cramped life and squalid worry of a year-in year-out, semi-detached suburban existence’, Stanninghame experiences ‘want’ as phantasmic, as ‘spectral eyes in the darkness’ (p. 7). For Mitford it is not merely atavism, or the propensity to return to primal appetites, that delineates the temporal characteristics of the period, but moreover an asynchronous organisation of economies: a fiscal *revenant*:

Grim, fell spectres haunted his waking hours no less than his dreams. Did he return from a few hours hard exercise with a fine appetite, that healthy possession served but to remind him how soon he would be without the means of gratifying it. He pictured himself destitute, and through his sleeping visions, would loom hideous spectres of want and degradation. (p. 72)

‘Fell’, that is to say, fierce and visceral, the spectres that torment Stanninghame reiterate our own essential savagery; they impress on him grim visions of a more primal appetite than is evident in ostensibly ‘civilized’ markets. Mitford’s spectres are of both past and future: certainly a primordial past, pertaining to the satiation of our most essential, primal needs, but also a past more recent. We might term this a kind of ‘suburban’, pseudo-privation, an erroneous sense of deprivation ensuing from a failure to meet the standard of luxury required of ‘polite’ society. Furthermore the apparition of future poverty, something akin to Dickens’s ghost of Christmas Future, haunts Stanninghame. The unexperienced future ‘returns’, illogically reiterating a reality that is yet to be lived.

Equally, for Mitford, as the nineteenth century draws to a close and an economy once centred on production and the provision of needs is supplanted by one favouring consumption and the satiation of ever more demanding consumer desires, ‘want’ ostensibly assumes a place in the annals of the dead past; it becomes a spectre, illusively projecting psychologies of a former time, a former economy, onto the unwitting mind of Mitford’s hero. Without becoming entrenched in the changing discourses of political economy in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to expand briefly on the principal developments that transformed the psychology of finance. In the last third of the century, the neoclassical or ‘marginalist’ school of economic thought, led by figures such as William Stanley Jevons and Carl Menger, postulated a system whereby the productivism of the classical economists – Marx, Smith and Mill for example – was supplanted by a model of production that was inherently contingent. ‘New’ economic man was driven by a desire to consume irrespective of a productive system that was largely conceptualised as the by-product of consumer

satiation.¹³ Thus the concept of ‘need’, the drive to fulfil man’s lower-order needs, was usurped by the notion of ‘abundance’. In a sense, the rise of domestic consumerism was fuelled by Britain’s liberal imperialism; the influx of commodities and imperial capital merely absorbed, perhaps even stimulated, escalating appetites at home. As Ann McClintock points out: ‘Banks and stock exchanges rose up to manage the bonanzas of imperial capital. Professions emerged to administer the goods tumbling hectically from the manufactories’.¹⁴ Yet, like Derrida, Mitford recognised the almost genealogical accession of time; *fin de siècle* or *fin d’histoire*, the transition into a new age is not unmarked by the echoes of that which precedes it.

However it is not solely the anachronistic organisation of time that characterises Mitford’s approach to economics; the spectres that haunt the text are not merely benign incarnations of asynchronous realities, but rather *predatory* apparitions, recalling and prefiguring a more sinister economic proclivity, a kind of vampiric desire to consume:

The ghastly remnants of that fearful feast lie around in the moonbeams – human bones, picked clean yet expressive in their shape; spectral, as though they would fain reunite, and, vampire-like return to devour their own kind (p. 102).

These human remains mark the aftermath of a cannibal feast witnessed by Stanninghame and his companions in the midst of their slave hunting expedition. The bones, situated in a post-consumptive temporality, operate as signifiers, shapes that denote both a compulsion to return and, furthermore, a primordial, vampire-like appetite. In the ethereal moonlight, the last vestiges of human life stand testament to the assisted passing into historicity; only hours before, living, breathing and tenaciously clinging to life, these creatures are now unanimated relics of a spectral past. Yet, the relationship between the living and the dead figures as a more reciprocal transmission; it is not merely the past that visits the present but the present that *revisits* a former state. By juxtaposing Stanninghame’s carnal indulgence of economic appetites with this savage lust for human flesh, Mitford consciously draws analogies between the predatory psychology of finance and a more primal desire to consume. Richard King points out that cultural critiques of anthropophagy in contemporary media find in the practice an ‘essential metaphor for late capitalism’. In other words,

¹³ In *The Theory of Political Economy*, first published in 1871, Jevons argued that ‘we labour to produce with the sole object of consuming’; furthermore our desires ‘are absolutely insatiable, and seem to increase with every improvement of civilization.’ An important marginalist voice in *fin de siècle* economics, Jevons here highlights the fundamental change in economic thought in the nineteenth century. For the classical economists (such as Marx) the end of economic activity was production and surplus. Towards the end of the century, post-classical economists, including Jevons, argued that production was incidental to the escalating appetites of new economic man. See W. S. Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy*, 5th edn (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1965), p. 102. For a more detailed explanation see Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants*, and Birken, *Consuming Desire*.

¹⁴ Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 208.

the mechanisms of capitalism promote a philosophy of exploitation and consumption, whilst cannibalism is similarly an abuse of the human body with an ultimate goal of consumption and individual profit. King argues: 'Given the similarities between classical cannibalism as embodied by the Aztec and quintessential capitalism as engendered by the modern West, it is not surprising that recent realignments of capitalism correspond to the emergence of a reconfigured cannibalism'.¹⁵

However it must not be assumed that the parallels witnessed in contemporary culture represented a unique and defining characteristic of modernity; Mitford was certainly aware that, in troping the human body as currency, the discourse of cannibalism assumed in his text a symbolic value. Keen to draw analogies between the savage consumption of human flesh and Stanninghame's acquisition of bodies for consumption in the slave-market, Mitford creates a situation whereby the rise to civilization, and subsequently to a post-classical economics, has served not to eliminate savage appetites but merely to sanitize them:

He looks upon the tragedy with a cold commercial eye. Prisoners represent so many saleable wares. If it is essential that his hell-hounds shall taste a modicum of blood, or their appetite for this species of quarry would be gone, it is his business to see that they destroy no more property than can be avoided (p. 104).

The cold, unmoved commercial gaze of Hazon, Stanninghame's comrade, is the antithesis of the 'blood-fury gleaming from distended eyeballs' in the face of the savage men (p. 103). Yet the 'material for the [savages'] feast', five human bodies 'trussed, bound' and 'helpless', is the self-same material of the hunter's 'wares': human bodies 'yoked together like oxen'. The evolutionary distance between the anthropophagic and capitalist mindset is paradoxically annulled by the singularity of their purpose. Hazon, cognisant of these analogues, reasons that common to all commercial enterprise is a kind of vampire-like subsistence: 'your British pattern merchant, your millionaire financier, what is he but a slave-dealer, a slave-driver, a blood-sucker?' (p. 134).

Hazon paints a grim view of man's ascent; each stage of development, from blood-sucking savage to corporate financier, becomes more spurious, the illusion of civilization more pronounced. The dangerous, exploitative manufacturing practices of industrial Britain, the protracted working day and workforce maimed, scalped and killed in office is not, according to Hazon, so different to this 'wild scene of carnage and massacre' (p. 103). Hazon's marauding enterprise is governed only by the desire to optimise capital, an attitude of entrepreneurial depredation that was widely believed to be the privilege of the patriotic Englishman throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, *The Economist* of 25 April 1896, reporting on the situation in South Africa, stated that the blacks' effort to 'throw off the yoke of the detested white men' could worryingly result in 'pecuniary losses which would be felt even in London for

¹⁵ Richard King, 'The (Mis)uses of Cannibalism in Contemporary Cultural Critique', *Diacritics*, 30 (2000), 106-123 (p. 113).

many years to come'.¹⁶ By extension, the analogues between anthropophagy and late capitalism fulfil not merely, as King argues, a metaphoric function, but also a *mimetic* one: The behaviour that drove primitive man to consume the flesh of his own finds agency and is replicated in the marketplace.

Whilst Mitford's protagonists exercise 'savage' values in their commercial ventures, there equally exists for their author the notion of the 'enterprising savage'. In *Through the Zulu Country* (1883), a non-fictional account of the battlefields and people of Zululand, Mitford notes that in the aftermath of war, ammunition of English servicemen still litters the ground: 'you may see where the unexploded cap and the marks of teeth where the enterprising savage has torn open the case to extract the powder and ball'.¹⁷ The image of savage man, deftly extracting the prized substance from an unused bullet, caricatures the curious kinship between savage and civilized; this simple, unconscious entrepreneurial act of savage man, satirises the imbruted account of the African peoples. Imperial enterprise, or rather capital-violence, justifiable on the grounds of the 'civilizing influence' delivered to South Africa's countrymen, is to Mitford nothing short of farce. Thus Stanninghame's assertion that their captives 'would be much better off when the journey was ended and they were disposed of [...] in civilized and Christian lands' (p. 133) exposes the thinly-veiled irony directed towards what *The Times* identified as Britain's 'coercion policy tempered with beneficent measures'.¹⁸

More importantly, for my purposes, the abandoned battlefield documented in *Through the Zulu Country* is haunted by spectral relics of the bloody Anglo-Zulu conflict. Mitford, in describing the scene, states that 'every now and then you come across a heap of these [used cartridges], and begin to speculate on how some poor fellow made a long stand for it on this particular spot until his ammunition failed'.¹⁹ The living present is disturbed again by the reanimating influence of this debris; the 'heap' alone stands in commemoration of the ill-fated soldier. As Derrida points out: 'There is something disappeared, departed in the apparition itself as a re-apparition of the departed.'²⁰ Derrida's logic initially appears to fall in on itself, since what is an apparition if not a 're-apparition' of the departed? This, however, is essentially Derrida's point. Time is not linear and structural, but prone to wane, collapse, and be revived. Certainly for Mitford, the living, the departed, and the *revenant* exist in disorientating intimacy. Here the discarded artillery effects a kind of metonymic conjuring act: it summons the spectral presence of a British soldier, determined to sell his life dearly.

Interestingly, the tribe operates in a closed economic system, a fact Mitford points out when he comments 'those who are active in at any rate preparing them [the victims] for slaughter, are their own children – *their own sons*' [emphasis in original text] (p. 101). Bodily capital is reinvested into the very system that produced it. In a

¹⁶ 'The Situation in South Africa', *The Economist*, 25 April 1896, p. 514.

¹⁷ Bertram Mitford, *Through the Zulu Country: Its Battlefields and its People* (London: Kegan Paul, 1883), p. 106.

¹⁸ 'The House of Commons', *The Times*, May 24 1892, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁰ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 5

sense the tribal elders are 'superannuated', preserving the autarkic integrity of the community. At the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropologists considered tribal cannibalism an attempted act of spiritual 'appropriation'. Indeed, in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) Freud writes: 'By incorporating part of a person's body through eating, one at the same time acquires the qualities possessed by him'.²¹ Here, consumption is of the family stock; capital gain through the ingestion of human flesh serves to perpetuate genetic assets. In economic terms the tribal community operate in a form of primitive protectionism, preserving equilibrium through the restricted movement of capital. However, the civilisation of man serves not to remove us from such base considerations, but propels humanity into what is essentially a financial Darwinian struggle. Economies move away from the self-consuming nature of this primitive consumption, expanding these predatory appetites into free markets, international competition, and imperial expansion. As Stanninghame argues: 'Preyer or preyed upon – such was the iron immutable law of life, from man in his highest development to the minutest of insects' (p. 133).

Lawrence Birken's analysis of narcissism and post-classical economics provides a useful insight into the mechanisms involved in the transition from the self-consuming appetency of tribal cannibalism to the centripetal ambition of Empire. Birken points out that Freud, in his writings on narcissism, established a new 'pleasure principle', whereby economic models of expenditure ran parallel with psychoanalytic theories of desire. According to Freud, the tendency towards auto-eroticism is the most primal and easy to satisfy. However, in the conditions where this is not possible one must look to others to gratify one's own original desires. Birken argues: 'The idiosyncratic consumer is thus propelled by self-interest into the social world. The human being is forced to invest in others as a round-about means of satisfying itself'.²² The tribal community, in its economic 'state of nature', is gratified to see genetic stock re-capitulated in the act of consumption. Conversely, the global scale enterprise of imperial Britain reads, in Birken's terms, as an oblique means of satiating escalated expectations of desire. This transition between savage and civilised is exemplified in the mace constructed by Stanninghame to defend himself against the ferocious spider-god:

These bones might further be utilised. They might be splintered and sharpened into daggers. No sooner thought of than carried out. And now the skeletons underwent the most ruthless desecration. Several were wrenched asunder ere he had selected half a dozen serviceable bones – and these he hammered to the required size with his newly constructed mace – sharpening them on the rough face of the rock [...] Did ever mortal man go into close conflict armed in such a fashion – he wondered – with club and dagger manufactured out of the bones of men? (p. 205)

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. by James Strachey, (London: Routledge, 1950; repr. 1961), p. 82.

²² Birken, *Consuming Desire*, p. 45.

In the context of close battle, the weapon rates as a commodity of exceptional utility value. For Stanninghame the luxury of sentiment is over-ruled by the notion of 'serviceability' or functional economic behaviour. The language of productivism predominates here; the commodity is not crafted but 'manufactured', 'constructed'. The sounds of industrial Britain resonate with every 'wrench' of the human remains. However, outside the 'survival' context, Stanninghame's mace assumes a rather more sinister value. Returning to England and in possession of a considerable fortune, the notion of utility is usurped by the ornamental value or 'marginal utility' of the product. Amidst the 'other trophies and curios', the gruesome weapon becomes nothing more than a bauble, a souvenir, a gruesome testament to the Victorian capacity to collect (p. 235).²³

Approximately fifty years later, at the Nuremburg trial, the wife of a Buchenwald commander was found guilty of crimes against humanity for the collection of human 'souvenirs'. The defendant, Ilse Koch, was found to be in possession of flayed skin and the shrunken heads of two Buchenwald victims. Whilst occurring some considerable time after the publication of Mitford's novel, the event and the surrounding discourse are highly pertinent to the current discussion. Transcending the merely theoretical considerations of this macabre collector behaviour, the event also highlights the conceptual distinction between utility and marginal utility value and its bearing on ideas of ethical consumption. Lawrence Douglas writes of the events of the trial that:

the reaction of the tribunal to these extraordinary artefacts expressed an understanding that shaped the rhetorical and jurisprudential complexion of the Nuremberg case: Nazi practices had not, according to this view, eroded the distinction between 'primitive' and 'civilized'; rather, they represented a rebirth of the primitive, an explosion of the savagery normally kept in check by institutions of modernity.²⁴

Significantly, the tribunal interpreted the atrocities committed at Buchenwald not as an indication of the kinship between modern man and our more primitive forefathers, but rather as evidence of the reiterative quality of our savage origins. For the Nuremberg arbiters, the spectre of our predatory past had not passed seamlessly into the margins of experience, but was destined to haunt our every progress, to be 'reborn' if we could not successfully legislate against it. Classifying these offences against humanity as 'crimes of atavism', Lawrence Douglas locates the production of human 'curios' firmly in the past, but, as he later concedes, articles of utility produced by similar methods (soap, for instance) displayed a 'grotesque triumph of the very logic of efficient production upon which the economy of civilization is

²³ For an in-depth analysis of the role of 'The Collection' in Victorian culture, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

²⁴ Lawrence Douglas, 'The Shrunken Head of Buchenwald: Icons of Atrocity at Nuremberg', *Representations* 63 (1998), 39-64 (p. 45).

based'.²⁵ Post-dating Mitford's text by several decades, it is of course possible to over-state the importance of the parallels between these fictional and disturbingly real cultural events. However, what this example certainly serves to do is to validate Mitford in his assertion that the trajectory of human economic experience is not characterised by linear progress, but, in the words of Derrida, a sense of '*non-contemporaneity*' with oneself.²⁶

A brief glance at Mitford's prose reveals the very macro level at which ideas of temporal atavism find expression, and this is helpful to understand how, for Mitford, matters of predatory enterprise were not in a sense premeditated but instinctive and immediate. Irony is felt not in the great narrative flights of expression, but at the very elemental level of Mitford's language. As Michael Lieven points out, Mitford's discourse, often criticised for its inelegant style, vibrates with disgust at the reality of Britain's interference at the Cape. It contrasts greatly with Haggard's thinly veiled liberal imperialism, his colonial ambition and not least, his awe at the power of the post-classical economy.²⁷ Furthermore, where Haggard's body economies have an identifiable nomenclature, a terminology to navigate what Foucault later dubbed the 'anatomy-politics of the human body', Mitford's feature inconspicuously in the narrative's dialogues.²⁸ 'Stony-broke' and 'stony hearted', Laurence Stanninghame's professed deficit is expressed both as financial hardship and anatomical, emotional deprivation. It is at the level of Mitford's vernacular phraseology that the economies of the flesh become evident, filtering through to the very base units of language, to the common slang and colloquialism:

I'm broke, stony broke, and it's more than ever a case of stealing away to hang oneself in a well. I tell you squarely, I'd walk into the jaws of the devil himself to effect the capture of the oof-bird (p. 7).

For Mitford's hero, to be 'stony', to be bereft of money, is at once to be dispossessed of life, of the means of living. This necessary co-dependence between the conditions of life and wealth is not by any means an exclusively *fin de siècle* concern; indeed as Regenia Gagnier points out 'although economics was still called the "science of scarcity", scarcity was no longer a material obstacle'.²⁹ Yet, curiously, the imperative relationship between the bodily and the fiscal is invested in Mitford's text; real material, quantifiable life had never sat in such close proximity to cold hard cash. Lawrence Stanninghame does not experience abject privation but 'genteel poverty', and yet he feels pressed to inhabit antitheses; with life and death, wealth and poverty operating on the parallel plane, Stanninghame chooses to operate in extremes;

²⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁶ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. xviii.

²⁷ Michael Lieven, 'Contested Empire: Bertram Mitford and the Imperial Adventure Story', *Paradigm*, 25 (1998), <<http://faculty.ed.uiuc.edu/westbury/Paradigm/lieven2.html>> [accessed 17 April 2009], (para. 5 of 24)

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990; repr. 1998), p. 141.

²⁹ Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants*, p. 1.

mediocrity in wealth and life is simply not an option. As Mitford narrates, he had ‘got into the habit of thinking there are but two states, death and Johannesburg’ (p. 17).

Johannesburg of course, built in the midst of the gold rush, is the metonymic representative of wealth and prosperity, yet it also represents ‘the other’. The African city with its fatal lure, its mysterious capacity to catapult one to dizzying heights of wealth and prosperity, or to consume, break and dispose of life, embodies the essential otherness of the ‘dark continent’. In effect ‘stony’ signifies a *fin de siècle* condition, a strange psychological phenomena that at the beginnings of the culture of abundance, and in the context of economic enterprise, one should feel bound to invest ‘life’ into this kind of financial speculation. Indeed ‘stony’ is a *fin de siècle* permutation, the first recorded use of the term appearing in R. C. Lehmann’s *Harry Fludyer at Cambridge* (1890).³⁰ Originally published in *Punch*, Lehmann’s comic university sketch was widely disseminated; his pervasive slang and colloquial dialogue caught the popular imagination.³¹ ‘Stony’ evidently needed little explanation, despite this being ostensibly its first foray into print. The term accentuates the ‘thingness’, the essential materialism of this condition of financial and bodily deficit. Moreover, the primeval resonance of ‘stony’, evocative of ‘stone-age’, atavism and the unevolved nature of things, recalls us to savage roots, to the primal want that precedes us.

In contrast, a glance at Haggard’s popular romance *Mr Meeson’s Will* (1888) reveals the more explicit demarcation of key terms deployed in the exploration of bodily economies. Bridging the gap between the speaker’s lexical shortcoming, and the speculative content of his thoughts, Haggard conjectures in Latin, the language of the higher disciplines:

Bill was more careful of the artistic effect and the permanence of the work than of the feelings of the subject. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*, he would have said had he been conversant with the Classics, without much consideration for the *corpus vile*.³²

Augusta is here tattooed with the last will and testament of Meeson, a miserly publisher who, repentant of his spiteful bequest and in the wake of a shipwreck that leaves him stranded, attempts to restore wealth to his only living relative. Providing

³⁰ ‘Pat said he was stoney or broke or something but he gave me a sov’, R.C Lehmann, *Harry Fludyer at Cambridge*, quoted in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, <http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/cgi/entry/50238374?query_type=word&queryword=stony&first=1&max_t_o_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=rY34-HHweGk-409&hilite=50238374> [accessed 12 December 2008]

³¹ In the *London Illustrated News* and other papers the sketch was declared a hilarious success. James Payn in particular remarked that it was ‘a more accurate and graphic account of the university life of to-day is to be gathered from this little volume [...] *Harry Fludyer at Cambridge* is really very funny’, quoted in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, January 14 1891, p. 3. The text was later included in the 1902 publication *Slang and its Analogues* for its characteristic use of slang expression, see John Farmer and William Henley *Slang and its Analogues Past and Present* (London: Poulter, 1902) p. 273.

³² H. Rider Haggard, *Mr Meeson’s Will* (Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2008), p. 76.

the canvas for Meeson's penitential decree, Augusta ironically becomes the *corpus vile*, the 'worthless body' of Meeson's transaction. This is an ironic gesture, of course, because with the inscription of the tattoo Augusta's body assumes an exchange value equal to the wealth of this affluent castaway. Perhaps drawing inversely upon the Tichborne case – in which a claimant's absence of tattoos negatively identified him as the heir to the fortune – Haggard's text explicitly sets up the terms by which the body becomes commodity.³³

More than an interesting aside to ideas of economic spectrality and predatism, this comparison serves to illustrate the unorthodox status of Mitford's perspective in the imperial narratives of the age. Haggard cannot fully realise the sinister mechanisms by which the body is subjugated in the act of exchange. Employing Latin, language of the classics and of the socially elevated, the message embedded in this exchange is not one of caution but rather of triumphalism. The talismanic significance of Augusta's tattoo, the mysterious almost unrealisable wealth that it promises, represents a triumph of the body and of white flesh. In contrast, Mitford's text, with its stark and colloquial expression, vibrates with the anxiety of this brutal economic inheritance; a stony, violent, atavistic discourse, revealing the dark secrets of our predatory past.

'If our narrative deals with history', wrote Mitford in the Preface to his 1893 novel *The Gun-Runner*, 'it is with a vanishing page of the same'.³⁴ By the 1890s the scramble for Africa was nearing resolution, and with it the horror that can only be felt in the immediacy of the events. Yet Mitford's ethic was not informed by the desire to chronicle a fleeting past but rather, addressing themes later to concern Derrida, do the work of 'inheriting' the awful legacy left in the wake of imperial expansion:

As such we look to it to interest the reader, if only as a sidelight upon the remarkable military power and ultimate downfall of the finest and most intelligent race of savages in all the world – now thanks to the 'beneficent' policy of England, crushed and 'civilized' out of all recognition.³⁵

³³ The Tichborne case, beginning in 1867, was arguably one of the most sensational trials of the Victorian age. The Claimant, supposedly the lost son of wealthy dowager Lady Tichborne, returned after a period of fourteen years when it was believed he had been lost at sea. Despite Lady Tichborne's positive identification of the man who claimed to be her son, many, including friends and relatives, doubted his identity. In the trial, the prosecution brought overwhelming evidence against the man who we now know to have been an Australian butcher, Arthur Orton. The most damning of this was the evidence that the plaintiff did not possess the tattoos of the real heir, Roger Tichborne. The attorney-general's address, transcribed by *The Times* newspaper, reads as follows: 'The plaintiff swore distinctly, and was obliged to swear distinctly that he is not, and never at any period of his life has been tattooed, Roger Charles Tichborne was beyond all question tattooed in his left arm in the way I will describe...', 'The Tichborne Case', *The Times*, 02 February 1872, p. 10. For a more detailed account of the trial see also Lord Frederic Herbert Maugham, *The Tichborne Case* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936).

³⁴ Bertram Mitford, Preface, *The Gunrunner* (1893), quoted in Gerald Monsman's introduction to Mitford's *Renshaw Fanning's Quest* (Chicago: Valancourt, 2007) p. xv.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The reality of Britain's interference in South Africa vanishes ghost-like into the annals of the past. A 'sidelight', Mitford's fiction illuminates the oblique perspective of *fin de siècle* imperial politics; it conjures the apparitional presence of the predatory foreign policies that saw African nations forced into bondage. This recalcitrant spirit, the desire to disrupt the illusion of Britain's 'beneficent' patronage of occupied South Africa is, according to Derrida, integral to the act of inheriting, for 'if the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, unequivocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation we would never have anything to inherit from it'.³⁶ The legacy of Britain's imperial enterprise, the predatory psychology of finance and fever of consumption that took hold in the last third of the nineteenth century, made for a ghastly bequest. It seems that the atavistic and predatory spirit that infected humankind was exacerbated, or perhaps more accurately 'metastasised', in the inequitable conditions of Empire. Yet in taking up the mantle, Mitford offered not merely a rival voice but also bravely 'owned' to the awful heritage that he shared. Indeed, whilst figures like Olive Schreiner struck out against the aggressive and self-serving policies of the British, few others were prepared to acknowledge themselves 'heir' to the marauding appetites that shaped the modern world.³⁷ Mitford was certainly no great *litterateur*; yet what he was, and what he continues to be, is a major voice in the 'Minor Literature' of Empire: a necessary third dimension to our understanding of imperial politics at the end of the nineteenth century.

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³⁶ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 1

³⁷ Olive Schreiner, unlike many imperial writers of the day, was critical of Britain's involvement at the cape. Her later tale *Trooper Peter Halket* (1897) notably castigated the exploitative practices of European settlers in South Africa. Schreiner also spoke out against colonial racism and the controversial 1891 Strop Bill, which gave Europeans the right to flog black labourers.

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INOCULATION AND EMPIRE: CIGARETTE'S HEALING POWER IN OUIDA'S *UNDER TWO FLAGS*

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Abstract

As the popular literature of the nineteenth century receives more attention from scholars, Ouida's novels have grown more appealing to those interested in exploring the many forms of the Victorian popular novel. *Under Two Flags* is perhaps her most well-known work, and this fame stems in part from the character of Cigarette, who fights like a man while also maintaining her status as a highly desirable woman in French colonial Africa. Whilst several scholars have argued that Ouida essentially undermines Cigarette as a feminine and feminist character, I argue that it is possible to read Cigarette as a highly positive element in the novel. This is demonstrated in the ways that Cigarette's actions are based on a very feminine understanding of medicine, as Ouida draws on contemporary and historical developments in medicinal technology to develop a metaphorical status for Cigarette as a central figure of healing. Specifically, we see that Cigarette takes on the form of an inoculation for the male protagonist's (Bertie Cecil) downfall. In this way, I hope to offer a view of Ouida's text that does not read her famous character as merely an "almost-but-not-quite" experiment.

I. Introduction

Among all of Ouida's novels, it is Cigarette from *Under Two Flags* (1867) who has remained one of her most memorable and notorious characters. In the twentieth century Ouida's biographer Yvonne Ffrench evaluated Cigarette as 'absolutely original and perfectly realised'.¹ Yet upon her first appearance in Ouida's novel, the response was anything but resounding praise. In 1866 Geraldine Jewsbury advised the new editor at the *British Army and Navy Review*, which had serialised the opening chapters of the novel, against publishing Ouida's novel in volume form. Likely due in part to Cigarette's scandalously contradictory nature, Jewsbury wrote that *Under Two Flags* was 'not a story that will do any man or woman or child any good to read, it is an idle and very unmoral book [...]. I daresay the story would *sell* but you would lower the character of your [publishing] house if you accept it.'² While the discrepancy between Ffrench's and Jewsbury's assessments of the novel and its principal female character are indicative of the shifts in cultural mores between 1866 and 1938, it is clear from Ouida's description of Cigarette as a woman who 'had had a thousand lovers, from handsome marquises of the Guides to tawny, black-browed scoundrels' why Jewsbury may have chosen to describe the book as 'unmoral'.

As Celia Phillips points out in her brief publication history of the novel, the

¹ Yvonne Ffrench, *Ouida: A Study in Ostentation* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), p. 49.

² Quoted in Celia Phillips, 'Under Two Flags: the Publishing History of a Best-Seller', *Publishing History*, 3 (1978), pp. 67-69 (p. 67).

British Army and Navy Review was not primarily a literary journal: Ouida's stories often found themselves printed 'side by side with serious discussions on military strategy and lengthy descriptions of the latest army equipment'.³ Ouida was not attempting to publish 'moral' literature, as such, neither was she seeking notoriety as an 'unmoral' author; her fiction found its primary audience amongst British soldiers. As she writes in the very brief preface, *Under Two Flags* 'has been fortunate enough to receive much commendation from military men, and for them it is now specially issued in its present form' (p. 7).⁴ Similarly to Ouida and her novel, *Cigarette* is very much defined by her relationships with the soldiers of the French foreign legion, and with one soldier in particular. As a vivandière for the foreign legion fighting in Algeria, *Cigarette* is in close contact with the soldiers; she becomes enthralled with the novel's protagonist, the disgraced British aristocrat Bertie Cecil, who has fled England and gone into self-imposed exile. After serving many years in Algeria under the French flag, Bertie is (by a grand coincidence) reunited with some of his former relations from England. Struggling now under the oppressive weight of his exile, Cecil is insubordinate to a high-ranking French officer who insults his aristocratic sensibilities. Court-martialled and sentenced to death, it is only through *Cigarette* sacrificing herself by leaping in front of the firing squad that Bertie Cecil survives to return to England, marry the princess, and reclaim his fortune. So while the structural story arch has Bertie Cecil at its centre, *Cigarette* undoubtedly steals the show, due largely to her 'unmoral' nature and her final sacrifice to save Cecil.

However, we must ask specifically what it was that made Geraldine Jewsbury recoil at *Under Two Flags*, since the mere mention of *Cigarette*'s promiscuity would not have justified such a resounding and total condemnation. In her development of *Cigarette*, Ouida presents a seemingly contradictory character who exhibits archetypal qualities of both metropolitan France and the elusively exotic colonial space. Such archetypes would have registered strongly in the minds of readers like Jewsbury, and if, as James R. Lehning argues, 'the strangeness of the colonies invited the use of metaphors about gender and sexuality to describe the relationship between France and its colonies', then it is possible to read *Cigarette* as a representation of this discourse from British literature.⁵ The French political narrative which Lehning describes characterised the country's relationship with the colony as that of a mother nurturing her child to maturity. As an implicit corollary to this narrative, the metaphors of gender and sexuality that described the 'native' state of the colony were often couched in terms of disease and sexual degeneracy. As such, it was France's mission to guide the colony out of this impoverished state.

While Ouida at first seems to legitimate this narrative by frankly stating *Cigarette*'s sexual freedom, along with Bertie's 'civilised' resistance to her advances, the character actually demonstrates a far greater degree of complexity than the standard colonial narrative would have provided for. She is almost simultaneously

³ Phillips, p. 67.

⁴ Ouida, *Under Two Flags* (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2006), p.7. All subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the text.

⁵ James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 129.

masculine (drinks, swears, fights), feminine (beautiful, graceful), desirable, and charitable (cares for the sick and wounded). To an extent, in nineteenth century literature, such a woman could only exist in a colonial space, where, in a sense, all bets are off with respect to traditional feminine roles. Rather than simply parroting the traditional colonial narrative of the coloniser's civilising influence, Ouida demonstrates how Cigarette makes possible Bertie's return to the civilisation he fled. Cigarette's medical skill becomes a metaphor that encompasses many of her disparate qualities, and which ultimately leads to her sacrifice at the novel's conclusion.

Yet the place of women in medicine in nineteenth century Britain was also a conflicted space, similar to the colonies in that it merged questions of sexuality, gender, and corruption (or degeneration). As Kristine Swenson explains, 'in Victorian sensation fiction, the world of nursing is portrayed as hiding a "secret world" of "sex, shame, and scandal"'.⁶ Thus it became extremely difficult for nurses in general, not to mention a colonial nurse, to 'escape from the shadow of her cultural "other," the fallen woman; [...] the medical woman's legitimacy depended upon her ability to protect women from male sexual danger with her "unsexing" knowledge of sex'.⁷ Writing *Under Two Flags* at the height of the Sensation furore in England, Ouida merges the sensational 'fallen woman nurse' with the more redeeming (and romantic) Nightingale nurse of the empire, since 'medicine was one of the few activities that allowed women to contribute actively to imperial expansion'.⁸ But, unlike Swenson's description, Cigarette uses her medical knowledge to save and protect men, rather than women. In this way Cigarette's paradoxical contradictions seem to stem from the confluence of her status as sexually open (with all the implications of disease accompanying that status) with her role as a healer and surgeon.

To some extent the conflict between notions of the imperial space and women in medicine is not entirely surprising, nor is Ouida's adoption of the inherent contradictions between the two. As a woman author writing for an almost exclusively male audience (military servicemen), Ouida is particularly aware of her audience's cognizance of imperial interests and concerns. In the same way that the British conceived of the colonies as 'sexually loose [...] frequently excessive' places, so too is the Algeria of *Under Two Flags*.⁹ Because Algeria is a French colony, Ouida was probably allowed more latitude by her British readers to portray a highly sexualised character like Cigarette, however, she does not handle her male protagonist according to the same sexual narratives that were ascribed to men in the colonies. Although he is problematic in other ways, Bertie Cecil does not succumb to the 'unmanning threat' of 'over-sexedness' in the colonial space.¹⁰ However, Cecil does exude a high degree of liminality, both in terms of race and gender, and it is only by being 'healed' of his liminal positions, being returned to the 'correct' position of the white, male aristocrat,

⁶ Kristine Swenson, *Medical Women and Victorian Fiction*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005), p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹ Philippa Levine, 'Sexuality, Gender, and Empire', in *Gender and Empire*, ed. by Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 134-155 (p. 135).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

that he can return from exile.

Cigarette's death plays a key role in Cecil's 'redemption', and contemporary critics have drawn varying conclusions about her demise which doubles as the moment of Cecil's restoration. Pamela Gilbert finds that, 'only in death, its breast pierced by hundreds of bullets, is the permeability of the upper body sufficient to balance Cigarette's femaleness, to achieve sufficient closure [...] that she may be identified as a hero'.¹¹ Likewise, Talia Schaffer describes Cigarette as 'too revolutionary for the novel to contain her; she dies in a spectacular act of self-martyrdom [...] a death that both salvages and disposes of this troublesome character'.¹² Gilbert and Schaffer both frame Cigarette as an impediment that must be eliminated; only as a corpse can she become a 'hero' or be 'salvaged'. However, I argue that Cigarette's final sacrifice becomes an act of metaphorical medical intervention that represents a fulfilment of her multiple contradictions. It is this act that I will term 'inoculation'. In addition to her sacrificial death at the end of the novel, Cigarette saves Bertie Cecil's life on two occasions; she is, in effect, Bertie's inoculation against the dangers of the colonial space. With each successive saving, Cecil's position seems more and more calamitous, and yet each time Cigarette manages to appear just at the right moment. Finally, she performs an act of permanent inoculation and provides lasting immunity to Cecil against ignominy, exile, and poverty. As such, she is an inoculant who both subverts, because Cecil needs her to make his return, and reaffirms, because she makes his return possible, the British ideal of a landed country gentleman.

II. Inoculation

In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes chose the term 'inoculation' to describe one facet of bourgeois myth. For Barthes, this rhetorical inoculation is a process whereby 'one immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a generalised subversion'.¹³ In this way, Barthes understands that the bourgeois imagination comes to terms with the 'principal evil' of its 'class-bound institutions' by recognising, and thereby rendering ineffectual, a nominalised version of something subversive.¹⁴ Earlier in *Mythologies*, Barthes describes an image on a magazine cover; the image is of a black man 'in French uniform [...] saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour'.¹⁵ The significance of the image lies in its implicit statement that the French empire has been a success, that the 'zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors' silences any contention that the imperial

¹¹ Pamela Gilbert, *Disease, Desire and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 147.

¹² Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 126.

¹³ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 150.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

interests of France have been anything but beneficial to the colonials.¹⁶ The image becomes, then, a form of inoculation, whereby the viewer is immunised against the subversive notion that the Empire was an oppressive and selfishly motivated enterprise that sought to enrich the colonising country through the forced subjection of its colonies. Instead, the viewer is provided with an image, which, although it could be construed as evidence of the subversive narrative, allows the viewer to refute the subversive narrative by pointing to the image's evidence of colonisation's success.

Similarly, through Cigarette's presence as a potentially subversive feminine and masculine woman in the novel, Bertie Cecil is successfully inoculated against the likelihood that his time in Algeria would make his return to Britain impossible. And, as part of the process of his restoration, Ouida reverts to the conservative principle of the demure and silent woman in Venetia, who Cecil marries after Cigarette dies. However, the situation in *Under Two Flags* complicates Barthes's conception of cultural inoculation because, contrary to Barthes, Cigarette does not inoculate against the 'principal evil' of colonisation. Indeed, on several occasions, Cecil explicitly states his preference for the rebel Arabs against the French, whereas Cigarette is fiercely loyal to the French cause. On the other hand, Bertie's successful return to his lands and social position does represent a reassertion of the bourgeois ascendancy. What Ouida accomplishes through the novel is, in essence, an inoculation against the 'evils' of colonial life as conceived by the metropole. If, as Philippa Levine argues, 'the sensuality of the colonial environment might unhinge [a man] from the British path of civilized moderation,' then it is clear that Bertie does not succumb to this potential downfall.¹⁷ Still, inoculation is more than a metaphorical construct, and it has a deep historical importance to colonial and post-colonial discourse, especially with respect to women, sexuality, and medicine. In order to fully establish Cigarette's role as a metaphorical inoculant for Bertie Cecil, a brief but necessary detour is appropriate.

Both inoculation and vaccination developed out of an effort to stem the infectious tide of smallpox. This centuries-long effort succeeded in eliminating the disease in the 1970s. However, both inoculation and vaccination were treated with scepticism and distrust upon their initial introduction to British medicine. Inoculation is 'the subcutaneous instillation of smallpox virus into non-immune individuals [...]. A local skin lesion would usually appear after 3 days and develop into a large [...] lesion'; in other words, a patient would be infected with the smallpox virus itself and, after a brief period of infection, the inoculated patient was immune to the disease.¹⁸ This method of immunisation was championed in England by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who "discovered" the practice of inoculation amongst women and children, during her years as wife of the British Consul in Constantinople in the 1720s'.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Levine, p. 137.

¹⁸ Gulten Dinc, Yesim Isil Ulman, 'The introduction of variolation 'A La Turca' to the West by Lady Mary Montagu and Turkey's contribution to this', *Vaccine*, 25 (2007), 4261-265 (p. 4262).

¹⁹ Alison Bashford, 'Medicine, Gender, and Empire', in *Gender and Empire*, ed. by Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 112-133 (pp. 114-5).

Unfortunately, almost from its very beginning as a Western practice, inoculation was conceived of as an ‘other’ in both racial and gendered terms, to negative effect. As Isobel Grundy describes, ‘The first English *advocates* of [inoculation] gender it as male [...] advocates call the leading practitioner in Turkey “an old Greek” [...] while an *opponent* writes “some old *Greek Woman*”’.²⁰ It was not uncommon for vehement opponents of inoculation, like William Wagstaffe, to base much of their arguments against the practice on the racial, cultural, and gender inferiority of its origins in Turkey.²¹ Lady Mary only added fuel to the fire by claiming that the only proper way to inoculate was according to the Turkish method and that this method was simple enough for a woman to administer. She felt that the British doctors had irresponsibly altered the Turkish method in a vain effort at prestige.²² As such inoculation became ‘increasingly associated with feminine and feminised folk tradition’, and ultimately its ‘connections with the “East” and its associations with feminine [...] medical practice made it unscientific’.²³

Vaccination, on the other hand, developed in a way that made it more palatable to the British scientific and medical community. First of all, it was a man, Edward Jenner, who discovered that a vaccine developed from cowpox could also immunise against smallpox. The primary contrast that must be emphasised here is that unlike inoculation, in which the human smallpox virus was used, Jenner’s method involved injecting the less dangerous cowpox virus, which also provided an immunity to smallpox. While Alison Bashford correctly argues that vaccination’s winning out over inoculation involved the conflict between ‘Oriental,’ feminine medicine and domestic, male discovery, it would be wrong to claim that Jenner’s method was always preferred.²⁴ Like inoculation, vaccination was not readily accepted upon its initial introduction; whereas those opposed to inoculation feared the implications of an ‘Oriental’ method, now the problem was a fear of creating a man/animal hybrid (because the cowpox virus came from cattle).²⁵ However, it soon became clear that Jenner’s method was generally safer than inoculation. When using the human smallpox virus to inoculate a patient, there was a risk that the inoculation could lead to a full-blown case of smallpox, in which case the patient was in danger of dying as a result of the procedure, but Jenner’s method of using cowpox did not have this lethal downside. As such, vaccination became the standard immunisation against smallpox, and inoculation as a medical procedure was made illegal in 1840.

The disparities between the origins and implementations of inoculation and vaccination are significant for my specific use of inoculation as a metaphorical conception within Ouida’s novel. An inoculation is, first and foremost, a dangerous procedure, in which the patient’s life is put at risk in the hope that an immunity, rather

²⁰ Isobel Grundy, ‘Inoculation and its After-Effects’, *Lumen*, 13 (1994), 13-42 (p. 16, emphasis mine).

²¹ Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 216.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 217-8.

²³ Bashford, p. 115, p. 117.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁵ Tom Fulford and Debbie Lee, ‘The Beast Within: The Imperial Legacy of Vaccination in History and Literature’, *Literature and History*, 9.1 (2000), 1-23 (p. 8).

than a full infection, will be attained. Cigarette's interventions come nearer and nearer to the brink of death for Cecil as the novel progresses. Secondly, unlike vaccination, inoculation is specifically a human-to-human form of immunisation. As I will show, Cigarette's body literally intersects Cecil's in a final dramatisation of inoculation's use of a human disease. Finally, inoculation stoked intense concerns about colonial hybridity and duality. Whereas vaccination was developed within the domestic sphere of Britain, inoculation carried the stigma of originating abroad and being the province of 'woman's medicine'. Concomitant with these concerns was the seemingly illogical notion that something which initially makes you sick can eventually make you well. Likewise, Cigarette's contradictory roles make her ability to be the instrument of Cecil's salvation and social elevation seem paradoxical.

III. The Illness

Unlike smallpox, Bertie Cecil's illness is not physical but cultural and socio-economic. After his unscrupulous younger brother, Berkeley, takes out a loan in Bertie's name, forging a friend's signature as the guarantor, Bertie finds himself under pursuit for the unpaid debt. The only way he can clear his name, however, is to expose a certain paramour who Bertie was with at the time the loan was taken out by Berkeley. Rather than reveal her identity, Bertie flees Europe and travels to North Africa with only his faithful valet, Rake, as a companion. In keeping with common Victorian suspicions of the aristocracy, the world out of which Bertie escapes is highly feminised and languorous. As Gilbert notes, Ouida's description of Bertie Cecil's rooms is uncannily similar to M. E. Braddon's description of Lady Audley's chamber in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862).²⁶ Ouida even describes Cecil as effeminate: 'His features were exceedingly fair—fair as the fairest girl's', and this effeminacy leads to his being scorned by his father' (p. 12). Suspicious of his wife's fidelity, Cecil's father doubts whether his eldest son is legitimate; Cecil's strong resemblance to his mother removes him even further from his masculine aristocratic heritage. This paternal estrangement based on Bertie's beauty prevents him from appealing to his father for help when the debt collectors arrive. While his self-imposed exile is in part due to his femininity, it is also an exile executed under false pretences. Cecil's 'self-quarantine' because of his 'dishonour' is paradoxically necessary because of his ineffable honour to the woman who he refuses to disgrace; neither has he committed the forgery of the loan notice, although he suffers for it. Within the society of the novel, Bertie Cecil has, in medical terms, been 'infected' with the taint of dishonour, but we as readers know that he is innocent.

By fleeing to the exotic locale of Africa Cecil exposes himself to a greater threat. Taking on the name Louis Victor, Cecil enters the French Foreign Legion as a low-ranking soldier. Ouida immediately thrusts her protagonist into a scenario in which his upbringing dramatically contradicts the social station in which he now lives. It is the conflict between these paradoxical positions that nearly kills Cecil on several occasions. Additionally, because of his feminine features and healthy libido,

²⁶Gilbert, p. 145.

his retreat into the land of the ‘languorous harem’ draws him closer to the ‘unmanning’ influence of colonial sexuality.²⁷ Ouida underscores the colonial space as highly variable in one of her first descriptions of Algeria:

Pell-mell in its fantastic confusion, its incongruous blending, its forced mixture of two races—that will touch, but never mingle; that will be chained together, but will never assimilate—the Gallic-Moorish life of the city poured out; all the colouring of Haroun al Raschid scattered broadcast among Parisian fashion and French routine. [...] In the straight, white boulevards, as in winding ancient streets; under the huge barn-like walls of barracks, as beneath marvellous mosaics of mosques; the strange bizarre conflict of European and Oriental life spread its panorama (p. 134).

Even within her description, Ouida is constantly vacillating between Europe and the Orient in building her metaphors. This vacillation becomes even greater in Ouida’s characterisations of Cecil and Cigarette.

Still, how is it that a disgraced, self-exiled, aristocrat finds restoration during twelve years of service in Algeria? Ouida’s answer lies in Cigarette, and it is through the vacillations and liminal status of the two characters that she constructs a narrative solution for Cecil’s situation. In the areas of gender and of race, Cigarette’s hybridity is firmly established, whereas Cecil’s capacity to fully integrate into the hybrid colonial space is hindered by his connection to the ascendant class in Britain. Still, both Cigarette and Cecil have moments when they do not ‘fit’ into the prescribed role or space that their background and heritage would call for. By bringing them together in violent scenarios, in which Cecil’s life is threatened, Cigarette ultimately inoculates Cecil against colonial hybridity, while also enabling him to be restored to his proper place.

IV. Gender and Medicine

In the same way that Cecil is a man with many feminine qualities, so too is Cigarette’s femininity combined with a degree of masculinity from the moment she enters the novel:

She was pretty, she was insolent, she was intolerably coquettish, she was mischievous as a marmoset; she would swear, if need be, like a Zouave; she could fire galloping, she could toss off her brandy or her vermouth like a trooper; she would on occasion clinch her little brown hand and deal a blow that the recipient would not covet twice; [...] and she would dance the cancan at the Salle de Mars [...]. And yet with all that, she was not wholly unsexed; with all that she had the delicious fragrance of

²⁷ Piya Pal-Lapinski, *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction and Culture* (Hanover: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005), pp. 10-11.

youth, and had not left a certain feminine grace behind her, though she wore a vivandière's uniform, and had been born in a barrack, and meant to die in a battle; it was the blending of the two that made her piquante, made her a notoriety in her own way (p. 145).

Ouida's use of the term 'unsexed' is significant, because it is a description which frames Cigarette's life in the novel, a word that she is insulted by at first, but learns to accept and turn to her advantage by the novel's end.

The earliest recorded use of the term is from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in which Lady Macbeth commands the spirits to, 'Unsex me here; | And fill me, from crown to toe, top-full of direst cruelty!' (I.v.38-41). These few lines, which precede Macbeth's murder of King Duncan, an act in which Lady Macbeth is complicit, suggest that Lady Macbeth throws off her feminine qualities in order to assist in the murder. As Phyllis Rackin argues, the soliloquy 'implies that women have a natural aversion to killing, physically grounded in their sexed and gendered bodies'.²⁸ Thus the etymological basis for the term emerges from an act of violence. At the close of the eighteenth century it was popularly used as an epithet against early proto-feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft.²⁹ Thus feminine violence and feminine independence both have associations with being 'unsexed'.

However, Ouida suggests that Cigarette is not nearly as 'unsexed' as she might appear. The implication of the narrative is that most women who carry the same qualities as Cigarette *would* be 'wholly unsexed', but that she has managed to avoid this. Despite being described as pretty, Ouida locates her capacity *not* to be unsexed in less visibly perceptible qualities: her 'fragrance of youth' and her even more ethereal 'feminine grace'. Indeed, it is in the very preservation of her feminine allure and sexuality that Cigarette takes on a strong association with disease, both literal (through sexually transmitted infections) and metaphorical (through her social indeterminacy and gender bending). This is important to my contention that Cigarette functions as an inoculation because the European discourse on smallpox sufferers 'was gendered: referring to men, it spoke of danger to life; referring to women, of danger to beauty'.³⁰ Because Cigarette's appearance does not confer her femininity, I would suggest that her physical attractiveness is itself a symptom of the diseased sexuality of the colony. As such, Cigarette represents a human carrier of the social and sexual 'disease' that threatens Bertie Cecil.

Yet, despite her many lovers, Cigarette 'never loved anything, except the roll of the pas de charge' (p. 148). Thus Cigarette has no 'love' for those with whom she shares her body; rather, it is her 'masculine' activities of fighting and battle that claim her affection. While her 'own sex would have seen no good in her [...] her comrades-at-arms could and did' (p. 149). If, as Ouida's experience with her periodical

²⁸ Phyllis Rackin, 'Staging the Female Body: Maternal Breastfeeding and Lady Macbeth's "unsex me here"', in *Bodyscape: Women, Orgy, Parody*, ed. by Catherine Nesci (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 17-29 (p. 19).

²⁹ See Thomas Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature* (1798), edition (London: T. Becket, 1803) and Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females* (New York: W. Cobbett, 1800).

³⁰ Grundy, p. 15.

publisher indicates, this novel was seen as highly ‘unmoral’, then this very phrase takes on a more subversive quality as Cigarette’s comrades, many of them her lovers, find good *in* her. However, in defiance of this description, Cigarette is drawn to Bertie Cecil precisely because, unlike other soldiers, he is not drawn to her. Indeed, he is first in the novel to verbalise the opinion that Cigarette is ‘unsexed’, a comment which Cigarette is both insulted and bewildered by, ‘Unsexed! If you have a woman’s face, may I not have a man’s soul? [...] What did he mean?’ (p. 166). Bertie Cecil finds Cigarette at once attractive and repulsive; while believing that her sexual liberality has left her ‘buffeted about’, Cecil is also entranced by her ‘feminine’ and ‘penetrate[ing]’ speech (p. 201). This penetration belies both Cigarette’s combined masculine and feminine qualities, while also foreshadowing the role that she will play as inoculant. In order for the inoculation to occur, there must be penetration, through which the patient is given a minor infection of the full disease.

Ouida complicates Cigarette’s association with disease by also making her an accomplished nurse and medic. While clearly possessing an intimate knowledge of sexuality that was associated with medical women, the fact that Cigarette receives her training from a surgeon and performs medical procedures in the military, demonstrates how ‘women crossed over and between the different modes of [medical] practice – [...] modes which only became firmly distinguished from the late nineteenth century’.³¹ In this way Cigarette shares inoculation’s ‘illogical’ quality; she has the simultaneous potential to heal and infect. This medical skill is linked to Cigarette’s liminal gender status through the connections that Ouida draws in describing Cigarette. As Gilbert observes, ‘Ouida ties together images of the “yellow” (diseased), “vulture-eyed” (death and disease consuming) camp follower (sexually promiscuous woman), who is “foul mouthed” (consuming and spewing filth) with Cigarette’s attractiveness, i.e., her sexual availability’.³² The conception of Cigarette as ‘disease consuming’ is especially appropriate to her status as metaphorical inoculant. Her sexual desirability and masculine behaviour are a part of her role as feminine medic, and through this linkage, Ouida makes her the agent of disease consumption for Bertie Cecil.

V. Racial Liminality in the Colony

In *Under Two Flags* both Bertie and Cigarette are racially liminal: Cigarette’s skin is not a reliable marker of identity, and Bertie’s loyalty to white colonial interests is less than certain. When he first decides to escape into the Algerian colonial conflict, Cecil plays a game of dice with a French officer to decide which side of the struggle he will join. On the surface it would seem that his loss of fortune has left Cecil so apathetic as to not really care which side he joins, and yet, in a precarious moment of honesty, Cecil tells the Frenchman that he is ‘more inclined to your foes [because] in the first place, they are on the losing side; in the second; they are the lords of the soil; in the third, they live as free as air; and in the fourth, they have undoubtedly the right of the

³¹ Bashford, p. 123.

³² Gilbert, p. 147.

quarrel!' (pp. 137-38). Cecil is attributing several aristocratic ideals to the Arabs in his characterisation of their involvement in the colonial conflict: as 'lords' of the soil, Cecil makes a fairly unabashed connection between English nobility and the Arabs fighting against colonialism. English nobility drew power from the land under their control – agriculture maintained through the leasing of property to tenants was the foundation of upper society – so that Cecil's description gives the Arabs more in common with a standard of upper class 'English-ness' than the French colonisers. At this moment Cecil reveals the extent to which he is in danger of being made unsuitable for returning to England by his exposure to the colonial space and its conflict. To side with the native fighters against the European imperial presence would be to renounce all loyalty to his heritage, even if such a defection was couched in metaphors that show the similarities between the Arabs and the English landed gentry.

However, even as a soldier for the French, Cecil moves well beyond a general admiration for the Arabs when we learn that he falls in love with an Arab woman. Ouida skips over a large portion of Cecil's time in Africa, so that this event is related in retrospect, but the memory is revealed in a powerful way. Cecil recalls Zelme, 'a woman he had loved well: a young Arab, with eyes like the softness of dark waters [...]. Her death had been the darkest passage in his life in Africa' (p. 165). This woman was a spoil of war, and her being acquired as property casts a negative light on the whole affair. However, unlike the sexual excesses and diseased associations of Cigarette, this woman fosters a lifestyle of restraint and sacrifice in Cecil. In order to provide Zelme with 'such few and slender comforts as he could give her', Cecil would deny 'himself cards, or wine, or tobacco, or an hour at the Cafe' (p. 165). Ouida demonstrates how Cecil is playing on the precipice of the social disease of the colonies, because he brings the honourable behaviour of a gentleman into a taboo inter-racial relationship.

It is, in part, his unwillingness to relinquish his social origins that brings him to the brink of death. He must endure constant reminders, primarily through his interaction with higher-ranking officers, of his social descent, and no officer embodies this conflict more than the Marquis de Chateauroy. The Marquis, like Cigarette, has been in Algeria for many years. Consequently, his skin has been 'burned black by long African service' (p. 153). Ouida makes an interesting distinction with respect to this 'blackening': it is not just his presence in Africa, but also his service, which have combined to burn his skin black. As such, the novel draws a connection between the kind of service in which Chateauroy has taken part and racial hybridity; he represents an oppressive force, but even his staunch opposition to the Arabs cannot keep him from being darkened. Cecil's antagonism to Chateauroy eventually lands him in front of a firing squad. Cecil meets Venetia, the sister of a former brother officer in England, and the widow of an Italian prince while she is sight-seeing in Algeria; noticing his affinity for Venetia, and assuming Cecil to be nothing more than a low-ranking soldier, Chateauroy questions Venetia's purity, an insult for which Cecil strikes Chateauroy across the face. This unforgivable assault on a superior officer results in Cecil's death sentence. However, it is in this moment that Cecil both realises his opposition to the French and tries to reclaim some of his

aristocratic background: 'He was no longer the soldier bound in obedience to submit to the indignities that his chief chose to heap on him; he was a gentleman who defended a woman's honour, a man who avenged a slur on the life that he loved' (p. 384). The difficulty, of course, is that he is still bound to the colonial system he has joined, and it seeks to infect him terminally. No matter how much Cecil attempts to change his conceptual relationship with Chateaubry, he is still a subordinate coloniser who has committed a serious offence. Ouida reveals that Cecil requires help from within the colonial culture in order to form his immunity against colonial retribution.

In contrast to Bertie Cecil, Cigarette, while very much indicative of the racial hybridity of the colony, exudes far less uncertainty about her political loyalties and status. Indeed, her very beginnings are firmly embedded in the sexual stigma of the colony: 'her mother was a camp-follower, her father nobody knew who' (p. 148). Cigarette's own sexuality is a reflection of her mother's, and a woman with many sexual partners would have no certain way of knowing who fathered her child. Her upbringing is also confused, as she seems to have spent most of her life in Africa, yet she carries fierce loyalty to France and was probably in Paris during the 1848 Revolution (although the precise revolution is not made explicit in the text). Ouida emphasises Cigarette's being a democrat, relating how even as a child she 'had sat on the topmost pile of a Parisian barricade' (p. 361). It is on this particular point that there is a discontinuity in the text: in the first mention of Cigarette's Parisian revolutionary activity, Cigarette was ten years old and 'had loaded carbines behind the barricade', but later we are told that Cigarette was only two years old on the barricade (p. 207). This inconsistency, while adding to Cigarette's racial hybridity, also confirms her narrative as part of the colonial narrative, with all the confusion and uncertainty that this entails. She is a child born in Africa of unknown parentage, yet she also comes from Paris and is of an uncertain age.

However, even with these confusions, Cigarette, unlike Cecil, is certain of her place in the social order – she has no ties to an ascendant class in the metropole. In order for her to serve as Cecil's inoculation, she must fully represent the qualities of the colonial setting that he seeks to escape. Ouida paradoxically demonstrates that while both Cecil and Cigarette are hybrid, the precise nature of their hybridities is fundamentally dissimilar. Whereas Cigarette's is fully within the colonial discourse, Cecil's is a constant reminder of his displacement and the danger that he will never return to his home. The 'disease' of colonial living threatens to remove his chance to return, but Cigarette, having been born into the 'diseased' status of a colonial hybrid, inoculates him by being a representative of the very thing he hopes to escape.

VI. Bertie Cecil's Inoculation

Cigarette saves Bertie's life twice before her final sacrifice of jumping in front of the firing squad. The first is a violent confrontation in which Cigarette asserts her masculine qualities through combat, the second involves her medical skill, and the final moment of salvation involves a combination of both, an act of masculine heroism with the medicinal qualities of inoculation and immunization. Ouida seems to build through these moments to the climax of the novel, showing her readers at

each successive stage the capacity that Cigarette has to *prevent* harm (the inoculation).

The first encounter occurs when Cecil takes on four drunken Arabs on horseback who have just trampled over an old man. Despite his affinity for the rightness of the Arab quarrel with France, Cecil's aristocratic notion of honour cannot abide this affront. Still, recognition of the Arabs' just complaint causes him, as he struggles against these four men, to attempt 'avoid[ing] bloodshed, both because his sympathies were always with the conquered tribes, and because he knew that every one of these quarrels and combats between the vanquisher and the vanquished served further to widen the breach, already broad enough, between them' (p. 216). But his honourable intentions only hasten his inevitable defeat at the hands of the four drunkards, and it is Cigarette who fires three times, killing one and wounding the others. Cigarette, still harbouring bitterness over Cecil's calling her 'unsexed', now gloats:

It was well for you that I was unsexed enough to be able to send an ounce of lead into a drunkard! [...] If I had been like that dainty aristocrat [Venetia] down there! [...] It had been worse for you. I should have screamed, and fainted, and left you to be killed [...]. [T]hat is to be 'feminine,' is it not?' (p. 217).

Ouida makes a conscious distinction between Cecil's restraint, despite his position as a coloniser, and Cigarette's willingness to fire without hesitation. The description is specifically that of infection; because of Cigarette's being raised around the Army, she 'caught fire at the flame of battle with instant *contagion*' (p. 216, emphasis mine). Her violence is linked directly to her upbringing in the colony and is described in terms of a diseased infection – something contagious that spreads from person to person. Cecil himself is not yet immune to this contagion, as he is one of the best fighters in the Legion. But his prowess in combat, unlike Cigarette's, is not a result of his exposure to the colony. Indeed, as I have indicated, Cecil's loyalty to the French was determined in a game of chance, and so his violence, again, is linked to his notions of aristocratic honour. In this moment, however, Ouida warns that Cecil's honour, unless infected by the colonial practices of Cigarette, may very likely kill him.

Cigarette saves Cecil again, but through an application of medical skill rather than violence. However, even her medical skill is linked to the violent conflicts of the colony: 'how deftly she would cure [the soldiers]', 'dash[ing] through under raking fire, to take a draught of water to a dying man', and riding 'twenty leagues [...] to fetch the surgeon of the Spahis to a Bedouin perishing in the desert of shot-wounds' (pp. 148-49). After Cecil is critically wounded in a skirmish, Cigarette pulls him from the battlefield and cares for him. At this moment Ouida reiterates Cigarette's medical abilities:

She had certain surgical skill, learned [...] with marvellous rapidity, by observation and intuition; and she had saved many a life by her

knowledge and her patient attendance on the sufferers – patience that she had been famed for when she had been only six years old, and a surgeon of the Algerian regiments had affirmed that he could trust her (p. 287).

After hours of attending him, Cigarette gets the unconscious Cecil to drink, and the infusion of fluids revives his health. Once again, she connects her actions here with being unsexed: ‘If I were not unsexed enough for this, how would it be with you now?’ (p. 289). Cigarette is cognizant of the emerging pattern in which her very ‘unsexed-ness’ is repeatedly responsible for Cecil’s well-being; her quality of colonial hybridity is the very quality that preserves Cecil’s life, and she now is wary of what may occur if she is called upon to save him again.

Through these first two moments Ouida has established the two qualities of Cigarette that make up her final inoculative capability. She is both violent and dangerous, just as the inoculation with smallpox was potentially dangerous. Additionally, her continued rescuing of Cecil already enacts a partial inoculation, as she maintains his resistance to death. Through these initial deployments of Cigarette’s skills in the novel, Ouida’s narrative sets the stage for the final inoculation in Cigarette’s sacrifice to save Cecil. In the midst of his court-martial and death sentence, Cigarette rides through the night in an effort to bring proof of ‘Louis Victor’s’ true identity as well as a written commutation of the death sentence from the highest-ranking officer in Algeria.

Returning just as the soldiers are about to execute Cecil, Cigarette throws her body in front of the firing squad to save his life. Cigarette’s method of saving Cecil is most certainly dangerous; just as an inoculation had the potential to cause a full case of smallpox, so too does Cigarette’s action carry with it the possibility that she will not stop all the bullets, leaving a stray shot to kill Cecil. Ouida is aware of this as she notes that Cecil, though he has been saved, is only ‘*almost* unharmed, grazed only by some few of the balls’ (p. 409, emphasis mine). In having some of the bullets hit Cecil, Ouida recognises that Cigarette’s body could not stop every bullet. In this way there is a physical inoculation, a human transfer of tissue, as part of Cigarette is violently injected into Cecil. Finally, as Cigarette is dying, she encourages Cecil to marry Venetia because ‘she is not “unsexed” ’ (p. 412). While it has always been Cigarette’s ‘unsexed’ and hybrid nature that has saved Cecil, at this moment, she recognizes that her final act of salvation will allow him to attain the bourgeois feminine standard in Venetia. Ouida underscores Cigarette’s centrality in the final chapter as we learn that Venetia and Cecil have built a memorial to Cigarette at their home in the English countryside. Thus, just as inoculation leaves a scar at the site of infection, so has Cigarette left physical scars, from the bullets, and psychological ones, evidenced by the memorial. While scars do connote the presence of infection and pain, they also are signs of healing—the scar is evidence of a disease that is now past, and no longer of any danger. So Bertie Cecil, returned to his fortune and heritage, no longer lives in fear of permanent exile in the diseased and dangerous space of the colony.

What Ouida is doing in *Under Two Flags* is unique to the extent that it suggests a process through which a successful return from the colonies is possible. It is an

ambitious goal, in which Ouida is navigating the tenuous divisions of colonial discourse: Bertie Cecil supports the Arabs, but fights with the French; he falls in love with an Arab woman, but marries a European Princess. For other characters in British literature who have returned from the colonies, the contrast between colonial and domestic mindsets is often more stark. Mr Rochester's first marriage and return from the colonies in *Jane Eyre* makes women of colonial origins out to be unstable and violent. Mr Kurtz, on the other hand, is subsumed by the 'heart of darkness', again portrayed as a violent and sexualized abyss, making any return to Europe impossible.

Rather than trying to controvert colonial stereotypes (as Jean Rhys does in *Wide Sargasso Sea*), Ouida's novel seeks to demonstrate that Bertie Cecil can simultaneously begin to become a part of colonial life, but also eventually return to the domestic sphere in England. As his hybrid qualities indicate, Cecil becomes quite ensconced in colonial life, often in ways that, in other novels, would prevent his return. Ouida, however, introduces Cigarette as a counterpart to Cecil, and her role in the novel becomes a significant complication of Barthes's inoculation, in which Cecil is inoculated against being drawn inexorably into the repressive colonial project, but as a result is returned to his ascendant position in England. *Under Two Flags* raises the question of how other authors, especially of popular fiction, might have attempted simultaneously to criticize and endorse the colonial project. In Ouida's case, her female protagonist becomes the inoculation against the colony, while also attempting to present a tantalizing and adventurous conception of a colonial woman's life and death.

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**ARISTOCRACY FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE: CHINESE COMMODITIES
IN OSCAR WILDE'S AESTHETICISM**

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Abstract

Oscar Wilde, who has international cultural influence, is a product of globalisation of the British Empire in the late nineteenth century. To gain an adequate understanding of this controversial writer, it is worthwhile exploring clearly the cultural resources that contributed to his aesthetic system. Most studies of Wilde have largely ignored his oriental influences. This essay focuses on Wilde's writings on Chinese commodities and demonstrates how these writings helped Wilde to formulate a consumerist aestheticism free from class distinction. Firstly, this essay briefly reviews the history of Chinese goods in Britain and highlights the changes in social conditions during the Aesthetic Movement. Secondly, through reading Wilde's writings on Chinese commodities, this essay discusses the relationship between Wilde and Chinese goods and the role of Chinese applied arts in his establishment of consumerist aestheticism for the Victorian public. Thirdly, this essay situates Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the context of late-Victorian imperial culture, to draw attention to the binary oppositions in Wilde's aestheticism, and the dilemma of keeping the distinctive identity of the aesthetes amidst the democratisation of beauty. Dorian's collection serves both to recognise and resist the temptations of commodity fetishism. Dorian's endless search for sensations leads him to abuse Chinese opium, which parallels the destined fate of the decadent aesthetes and the correspondingly over-expanded imperial culture.

Oscar Wilde has been presented as a multi-faceted artist, who contributed to the development of artistic and cultural movements of his time. A leader of fashion as well as a social critic, Wilde promoted the slogan 'art for art's sake' and commercialised this credo for the public. He had great enthusiasm for various Chinese commodities and absorbed inspiration from them to establish his aesthetic theory. As an undergraduate at Magdalen College, he had his considerable collection of blue-and-white porcelain housed on the shelves. His remark 'I find it harder and harder every day to live up to my blue china' brought him fame in the university.¹

Wilde's interest in Chinese arts was nothing eccentric in 1870s England. As early as the thirteenth century, the empire of China had fired the imagination of the Europeans through Marco Polo's celebrated account of his travels in the East. Nevertheless, the Eastern trade remained small during the intervening centuries until the discovery of America. The silver from Mexico and Peru enabled the European East India Companies to extend importation of Chinese commodities.² The new phase

¹ Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), pp. 43-44.

² The main demand in China was only for gold and silver, so the European nations had to pay gold or silver for Chinese commodities. See Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie: the Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 46-47. This is why the purchasing power of the West was limited before discovering the gold and silver mines in Latin America.

of trading with China encouraged the Europeans' taste for Chinese arts and handicrafts. In Britain in the mid-eighteenth century, the vogue for Chinese goods spread widely amongst the aristocracy, and a taste for objects in Chinese style became almost synonymous with nobility. For example, the Royal family collected Chinese arts, and some of the interior decoration of Buckingham Palace was inspired by Chinese aesthetic principles.³

Although the consumption of Chinese goods had a long history in Britain, it was a privilege monopolised by the aristocracy until the 1860s, when the British Empire finalised its early global expansion. The success of the colonial project greatly enhanced ordinary British people's interest in remote commodities. Chinese goods entered into the view of the public through exhibitions and the enlargement of Anglo-Chinese commerce from the 1840s, when a series of treaties were signed between China and Britain, which entitled the British to the most-favoured-nation treatment. These Anglo-Chinese trade agreements were the products of the era of early globalisation prompted by the desire of colonial powers to seek new markets for their manufactured goods as well as to conquer new colonies to obtain raw materials for industry. While a wave of British manufactured goods flooded Chinese shores, shiploads of objects from China (such as tea, silk, porcelains, ceramics, textiles, lacquers, furniture, wallpapers, silverware, prints and paintings) also flowed into Britain. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Britain became the biggest importer of Chinese commodities in the West.⁴ The advancement of navigational technology and the decrease of the cost of transportation after the Industrial Revolution greatly reduced Chinese commodities' price in the British domestic market.⁵ Thus, not only the aristocracy but also the ordinary people, including a young student like the 22-year-old Wilde, had the ability to buy Chinese commodities. Meanwhile, the emerging bourgeoisie produced by industrialisation and urbanisation supplied a potentially enormous market for exotic goods as the growing middle classes indulged a passion for decorating their newly owned houses. Because taste, pleasure, and luxury are inseparable from the concept of use, yet ideally separate from necessity, the acquisition of goods that have symbolic values such as rich, romantic, trendy, avant-garde, etc. constitutes a self-confirmation of cultural identity. To these new middle class consumers, the most reliable route was to emulate the current aristocratic vogues. The Chinese goods, which had been popular among the Royal family and upper classes for nearly three centuries but became cheap in the Victorian age, made it possible for the middle classes to obtain an economical aristocratic identity. The Chinese commodities embodied the exoticism of the Chinese empire. When consuming the Chinese goods imported in large quantities,

³ C. Maxwell, 'Chinoiserie at Buckingham Palace in the Nineteenth Century', *Burlington Magazine*, 149 (2007), 383-92.

⁴ Jerry L. S. Wang, 'The Profitability of Anglo-Chinese Trade, 1861-1913', *Business History*, 35.3 (1993), 39-65.

⁵ Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson, 'When did Globalisation Begin?' *European Review of Economic History* 6 (2002), 23-50. They argue that it was the nineteenth century transport revolution that precipitated the 'decline in the international dispersion of commodity prices'; quotation from p. 26.

they were also consuming the brand of 'China' simultaneously. In Wilde's time, the taste for Chinese commodities was not necessarily associated with an elite identity. Besides the upper classes, the ordinary British middle class family also showed interest in Chinese goods and were able to afford the prices. The consumption of Chinese commodities was not limited to any specific social class or economic position during the period of the aesthetic movement in Britain.

I. Oscar Wilde's Consumption of China: Porcelain, Tea and Textiles

During Wilde's Oxford days, John Ruskin and Walter Pater were his most prominent spiritual supervisors. Ruskin was Professor of Fine Art at Oxford. Wilde, having attended Ruskin's lectures, determined to participate in the practical beautification of the countryside. He wrote to Ruskin, 'from you I learned nothing but what was good' (Ellmann, p. 48). Pater, less interested in social reformation but more attracted by the artistic senses, also had a lasting influence on Wilde. In *De Profundis*, Wilde recalled Pater's *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* as 'a book [which] had strange influence over my life' (Ellmann, p 46). This is similar to the scene in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* where Dorian cannot refuse the allure of the poisoned perfection of a novel that Lord Henry gives him. 'Ruskin and Pater competed for the soul of the young "Dorian Wilde"', and both men were customers of Liberty & Co. in Regent Street, London, a shop that enjoyed the greatest reputation for the retail of decorative artefacts from China and other oriental countries in the late nineteenth century.⁶ Many members of the aesthetic circle collected oriental applied arts, such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, E.W. Godwin, and James McNeil Whistler. In this respect, Wilde's enthusiasm for blue-and-white when he was in Oxford was a confirmation of his identity as an aesthete.

The success of the American lecture tour in 1882 first established Wilde's reputation in the aesthetic movement. Styling himself as 'professor of aesthetics', Wilde took on the role of spokesperson for the British aesthetic movement in America.⁷ He prepared three lectures during this tour. The first was 'The English Renaissance', but he soon found what interested the Americans was not the history of European thought, Hellenism or the birth of the aesthetic movement in the French Revolution, but rather what the new world should do about its own arts and how the lecturer would advise them to decorate their homes. Therefore, Wilde changed the topic from artistic theory to artistic practice: that is, 'The Decorative Arts' and 'The House Beautiful', which sounded more practical and more appealing to his American audience. He toured triumphantly with these two lectures for nine months, adding appropriate anecdotes as he arrived in a new city.

The 1882 American tour was a significant event in the development of Wilde's aestheticism. This was the first time that Wilde made profits from the commodification of the aesthetic movement and, more significantly, the

⁶ *The Wilde Years: Oscar Wilde and the Art of his Time*, ed. Tomoko Sato and Lionel Lambourne (London: Barbican Art Galleries & Philip Wilson, 2000), p. 12.

⁷ Mary W. Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America* (London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 7.

commodification of himself. The timing of Wilde's tour had everything to do with Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *Patience*, which satirised the aesthetic movement and the popular stereotypes of an aesthete. In this opera, aestheticism was signalled by visual displays: long hair, knee breeches, silk stockings, lilies and sunflowers. Instead of denying such materialisation, Wilde tried to give the audiences what they expected, making himself a show for the public. These lectures to American audiences, and the series of lectures on his impressions of America to British audiences when he returned to England, represented the successful interaction between the ivory tower of aestheticism and the beautification of ordinary living. The Aesthetic movement could be widely participated in regardless of social position, material fortune or aesthetic knowledge. In such an engagement with the public, it is interesting to notice that Wilde often took Chinese commodities as references to support his aesthetic ideas. This seems to begin with his visit to Chinatown in San Francisco in April 1882. He showed great admiration for Chinese artefacts and his interest in things Chinese was extensive, including blue-and-white porcelain, China tea, Chinese silks, and the textiles and costumes of Chinese theatre, all of which were popular icons of China in the Western world.

Blue-and-white is one of the hallmarks of the British Aesthetic Movement and Wilde showed great appreciation of it in his lectures. This commodity played a significant role in the foundation of European chinoiserie, for it had been the major import among the 'art objects' since the time when China-mania arose in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards. These porcelains were simultaneously functional wares, treasured possessions, and assertions of magnificent power. Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) possessed several china pieces, while King Charles II had a larger collection. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, William III and Mary II brought several hundred pieces of porcelain from the Dutch republic to England, along with a new continental fashion.⁸ The taste for porcelain became the currency of social emulation among the aristocracy and gradually spread down the social ladder to the prosperous bourgeoisie. The popularity of porcelain throughout Britain stemmed not only from its practical use in dining but also from its incorporation into the new consumer vogue for interior decoration, a trend that grew as the elite built increasingly spacious homes.

During the Victorian period, Chinese porcelain continued to be adored. It was much easier for the Victorians to get access to and obtain a greater understanding of Chinese porcelain than their ancestors. There were oriental shops selling Chinese porcelains in London, and we can detect how this Chinese artefact was favoured by observing how much of the Chinese collection in the museums in Britain was made up of blue-and-white, purchased from China during the latter half of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1883 the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert) employed Stephen Bushell, a member of the British legation in Peking, to buy ceramics from China in large quantities. The 240 pieces he bought not only covered the highly decorative and colourful ceramics which the West was already quite

⁸ Robert Finlay, 'The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History', *Journal of World History*, 9.2 (1998), 172-73.

familiar with, but also included objects made for the imperial court and the scholar's table that had not been seen in the West. To collect blue-and-white porcelain was a wide fashion among the Victorian society. A watercolour painting titled *Lady Betty Germain's China Closet, Knole*, drawn by Ellen Clacy in 1880, depicted this cult. This picture showed the subject's Elizabethan house of Knole, where she formed a large collection of Chinese porcelain with a tall cabinet full of blue-and-white china, and a young woman in blue garments appreciating the beauty of them.

Wilde was also very fond of blue-and-white. Besides his famous remark in Oxford quoted at the beginning of this essay, Wilde said in a letter to William Ward on 3 March 1877 'I enjoy your room awfully. The inner room is filled with china, pictures, a portfolio'.⁹ He praised his friend's room decoration because it displayed china and other works of art. The collection and consumption of Chinese porcelain demonstrated William Ward's aesthetic credentials. Walter Hamilton, the first historian of the aesthetic movement, gave a notion of fashion believed by Wilde's time:

Chippendale furniture, dadoes, old-fashioned brass and wrought iron work, medieval lamps, stained-glass in small squares, and old china are held to be the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace and intensity (Sato & Lambourne, p. 24).

Owning china, in the eyes of fashion, was one of the necessary material pre-conditions to ensure one's aesthetic identity. This idea was widely accepted by the Victorian Aesthetic circle. The blue-and-white collectors included almost all the significant members in the Aesthetic movement. In Wilde's aesthetics of house decoration, blue-and-white china, because of its beautiful colour, noble shape and proportioned form, was one of the best objects to bring an aesthetic sense to a room. For instance, in *The House Beautiful*, Wilde described Whistler's breakfast room in London as a 'marvel of beauty'. He said 'the shelves are filled with blue and white china', and 'the breakfast-table is laid in this apartment, with [...] its dainty blue and white china, with a cluster of red and yellow chrysanthemums in an old Nankin vase in the centre'.¹⁰ Whistler used blue-and-white in his room decoration. These porcelains were decorated with enamel in the shape of Chinese ink-paintings. The themes were usually natural landscapes or noble beauties, describing a peaceful and leisured life of the aristocracy in ancient China. These pictures used a very different method of perspective from Western realistic paintings, and brought distinctive quality and design value to blue-and-white china through simple lines and colours, giving the Western consumers fresh artistic enjoyment. The Nankin vase that Whistler put in the centre of this room belonged to the school of blue-and-white of the Ming dynasty. Wilde explained why this was 'a charming room' by the standards of

⁹ *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. 40. Further references to this book are cited in the text, and abbreviated as *CL*.

¹⁰ *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Merlin Holland (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 916. Further references to this book are cited in the text, and abbreviated as *CW*.

aestheticism; he described it ‘catching all the warm light and taking on of all surrounding beauty, and giving to the guest a sense of joyousness, comfort, and rest’. Moreover, ‘nothing could be simpler, it costs little, and it shows what a great effect might be realised with a little and simple colour’ (CW, p. 916). The simplicity and elegance of blue-and-white fitted the taste of the Victorian aesthetes and supplied an alternative to the dominance of the neo-classical style in the domestic interior.

In some respects, the Aesthetic movement is an inheritor of early nineteenth century Romanticism. The romance of blue-and-white also attracted the Aesthetes because it provided them with ‘poetic space’, an extra use-value of this commodity. During the Renaissance, when Europeans did not know the materials of porcelain, they shared a popular view that porcelain from China had something magical; as Impey suggests, ‘it was widely believed that porcelain was corruptible by poison, if poison was placed in a porcelain, the bowl would break’ (Impey, p. 54). The ‘marvellous’ china persisted in stimulating the Victorian Aesthetes’ imagination, too. As Andrew Lang’s poem *Ballades in Blue China* (1880) eulogised:

Of china that’s ancient and blue,
Unchipped all the centuries through.
It has passed since the chime of it rang,
And they fashion’d it, figure and hue,
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang (Sato & Lambourne, p. 27).

Written at the height of the fashion for blue-and-white, this ballad expressed the emotion of porcelain fetishism. Lang admired these fragile objects as they had survived for centuries. The mythical representation of nature is traced to the ‘reign of the Emperor Hwang’, four thousand years ago when China was united as a country under a legendary king. Therefore, the taste for blue-and-white was not only consumption of a piece of exotic commodity, but also a poetic experience of an ancient civilisation of glory and romance free from the pollution of modern industrialisation. The aesthetic movement was a reaction against high art and a renewal of interest in eighteenth-century taste. The oriental romance attached to blue-and-white contributed to the Aesthetes’ rebellion against religious morality and neoclassicism. The Victorian aestheticism of room decoration abandoned the rules of ‘heavily carved furniture, large mirrors in gilt frames’: instead, blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, with its relatively simple decoration, intelligent design, balanced form, graceful colour and romantic imagination, became one of the hallmarks of an enlightened home.¹¹ Wilde summarised this aesthetic taste and advocated it in *The House Beautiful*, saying ‘the beauty [...] depends upon the quality and appearance of the china and glass; for a good permanent dinner set have Japanese or blue-and-white china’ (CW, p. 921).

Chinese tea was another major commodity in Anglo-Chinese commerce during the nineteenth century. Liberty & Co. once gave a pack of tea to their clients for free as long as they bought artefacts in the shop, and there was a shop near London

¹¹ Elizabeth Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Ferndale, 1981), p. 64.

Bridge where a piece of china was given away free with every pound of tea bought.¹² The East India Company first brought Chinese tea to England from Canton in the period of Cromwell's rule, and for a long time drinking tea was confined to the Royal family and the wealthiest class because it was too expensive for normal British people to afford. However, the monarchy and nobility's consumption established the fashion for tea. So in the nineteenth century, when large amounts of Chinese tea were imported and Britain planted tea in its Indian colony (which greatly reduced its price), it soon became the national drink. When Wilde gave his lecture in San Francisco, he went to Chinatown to drink tea. In *The Decorative Arts*, he said, 'when I was in San Francisco, I used to visit [...] the Chinese restaurants on account of the beautiful tea they made there' (CW, p. 935).

Chinese culture regarded drinking tea as an enjoyment of leisured life as well as an effective means of social intercourse. As early as the Tang Dynasty (780 A.D.), the activity of drinking tea had already become fashionable in China. Through the etiquette of tasting manners, the Chinese people used tea to show respect to their guests or express their appreciation. The appropriate manner of drinking tea could demonstrate one's education and social class. Wilde seemed quite interested in the cultural implications of Chinese tea. When he gave a lecture on his *Impressions in America* (1883) around Britain, he talked about Chinese tea to amuse his audiences. The London newspaper *The Era* (14 July 1883) reported that 'the lecturer (Oscar Wilde), dwelt upon the beauties and peculiarities of Chinese theatricals in San Francisco, where the audiences show their approval, not by applause, but by taking a little cup of tea'. Every time, as *The Era* recorded, this witty story of Chinese tea would arouse laughter.

However, in Britain, Chinese tea played a similar role in the social life of the upper classes. In the first scene of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Algernon asks the servant to make afternoon tea for his aunt (CW, p. 359). However, as Jeremy Lalonde has argued, Lady (Augusta) Bracknell was actually a middle class woman.¹³ Because of its mass consumption in the Victorian era, tea drinking gained a double social identity: being consumed by both the elites and the popular classes, enabling gracefulness and nobility to be achieved economically. In other words, Chinese tea became a meeting point for the various classes of Victorian Britain. Elegant Chinese teacups also attracted Wilde. In *The House Beautiful*, he described 'a most beautiful cup as delicate as the petal of a flower' (CW, p. 921), and in *The Decorative Art* he made an analogy between 'the tiny porcelain cups' and 'the petals of a white rose' (CW, p. 935). In contrast to the pleasure of drinking Chinese tea and enjoying the teacups in Chinatown, when Wilde used 'common delft cups about an inch-and-a-half thick' in 'the grand hotels', he thought 'I have deserved something nicer' (CW, p. 935). The experience of drinking tea in Chinatown gave Wilde a strong impression of what 'artistic life' should be.

¹² Bernard Denvir, *The Late Victorians: Art, Design and Society, 1852-1910* (New York: Longman, 1986), p. 18.

¹³ Jeremy Lalonde, 'A Revolutionary Outrage: *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Social Criticism', *Modern Drama* 48.4 (2005), 659-76.

Textiles, a Chinese commodity imported into Europe since Roman times, also stimulated Wilde's interest. They were still one of the most competitive Chinese goods for export in the nineteenth century. Liberty & Co. in London sold silks and dress fabrics from China. According to Elisabeth Aslin, the Victorians described Chinese silk as 'diaphanous, exquisite, being suitable in every case for drapery' (Aslin, p. 82). Chinese fabrics were used in the stage costumes for *Patience* and *The Colonel and the Cup*. Liberty first referred to Chinese textiles as 'art fabrics' in 1876, and soon this laudation spread, being widely accepted in the 1880s. Wilde recommended Chinese textiles for floor decoration to his American audiences. In *The House Beautiful*, he criticised modern carpets as 'unhealthy or inartistic', because 'carpets absorb the dust, and it is impossible to keep them as perfectly clean as anything about us should be'. He suggested 'it is better to use a parquetry flooring around the sides and rugs in the centre', and had the floor 'laid with pretty matting and strewn with those very handsome and economical rugs from China, Persia, and Japan'. In this case, 'art and sanitary regulations go hand in hand' (CW, p. 918). Wilde's taste for Chinese textiles was not his patent; instead the use of Chinese silks and textiles in room decoration was common in his time: for example, an essay on 'Liberty Stuffs, Blue China, and Peacocks Feathers' in *The Pall Mall Gazette* (14 November 1885) introduced rooms decorated with Chinese textiles: 'The walls are hung with the richest embroideries and glow with the most brilliant colours. Here are ancient Chinese tapestry, with golden dragons [...] the state robes of a Chinese mandarin [...] hangings from Chinese temples, embroidered with dragons and beasts and birds'.

Chinese textiles usually have decorative motifs rooted in Chinese myths, legends and traditions. Most of these motifs on embroideries, woven silks and printed cottons appear as balanced, spontaneous forms rather than as exaggerated expressions. The traditional technique places high emphasis on the productive procedure of tinting the textiles. Wilde showed his appreciation of Chinese colouring in *The Truth of Masks*: 'the fine Chinese blue, which we all so much admire, takes two years to dye, and the English public will not wait so long for a colour' (CW, p. 1171). He satirised the consumption of art in a market economy, highlighting the conflict between the production of traditional crafts and the demands of mass consumption in a commercial age, as well as the differing attitudes towards time and efficiency in the traditional Chinese agricultural society and British industrial capitalist society.

The costume in Chinese operas displayed the beauty of Chinese textiles. When Wilde was in San Francisco he visited the Chinese theatres 'for their rich dresses' (CW, p. 921). The costumes in Chinese opera are dazzling, various and colourful. The functions of costume are complex: they provide visual enjoyment, indicate the theme and type of a play, display the social status of a character. The beautiful colours, exotic designs and decorative accessories of the costume showcased the high level of Chinese embroidery and woven skills. Wilde wrote a letter to Norman Forbes-Robertson on 27 March 1882 to share his excitement: 'tonight I am escorted by the Mayor of the city through the Chinese quarter, to their theatre and joss houses and rooms, which will be most interesting' (CL, p. 159).

II. Dorian Gray's Consumption of China: Consumerism, Fetishism and Decadence

Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) comprehensively displayed the cultural implications of Chinese commodities in the context of aestheticism. Richard Ellmann notes that Walter Pater 'was delighted with the book', but objected to the portrayal of Lord Henry Wotton, who regurgitated many of Pater's sentiments from *Studies in the History of Renaissance* (Ellmann, p. 299). This *fin de siècle* Gothic fantasy novel, as Anne Varty argues, is 'an extraordinary anthology of styles, dovetailed to express the central ethical idea that art, serving as a repository for the conscience of a culture, extends or constrains the perceptual range of humanity'.¹⁴ Richard Ellmann names the 1880s' aestheticism 'the age of Dorian' (Ellmann, p. 289), as Dorian supplied the reader with a model of the Aesthetic lifestyle. Dorian is a dandy, who represents a retreat from politics and history into art and commodity culture. He indulges in the pursuit of beauty, pleasure and style through collecting a wide range of strictly Aesthetic commodities from the Orient: perfumes, musical instruments, jewels, embroideries, tapestries, porcelain, antiques and cultural relics. In the famous chapter eleven, Wilde gives an inventory of the resultant objects of Dorian's evolving passions for collecting, which Regenia Gagnier describes as 'a textbook of *fin de siècle* economic man'.¹⁵

Among Dorian's collection there are arts from China: 'for a whole year, he sought to accumulate the most exquisite specimens that he could find of textile and embroidered work, getting [...] elaborate yellow Chinese hangings' (CW, p. 105). Wilde depicted Dorian's thirst for these decorative oriental luxuries as the external manifestation of this hero's inner artistic superiority. By collecting arts of different nations and historical periods 'he sought to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles, and find in the spiritualising of the senses its highest realization' (CW, p. 99). Chinese hangings, due to their artistic freedom, sound artisanship and genuine good taste, contribute to Dorian's realisation of the senses. In this novel, Wilde tried to sell the Aesthetic living style to his readers. Almost all the Chinese commodities that Wilde was interested in appeared in the novel. For instance, Lord Henry's Mayfair house library in the fourth chapter:

It was, in its way, a very charming room [...] some large blue China jars and parrot-tulips were arranged on the mantelshelf, and through the small leaded panels of window streamed the apricot-coloured light of a summer day in London (CW, p. 45).

Both blue china and the tulips were Aesthetic symbols. This description of Lord Henry's library was based on the composition of Wilde's own room at Oxford, which

¹⁴ Anne Varty, *A Preface to Oscar Wilde* (Essex: Longman, 1998), p. 115.

¹⁵ Regenia Gagnier, 'Is Market Society the Fin of History?', in *Culture and Politics at the Fin de Siècle* ed. Sally Ledger and McCracken Scott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 302.

was decorated with fashionable blue-and-white vases and other oriental artistic treasures. In fact, Wilde offered numerous and elaborate descriptions of the rooms in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Almost every chapter is situated within a different closed space. Wilde took full advantage of his talent in room decoration. Dorian is very popular with London aristocratic society. Chinese tea as a sociable means appears in Chapter 17, as Dorian talks to the pretty Duchess of Monmouth at teatime, and in Chapter 2 a tea tray is set down upon a small Japanese table and ‘globe-shaped china dishes were brought in by a page’ (CW, p. 35). On these occasions, the consumption of Chinese tea identifies the character as educated, graceful and superior.

The consumption of Chinese commodities had a long history before the Aesthetic movement. However, in Dorian’s age, the consumption of ‘China’ was part of the practice of nineteenth century imperialism, in which the products of ‘past’ or ‘primitive’ cultures (which referred to both those ‘dead or dying’ oriental cultures and European civilisation in the previous centuries) were fetishistically consumed. The cultural capital gained by consuming oriental objects resided specifically in the evocation of an aristocratic yet simpler past, a time characterised by effortless aesthetic cultivation rather than industrial, capitalist striving. Elisabeth Aslin observes that the aesthetes of 1870s and ’80s developed ways to ‘pass on to others the aesthetic standards discovered in past ornament’ (Aslin, p. 14). In treating the eighteenth century as a golden age in art, which was remote from the shapeless vulgarity of the late nineteenth century, the highly self-conscious Aesthetes found resources to conduct their offensive against established artistic notions represented by neo-classicalism. As Malcolm Haslam points out, designers and consumers tried every other style known to them, whether from ancient times or from distant places.¹⁶ Through the rebellion against neo-classicism, the Victorian Aesthetes rediscovered ideas of form and artistic freedom. The elegance, abstraction and simplicity suggested by eighteenth-century’s Chinese fashion provided the Aesthetes with a release from the sinuous intricacies of Victorian medievalist design and the insistent pictorialism of its painting. To reshape Victorian culture, John Ruskin recommended a return to pre-industrial methods of production and craft workshops. He questioned whether anything made by machine could really be called art. Ruskin’s theory contributed to the popularity of Chinese handicrafts and other handmade goods among Victorian consumers. As a disciple of Ruskin, Wilde was very familiar with Western art history. When he described Dorian’s consumption precisely in order to show the hero’s elitist character, he searched for inspiration from the authority of traditional aristocratic taste, among which the consumption of Chinese commodities and other oriental luxuries separated the nobility as culturally superior to the common people.

Thus Dorian’s acquisition of goods from China and other oriental nations secures his ‘aristocratic’ distinction. The relationship between consumers and commodities has been reversed. The consumption of commodities is no longer the consumer’s individual choice: instead it is the commodities that decide who the consumers are. As Thorstein Veblen points out, the facet of conspicuous or honorific

¹⁶ Malcolm Haslam, *In the Nouveau Style* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 1.

consumption is fundamentally an effort to discriminate not between commodities, but between classes.¹⁷ That is to say, the customers not only consumed the practical use-value in a general sense of these commodities, but also gained a certain reputation and cultural power through obtaining the symbolic values (such as romance, wealth, fashion, nobility, modern, elegance) which were associated with these commodities. On many occasions the specific symbolic values of a commodity were created by corresponding social aesthetics. Meanwhile, people's aesthetic superiority was socially recognised when they purchased commodities with an attendant fashionable or cultural implication. As a result, by collecting oriental handmade objects that were distinguished by their beauty, uniqueness and rarity from Victorian machine production, Dorian creates an aesthetic consumption above the mass market. He consumes both the use-value in practical life and the symbolic value in social fashion of Chinese commodities and finalises his self-definition of aesthetic identity through such consumption.

However, despite resisting bourgeois or mass styles of consumption, Dorian's collection also serves as a recognition of the temptations of commodity fetishism. Influenced by William Morris's socialist theory of art, Wilde did not reject the utilities of Chinese commodities. For example, the yellow Chinese hangings in Dorian's collection are pieces of art, but also commodities with practical use-value as furniture. The utilisation of artistic commodities was another aspect of the Aesthetic Movement which used to be neglected by some Victorian scholars, but which took a significant position in Wilde's writings. For instance, Wilde reconstructed the relationship between art and life in *The Decay of Lying*, pointing out that Rossetti's paintings were not just popular visual arts but could be taken as the guide for women's dress fashion. In other words, the beauty of Rossetti's art could be realised in a woman's practical life. For Wilde, to create a piece of art does not mean the refusal of the market. He encouraged his audience to 'use arts'. For example, he argued in *The House Beautiful* that 'you have to use delicate things to accustom your servants to handle them securely; it will be a martyrdom for a long time at first, but you may be content to suffer in so good a cause' (CW, p. 921). In *Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young*, he declared 'one should either be a work of art or wear a work of art' (CW, p. 1245). Each individual might become an artist by following fashions or consuming the arts. Therefore, Dorian's ceaseless search for sensations, in another aspect, shows the obsession driven by commodity consumerism. Lord Henry's aphorism, 'the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it', best explains Dorian's (or Wilde's) art-consumerist ideology. While Wilde depicted Dorian's collection in order to show this hero's spiritual or aesthetic ascendancy, the logic of the dandy becomes assimilated into the logic of commodity culture. At first glance, it might seem that Dorian's collection represented a kind of extinct European nobility, but the imperialism of Victorian Britain and the Industrial Revolution made all these oriental goods easily available.

The Victorians witnessed a rapid democratisation of the decorative arts. Books and periodicals on decorative arts appeared in large quantities in the 1870s and 1880s.

¹⁷ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1965), pp. 160–61.

Entertainment, decoration and fashion formed cultural industries. The Victorian public lived in an era of wealth and prosperity, enjoying the products of new modes of manufacturing and distribution in a vastly expanded world of commodities. While Dorian views native, coloured races and their arts as a remote, sealed, pre-industrial civilisation from the past that stands in opposition to modern technology and commodity culture, these objects, in fact, had already been involved in the world capitalist system. Handmade, beautiful but cheap Chinese commodities supplied the Victorians with a 'unique' but economical aesthetic experience. Elisabeth Aslin argues that Philistines, a term which in the context of the Aesthetic movement meant one deficient in liberal culture whose interest was bounded by material and commonplace things as opposed to the high-minded spiritual and artistic values of the Aesthetes, referred more to those whose sensibilities were not so well cultivated, rather than acting as a definition of a certain economic status (Aslin, p. 15). The Victorian middle classes were eager to display their affluence by establishing collections in imitation of the aristocracy and by emulating their upper class purchasing habits. The Aesthetes did much to set up the standards of beauty in bourgeois society and to cultivate public tastes. An article in *The Burlington*, which was a mouthpiece of the Aesthetic movement in 1881 and 1882, described how:

This improvement is rapidly spreading through all classes of society. Good taste is no longer an expensive luxury to indulge in. The commonest articles of domestic use are now fashioned in accordance with its laws and the poorest may have in their homes at the cost of a few pence cups and saucers and jugs and teapots, more artistic in form and design than were to be found twenty years ago in any homes but those of the cultured rich (Aslin, p. 15).

It showed that in practice an ordinary Victorian family could emulate Dorian's 'aristocratic' collection, so long as they had an interest in these objects.

Wilde's Aestheticism assimilated consumerist economics. He tried to sell his audience an economical Aestheticism that everyone was able to consume. The room decoration he talked about was in 'the simplest and humblest of homes' (CW, p. 926). Wilde adjusted his Aestheticism to the model of using the smallest money to get the biggest enjoyment. A person's aesthetic taste did not depend on how much money he squandered on collecting expensive arts, but relied on the actual effects of his artistic devotion. In *The House Beautiful*, Wilde explained this idea by illustrating the example of Whistler.

Mr. Whistler has recently done two rooms in London which are marvels of beauty. One is the famous Peacock Room [...] It cost £3,000; the other room [...] only £30 (CW, p. 916).

The cost did not determine the artistic value, because both rooms were successful aesthetic works. Rather, it realised an ideal economic model. A common person could spend £30 to get as equal artistic enjoyment as those who spent £3,000. This

picturesque advertisement appealed to middle class audiences because it created a possibility for them to share an equal aesthetic identity with those who had superior economic power over them. As Wilde argued in the same lecture, 'art is not given to the people by costly foreign paintings in private galleries' nor is it a 'luxury for the rich and idle'; instead 'the art I speak of will be a democratic art made by the hands of the people and for the benefit of the people' (CW pp. 926-27). The idea of aesthetic democracy advocated by Ruskin and Morris, 'aristocracy of everyone', obtained its feasibility through Wilde's consumerist Aestheticism.¹⁸

The descent of the cultural identity of consuming arts from the aristocracy to the common person was an achievement born of the missionary aspect of the Aesthetic movement in the social context of Victorian capitalism. John Ruskin believed a learned aristocracy had the task of guiding the poor toward the appreciation of art, to 'educate the people to know what was beautiful and good for its moral and social benefits'.¹⁹ As a disciple of Ruskin, Wilde was also concerned about how to enhance the aesthetic taste of the Victorian public. Nonetheless, the popularity of art-consumption in this commodity culture also brought the Aesthetes a dilemma. This philanthropy raised another question: if everyone were educated to have good taste, the object of Aesthetes' taste would be less valuable, and their spiritual superiority could no longer be demonstrated.

Wilde tried to solve this paradox in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by describing the hero's endless reconstruction of his collection of oriental arts, never stopping at one point but persisting in seeking for the secret of some new joy. In Chapter Eleven, readers are given an inventory of Dorian's evolving passions for collecting. In fact, this solution was taken from an idea in the Conclusion to Pater's *The Renaissance*. Pater demonstrated the transience and relativity of all things and the need, therefore, 'to be forever curiously testing new opinions and counting new impressions'.²⁰ Dorian's evolving passions for collecting, which could be seen as an analogy of the thriving expansion of the British Empire across the world, serves as recognition of the temptations of commodity fetishism. Nevertheless, it leads to the abuse of opium, the symbol of decadence, magic, joy and inspiration since Coleridge's time. In Wilde's description of the opium den in Chapter Sixteen, Dorian 'knew in what strange heavens they [opium-eaters] were suffering, and what dull hells were teaching them the secret of some new joy' (CW, p.136). The hero is attracted by the opium den, where 'the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new' (CW, p. 134). His thirst for opium is driven by the same psychology as that operating in the reconstruction of his collection. The opium addiction is the transmogrifying form of commodity fetishism.

In the aestheticisation of opium, Wilde employs the symbol of 'China' to bridge consumerism and decadence:

¹⁸ Linda Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1996), p. xii.

¹⁹ Diana Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 4.

²⁰ Peter Raby, *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde* (Shanghai: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 83.

At last he got up from the sofa on which he had been lying, went over to it, and, having unlocked it, touched some hidden spring. A triangular drawer passed slowly out. His fingers moved instinctively towards it, dipped in, and closed on something. It was a small Chinese box of black and gold-dust lacquer, elaborately wrought, the sides patterned with curved waves, and the silken cords hung with round crystals and tasselled in plaited metal threads. He opened it. Inside was a green paste, waxy in lustre, the odour curiously heavy and persistent (CW, p. 133).

In this scene in the fifteenth chapter, the hero anxiously unlocks an ornate cabinet, which holds a secret stash of Chinese-boxed opium. Here, the Chinese box, which is an aesthetic object as well as an oriental commodity, contains dangerous opium and acts as a medium for Dorian's decadence. The inspiration here might come from Wilde's visit to the opium den during his trip to Chinatown in San Francisco, but is more likely to be based on Victorian perceptions of Orientalism, in which the Chinese Empire was a symbol of mystery, hedonism and decadence due to its extravagant lifestyle. The depiction of Chinese opium culture was part of the Victorian construction of an Oriental "Other" governed by its addiction to immoral sensual pleasure. The decadence of Dorian's abuse of dangerous opium in order to gain extraordinary sensual experience implies his inevitable trajectory from the indulgence of commodity fetishism to decadence, a trajectory reflected in the Victorians' perception of Chinese culture.

In conclusion, Wilde's writings on Chinese commodities show his view of a consumerist aestheticism, one that recommended 'applied art' to the public and sensual experiments to the elites. The Aesthetic movement was a revival or renaissance of the decorative arts. Artists and designers worked enthusiastically to improve the taste of the public. Aestheticism was not just an elite debate limited to the academy; it also served as a way of materially improving society. Wilde did not reject consumerist culture, but connected it with aristocratic tastes, creating a new economics of beauty, which mixed commodity logic and aesthetic pursuit, ordinary living and artistic utopia. The consumption of Chinese commodities, which initially appeared as luxurious markers of class distinction, spread from the aristocracy and the social elites to a much broader market in the late nineteenth century. It was driven by the forces of consumerism, industrialisation and the new middle classes' ambitions of social mobility. The Aesthetic movement was both an expression of aristocratic sensibility and a plea for social transformation. Chinese commodities, from their noble heritage in classical times and democratic price in the Victorian age, became the point of contact between interior spiritual superiority and exterior cultural consumption. They served as the memory of aristocratic glory and the everyday enjoyment of the common family, thus entering the philosophy of Wilde's consumerist aestheticism. However, during the democratisation of beauty, Wilde tried to keep the superior cultural identity of the aesthetes. The collecting of oriental arts became a form of commodity fetishism, and 'China' mirrored the inevitable decadence of the Aesthetic movement and the over-expanded imperial culture.

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GEORGIANA MOLLOY, JANE PORTER AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPLORATION NARRATIVES FOR NEW BEGINNINGS IN A STRANGE LAND

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Abstract

Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative, first published in 1831, was an instant success: the *London Quarterly Review* acknowledged that it had gone into its second edition within twelve months. Edited by Jane Porter, *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* follows the model of other exploration narratives, but diverges from the formulae in its focus on 'homespun achievements' and 'conjugal bliss and domestic contentment' rather than mutiny and massacre.¹

Georgiana Molloy arrived in the Swan River colony in 1830, settling in the remote south-west of Western Australia. With no home comforts Georgiana had to adapt to the many hardships of colonial life in this unfamiliar land. Despite her time being mostly absorbed in the daily grind, she was determined to find time to read.

In 1834 Georgiana wrote in a letter to her best friend in England that she was reading *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*. This was the first work of fiction that Georgiana had read since arriving in the colony, and yet this novel, I propose, was the motivation for her finding purpose and passion in her harsh surroundings. This paper will explore how *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*, with its focus on 'homespun achievements', mutual support, companionship and adherence to the Sabbath, became for Georgiana the foundation of beginnings in the challenging and harsh environment in which she found herself.²

In August 1829, the young Georgiana Kennedy married Captain John Molloy, twenty-four years her senior. Within a few months Captain Molloy and his wife packed up all their belongings and sailed from Portsmouth, on board the *Warrior*, arriving almost six months later in the newly established Swan River Colony in Western Australia. Georgiana was heavily pregnant with her first child. However, the conditions in the colony were so severe, and Georgiana so malnourished from the long journey, that the baby died within a few days of its birth. This was to be the first of nine pregnancies in twelve years for Georgiana. Only five resulted in children who lived beyond infancy. The Swan River Colony did not prove to be the viable land promised by the Governor, Captain Stirling, so Captain Molloy and Georgiana, along with two other families and a few servants, moved some three hundred kilometres south to the area now known as Augusta. With only a tent for shelter, a few household utensils and very little in the way of provisions, life for Georgiana in Augusta was a far cry from the life she knew back in England.

In a letter to her friend Helen Storey, Georgiana wrote of how she was 'overwhelmed with too much labour', physically suffering to the point where she exclaimed how everyday she expected 'to see some bone poking through its

¹William Lines, *An All Consuming Passion* (New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1994), p. 189.

² *Ibid.*

epidermis'.³ However, along with these descriptions of suffering there was a glimmer of hope. Georgiana explained to Helen that she has just finished reading the remarkable story of a shipwrecked couple, Edward and Eliza Seaward. Georgiana described the story of the achievements of this couple as an inspiration, writing that it was 'a delightful book and one much suited to this strange life'.⁴ The book Georgiana read is the exploration narrative, *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative of His Shipwreck, and Consequent Discovery of Certain Islands in the Caribbean Sea: With a Detail of Many Extraordinary and Highly Interesting Events in His Life from the Year 1733 to 1749, as Written in His Own Diary*, edited by Jane Porter, author of the popular novels *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810). While future letters reveal that the hardships did continue, inspired by the Seawards' story Georgiana gradually created a home. In time she recognised that this small colony of Augusta, in the remote south-west of Western Australia, was a place that promises hope and a future. Despite dying at the very young age of thirty-eight, Georgiana is remembered as one of the founding pioneers of the Augusta region, and more significantly as a noted botanist. Her collection and identification of Western Australia's native flora was reported in George Bentham's *Flora Australiensis*, published between 1863 and 1878, and in Briteen and Boulger's *A Biographical Index of Deceased British and Irish Botanists*, featured in the *Journal of Botany* between 1888 and 1891.⁵

Although *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* is a work of fiction and the life of Georgiana Molloy a historical reality, both stories poignantly capture the feelings and tremendous hardships that new settlers had to endure. Both stories also inherently reflect the struggle to create that 'circle of domestic happiness', which according to John Kemble was so important during the nineteenth-century for Britain's fostering of Empire and colonial expansion.⁶ The concept of 'home', and particularly the 'domestic', was fundamental to the nineteenth century British concept of Empire. In both *Seaward's Narrative* and the story of Georgiana Molloy, 'home' is envisaged as an expanded domestic space. Susan Strehle, in *Transnational Women's Fiction: Unsettling Home and Homeland* (2008), describes 'home' as 'central and centering' to the nation.⁷

Rosemary Marangoly George, in *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (1999), asserts that novels in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century were seen as having a mainly female

³ 'The Letters of Georgiana Molloy', *The Western Australian Historical Society*, ed. by W.G Pickering, Part IV, 1929, p. 48 (December 8, 1834).

⁴ Lines, p.189.

⁵ Alexandra Hasluck, *Georgiana Molloy: Portrait with Background* (Fremantle, W.A.: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2002), p. 305.

⁶ John Kemble, *The Saxons in England* (1848), quoted in Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 87.

⁷ Susan Strehle, *Transnational Women's Fiction: Unsettling Home and Homeland* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), p.1.

readership and were therefore ‘irrelevant to the workings of the national destiny’.⁸ However, she states that with the ‘advent of colonial fiction’, the novel, with its focus on ‘love, courtship [...] the home and domesticity [...] can be read as the imagining of one’s (domestic) ideology in an expanded space’ and therefore its ‘implications in events of nation and empire can no longer be ignored’.⁹ The domestic space in these novels is expanded into a metaphor for the national. Although George’s study focuses on colonial literature, and the effects of colonialism in the twentieth century, her insights and her argument help to illuminate the plight of Georgiana and her response both to her situation and to her reading of *Seaward’s Narrative*. The ‘home’ created by Edward and Eliza Seaward on their island can be defined as ‘an empire in miniature’.¹⁰ It becomes a representation of England, complete with all the trappings of the domestic, defined by George as embodying ‘shelter, comfort, nurture and protection’.¹¹ Although it is a work of fiction, I would argue that *Seaward’s Narrative* was instrumental in empowering Georgiana, giving her a blueprint for effecting positive change. Importantly, common to both stories is the agency of women. Through the fictional Eliza Seaward, Georgiana found a frame of reference to overcome the challenging environment and establish a ‘home’. I would argue too that Eliza Seaward and Georgiana Molloy both become, in Strehle’s words, ‘active agents of empire’.¹²

The editor of *Sir Edward Seaward’s Narrative*, Jane Porter, was born in Durham on 3 December 1775.¹³ One of five children, she was the eldest daughter of William Porter (1735-1779) and Jane Blenkinsop Porter (1745-1831). The eldest, John (1772-1810) rose to the rank of Colonel; William Ogilvie (1774-1850) was an eminent medical doctor in the Royal Navy; Robert Ker (1777-1842) a historical artist and attaché to the Russian czar; and the youngest, Anna Maria (1780-1832), was also a novelist. Porter was the author of four novels, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), *The Pastor’s Fire-side* (1817) and *Duke Christian of Luneburg* (1824) plus various collaborative works and other minor texts published in

⁸ Rosemary Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (London: University of California Press, 1999), p. 4. The subject of women’s post-colonial fiction is huge and one that I will not fully develop or argue in this paper, as my concentration is on exploration narratives and also the agency of the female protagonist. Although I refer to the works of George and Strehle, it is their definition of ‘home’ and the ‘domestic’ which is most pertinent to this paper.

⁹ George, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹² Strehle, p. 24.

¹³ There is speculation regarding the actual year Porter was born. Until the most recent DNB entry (2004) Porter’s birth date has been recorded as 3 December 1776, which is somewhat problematic given that her brother Robert was born in the early part of 1777 and was baptised on 10 July 1777. However, Dorothy McMillan in her 2004 entry records Porter’s baptism year as being 1776. I have investigated this as far as possible and can confirm that Porter’s date of birth is in fact the 3 December as in a diary entry of 3 December 1831 she writes “My Birth-Day!” On checking the baptism entries of the St Mary le Bow Church in Durham, where the Porter children were baptised, it is recorded that Jane was baptised on 17 January 1776. It is known that she died on the 24th May 1850 at the age of 74 and so I can only conclude that she was in fact born on 3 December 1775.

periodicals and compilations. She continued writing until her death at the age of seventy-five in 1850. Although not as immediately popular as *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *The Scottish Chiefs* went on to become one of the most widely read novels of the nineteenth century, publication records show that it was still being re-published as late as 1922, and as recently as a 2007 Broadview edition. Porter gained much notoriety with the popularity of her novels and critics' reviews were lavish in their praise. Both *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *The Scottish Chiefs* were translated into many languages and distributed across many continents, the *Literary Biography* reports that it 'went through six nineteenth century editions and printings'.¹⁴

The *London Quarterly Review* (1832) wrote that it 'must possess some kind of merit to have carried it to a second edition within twelvemonth'.¹⁵ The *Review* described the novel as 'interesting and amusing' and praised its style and language as being 'perfectly natural, and [...] extremely affecting'.¹⁶ Also in 1832 the *Athenaeum* published a poem by writer Geraldine Jewsbury, praising the adventures of the 'noble minded husband and wife [...] their mode of living [...] their plans, difficulties and complete success'.¹⁷ The poem begins with an address to the reader suggesting:

Whether the 'Narrative' be truth touched by fancy, or fancy working on truth, the result is equally captivating; and whether they belong to tale or history, the characters of Sir Edward Seaward and his lady equally excite interest and challenge admiration.¹⁸

In creating his fictional character Arthur Gordon Pym, Edgar Allan Poe also drew inspiration from *Seaward's Narrative*. Randel Helms, in his essay 'Another Source for Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym', writes that Poe's fictional hero Pym and the title *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) 'came directly from [Poe's] memory of Jane Porter's work'.¹⁹ Helm argues that Poe was reading *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* (1831) at the time he began writing *Pym* and this is evident when comparing the opening chapters of Poe's novel and the account of the Seawards' shipwreck. Helm writes:

Poe must have been reading *Seaward* at the time he was working on those chapters of *Pym* that recount his hero's being trapped in the hold of the *Granpus* [the ship] and his subsequent drifting on the mastless hulk,

¹⁴ Michael Adams, 'Jane Porter', in *British Romantic Novelists, 1789-1832*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography* Series 159, ed. by K. Bradford (Mudge, Detroit, Gale Research Inc., 1992), p. 269.

¹⁵ Anonymous, 'Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative of his Shipwreck, and Consequence Discovery of Certain Islands in the Caribbean Sea: With a Detail of Many Extraordinary and Highly Interesting Events of His Life From the Year 1733 to 1749, ed. by Miss Jane Porter', Art VIII. *London Quarterly Review*, (1832), p. 480.

¹⁶ Anonymous, *London Quarterly Review*, p. 480.

¹⁷ Mrs Fletcher, 'Lines Written after Reading Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative', *Athenaeum* (1 December, 1832), p. 777.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Randel Helms, 'Another Source for Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym', *American Literature*, Vol. 41/4 (Jan 1970), p. 573.

for it is these early episodes that most clearly have their inspiration in Jane Porter's work.²⁰

As well as providing inspiration, the novel also generated much speculation as to whether it was a work of fact or fiction. The *London Quarterly Review* wrote how:

[N]ine-tenths of those who had perused the book, and among others a great many naval officers, (a naval man, we suspect, has been concerned in the manufacture,) believed it to be a true and genuine story.²¹

After a lengthy dissection of 'some of the principal transactions recorded in this extraordinary Narrative', the author of the review concludes that 'it is neither more nor less than pure, unmingled fiction from first to last'.²²

There was also much speculation about its actual authorship. Although Jane Porter is clearly named as editor on the title page, many believed this was merely a ploy to conceal her authorship, or to give the text greater authority by claiming that it was a true account by Sir Edward Seaward.²³ Porter refuted claims that she was the author, writing in the 'Preface' that she merely 'undertook the task of being its editor'.²⁴ Fiona Price in *Notes and Queries* (2002) proposes that *Seaward's Narrative* was written by Porter's older brother, William Ogilvie Porter. Price bases her conclusion on a series of letters to and from Porter and her brother William just prior to the novel's publication. The letters reveal that William was responsible for initially penning *Seaward's Narrative*. However, Price concedes that there was a very complex process of collaboration between the siblings throughout. William's letter to Porter of March 1831 clearly shows that she used her literary skills to significantly refine and edit the manuscript, as William acknowledged his sister's invaluable help in producing the novel's final draft:

I am well pleased [...] that you are reading the [manuscript] over again, and I both hope and believe you will find it much improved in many respects – In some of your corrections [...] you will recognise much of

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Anonymous, *London Quarterly Review*, p. 501.

²² Anonymous, *London Quarterly Review*, p. 506.

²³ See, *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature*, ed. By James Kennedy, W.A. Smith and A.F. Johnson, Vol 5 (1929), p. 274; Michael Adams, 'Jane Porter', *Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Romantic Novelists, 1798-1832*, Vol. 116 (1992); 'Jane Porter 1776-1850', *The New Cambridge Bibliography 1800-1900*, ed by George Watson, Vol 3 (1969), p. 758. Joanne Shattock in *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Vol 4 (1999), lists the narrative as 'Of doubtful attribution' (p. 987).

²⁴ *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative of his Shipwreck, and Consequent Discovery of Certain Islands in the Caribbean Sea: With a Detail of Many Extraordinary and Highly Interesting Events in his Life from the Year 1733 to 1749, as Written in his own Diary*, ed. by Jane Porter (London, Longman, Rees, Orme et al, 1831), p. viii. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

your own, and always as an improvement.²⁵

More recently, in the 2004 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Dorothy McMillan also claims that William was responsible for the writing of novel, using the argument that William drew on his naval experiences in the creation of the manuscript. McMillan, in fact, inadvertently praises the success of *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* by stating that Porter's denial of authorship is a great loss to the Porter canon, because in the wake of her other successes, it would have shown to the literary world her versatility as a writer.²⁶ I would argue that the most significant contribution by Porter to the novel is the creation of the fictional heroine, Eliza Seaward. Porter's previous heroines, Mary Beaufort (*Thaddeus of Warsaw*), Marion Wallace and Helen Mar (*The Scottish Chiefs*), Marcella Santa Cruz (*The Pastor's Fire-side*) and the Princess Elizabeth (*Duke Christian*) are strong intelligent women who stand their ground steadfastly and are always prepared to fight for what is right. Through her heroines Porter articulated her belief that women are capable of action and rational thought. Mary, Marion and Helen, in particular, demonstrate the pivotal role women play in the maintenance of domestic order, especially during periods of revolution and national unrest. Like all Porter's heroines, Eliza Seaward is compassionate, virtuous; and most importantly, a strong companion to, and equal helpmate of, her husband. Eliza Seaward is another clear example of how Porter also uses her heroines to effect moral improvement. It is the characterisation of Eliza Seaward, I suggest, which initiated Georgiana's passionate engagement with *Seaward's Narrative*. Porter's contributions and influence in the writing, editing and publication of *Seaward's Narrative* are significant and I propose that it should therefore be included as part of her oeuvre.

The politics of the domestic in *Seaward's Narrative* are paramount and form the point from which it diverges from the other formulaic exploration narratives of the period. The genre of fictional exploration narratives has an interesting history, beginning with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, published in 1719, and ending, arguably, with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, published in 1837. Between these two seminal fictional works lies a proliferation of historical narratives in response to what historian James Williamson describes as 'the eighteenth-century's "romance of unknown lands and peoples" [...] developing in European culture since Columbus', and the nineteenth-century's quest for empire.²⁷ In *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* Linda Colley suggests that, faced with the threat of war and mounting internal turmoil, British exploration and imperialism helped to forge a united identity and consequently the British people began to recognise themselves as a nation. Colley explains that 'Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the Other, and above

²⁵ Fiona Price, 'Jane Porter and the Authorship of *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*: Previously Unpublished Correspondence', *Notes & Queries*, 49/1, (March 2002), 56. (Letter 10 March 1831).

²⁶ Dorothy McMillan, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by H.C.G Matthew and Brian Harrison, Vol. 44 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 960.

²⁷ Quoted in Bruce Robert Greenfield, *The Rhetoric of Discovery: British and American Exploration Narratives, 1760-1845 and American Renaissance Writing* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1985), p. 10.

all in response to conflict with the Other', thereby relieving anxieties related to their own internal fracturing and 'serving as a unifying agent'.²⁸ Brett McInelly, in 'Expanding Empires, Expanding Selves: Colonialism and the Novel', points to *Robinson Crusoe* and other exploration narratives as providing the British with a self-reference in the wake of their expanding empire.²⁹ The novel, *Robinson Crusoe* and the true narratives of explorers reinforced the need to be resourceful, self-sufficient and enterprising, to tame not only the natural environment but also the natives that were encountered in the newly colonised lands. John Richetti, in his 'Introduction' to *Robinson Crusoe*, writes that each newly discovered land became 'an opportunity for colonial expropriation, for development and improvement', what we may now consider exploitation.³⁰

As documents of journeys to locations previously uncharted, exploration narratives not only aroused feelings of nationalism and patriotic fervour in their readers but, according to Lisa Gitelman in 'Arthur Gordon Pym and the Novel Narrative of Edgar Allan Poe', also provided much entertainment, with their lashings of 'mutiny, butchery, shipwreck, suffering, massacre and incredible adventures and discoveries below the eighty-fourth parallel'.³¹ While there are specific points of departure in *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*, there are also some similarities to its predecessor Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and successor, Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. The male protagonists Robinson Crusoe, Edward Seaward and Gordon Pym, have an inherent desire to go to sea; all are shipwrecked after a violent hurricane, washed ashore on a seemingly deserted island, and are faced with the prospect of surviving with only bare essentials. The key point of departure for *Seaward's Narrative* from these novels and other exploration narratives, however, is the absence of overt brutality, especially with regard to the native people encountered. For example, in *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe gives a vivid account of the horror he felt when confronted by the natives:

I perceiv'd by my perspective, two miserable wretches dragg'd from the boats, where it seems they were laid by, and were now brought out for the slaughter. I perceiv'd one of them fell [...] and two or three others were immediately at work cutting him open for their cookery.³²

Pym is similarly faced with murder, mutiny and mayhem, and his descriptions are

²⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1701 – 1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 4-5. Also see Brett McInelly, 'Expanding Empires, Expanding Selves: Colonialism, the Novel, and Robinson Crusoe', *Studies in the Novel*, 35/1 (March 2003), 1-21 (p. 4).

²⁹ McInelly, p. 11.

³⁰ John Richetti, 'Introduction' to Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London, Penguin Classics, 2003), p. xxii.

³¹ Lisa Gitelman, 'Arthur Gordon Pym and the Novel Narrative of Edgar Allan Poe', *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 47/3 (December 1992), 349-361 (p.352). Gitelman explains that the eighty-fourth parallel is the coordinate beyond which, at that time, no one had ever ventured, and therefore a region that was unknown. Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne both refer to the eighty-fourth parallel.

³² Defoe, p.159.

equally graphic in their detail:

A scene of the most horrible butchery ensued. The bound seamen were dragged to the gangway. Here the cook stood with an axe, striking each victim on the head as he was forced over the side of the vessel by the other mutineers.³³

The natives in *Seaward's Narrative* on the other hand are friendly, hospitable and even obliging. Randel Helms scathingly writes that the natives in *Seaward's Narrative* are a 'white fantasy'.³⁴ I argue that the friendly and cooperative nature of the natives encountered by Edward and Eliza Seaward was fundamental to Porter's, and indeed William's, overarching philosophy of Christian virtue. Although at various moments in the text there are several bloody attacks by some natives and from pirates, the emphasis is on the eventual success of the Seawards and their islanders. Edward and Eliza are emphatic that defeat of the enemy must be achieved with little loss of life and that thanks must be offered to the Almighty for this deliverance.

However, as previously stated, the most important point of departure in *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* is the presence of Eliza Seaward. Edward Seaward is shipwrecked with his wife, Eliza, and throughout the entire text, Eliza is pivotal in every decision, action and outcome. She is Edward's strength, his companion, and in all things his equal. Upon her death Seaward writes passionately:

I feel her loss so deeply, that nothing less than the power of God could support me under my bereavement. But I live in the certain hope of meeting her again, and for ever, in the mansions of the blessed. (vii)

Eliza's presence highlights the politics of the domestic in the novel. In the 'Preface' Porter outlines the 'unpretending simplicity of the relation' between Edward and Eliza and assures the reader that this relationship exemplifies 'sound and truly British principles, religious and moral' (vi).

After their shipwreck, the first thing that Edward and Eliza must attend to is the provision of shelter and sustenance, which they accomplish through mutual support. They are practical, resourceful and always grateful for each small success. Gradually they begin to take delight in their isolation on the island. They are content with each other, applying their efforts each day to building shelter and garnering food from the land and sea. But above all, Edward and Eliza never take each other for granted and they never fail to observe the Sabbath or to give daily thanks to the Almighty for all

³³ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (Boston: David R. Godine Publisher, 1973), p. 3.

³⁴ Helms, p. 573. The issue of slaves versus servants in *Seaward's Narrative* is an issue beyond the scope of this article. In the 'Preface', Porter draws attention to what she refers to as the 'home policy of the upright Governor of Seaward Island, with regard to its engrafted negro population' (p.ix) and continues to explain that she believes it to meet 'united demands of the right of property in the ...last race of imported slaves' (p. ix).

his blessings. After ‘their struggle for survival has been won’ the first of the natives arrive on the island.³⁵ Edward and Eliza welcome them, sharing their food and shelter. With time more natives arrive, marriages take place, babies are born, more houses are built and a diversity of crops are grown. Small industry begins to develop and soon the Seawards find themselves at the helm of a thriving community. This growth naturally means some law enforcement is necessary, but Edward writes that:

Our laws were few, but wholesome; and we desired to make our holy religion the rule of our conduct. In consequence, the population was healthy, orderly, industrious, and contented (p. 108).

Although the Seawards work tirelessly for the good of their growing community, they continue to be content in each other’s company and on some occasions look back with fondness to the months that they were alone on their island. Edward reflects:

And after the party had gone, my dear Eliza dressed herself in the old island garb of our former days [...] I also dressed myself as in the habit of those times [...] I gave my wife a pike in her hand, and then took up a basket [...] We had religiously preserved these memorials of our early days [...] then taking the hand of my beloved [...] We bent our steps through the woodland region [...] and soon we felt refreshed and joyous (p. 57).

Their pleasures are simple, as Edward further reflects:

Sometimes we walked abroad in the cool of the morning on the beach, collecting shells; or, when the sun was high, reposed under the shade of one of our numerous fine trees, and there read (p. 139).

Eleven years after being shipwrecked on their island, with Eliza’s health declining, the Seawards decide to return to England, having established a ‘flourishing colony under the British flag’.³⁶ Their island, their ‘home’ of eleven years ‘had grown up’ however, and it was time to ‘leave it to itself’ (p. 321). As the island recedes into the distance, Eliza sighs heavily, recollecting that their island was ‘to [them] an earthly paradise’ (p. 332).

Although reading was one of Georgiana Molloy’s greatest loves, the heavy burden of domestic duties meant that it was confined to Sundays, but this being the Sabbath, she felt it duty bound to ‘read only books relating to religion’.³⁷ In a letter to her friend Helen Story in 1833, Georgiana wrote, ‘I confine myself chiefly to these books for my conscience seems to say when reading any others, “Is your peace made

³⁵ Helms, p. 573.

³⁶ Lines, p. 189.

³⁷ Hasluck, p. 102.

with God?”³⁸ Much to Georgiana’s distress no church was yet built in the burgeoning colony of Augusta, although land was allotted for one in the original plans of the town.³⁹ Instead, all efforts were directed towards building barracks and cottages for the newly arriving soldiers and their wives. A temporary hospital was also quickly established along with a colonial store. Despite the lack of a church, Georgiana urged her husband to conduct church services in honour of the Sabbath. These were held on the veranda of their small cottage. They were, however, poorly attended and little reverence was paid. Georgiana wrote desperately to Helen:

I can give you no idea of the open state of regardless wickedness that [...] reigns here. [Captain] Molloy ordered an observance of the Sabbath from the first of our arrival. But all is heard as if not heard; and the soldiers’ wives very often quit the service in the middle of it.⁴⁰

Georgiana was often left alone for many months. Without a servant, husband or friends, Georgiana put all her efforts into creating a home. In those early days in the new colony, Georgiana thought of nothing but returning to England and her beloved home, Rosneath. Writing to her sister Elizabeth in 1832, Georgiana described her new surroundings as the ‘unbounded limits of thickly clothed dark green forests where nothing can be described to feast the imagination’.⁴¹ Her loneliness was not only due to the frequent absences of her husband, but also to alienation from the other women in the small community. Interested in philosophical and religious concerns, Georgiana found no-one among the soldiers’ wives with whom she could discuss the things that interested her most. In a poignant letter to her dear friend, Margaret Dunlop, in 1833, Georgiana wrote how her ‘head aches’, explaining to Margaret that:

I have all the clothes to put away from the wash; baby to put to bed; make tea and drink it without milk as they shot our cow for a trespass; read prayers [...] I wish I had you here to help me.⁴²

As resident Magistrate, Captain John Molloy was frequently required to attend to business in the Swan River Colony, leaving Georgiana, and their rapidly growing family, to fend for themselves. Georgiana hated being left alone and the Captain was equally discontented at leaving his family, especially as relations with the indigenous people were on precarious terms. However, in his absence Georgiana took over the duties of the Magistrate, in addition to her domestic chores and caring for her young children. During her time in the role of Magistrate Georgiana was required to conduct a funeral service for her one-time servant, Kitty Ludlow. In a letter to Helen Story Georgiana recorded the distress that organising this funeral caused her, not only because of her deep concern for the spiritual salvation of Kitty, but also because the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.102.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.109.

⁴² Hasluck, p.135.

intense December heat meant that the body began to decompose quite rapidly. Georgiana wrote that Kitty's poor frame 'was so highly decomposed it made two of the bearers ill for some days.'⁴³ During another of her husband's absences, the Colony's doctor, in a drunken state, entered the house uninvited. Although Georgiana wrote that she was not alarmed by the incident, she was deeply concerned about the widespread drunkenness that was evident in the small colony. In his biography of Georgiana Molloy, William Lines records that although later counselling the doctor, Georgiana feared her efforts were in vain. As with the licentiousness rife amongst soldiers and their wives, Georgiana also had grave concern for the salvation of the Aboriginal people she encountered.

In 1834, some four years after settling in Augusta, with three small children and Magistrate duties to attend to, Georgiana wrote home that even reading a religious text on a Sunday had become a luxury she could barely afford. She wrote: 'I never open a book, and if I can read a chapter on Sundays, it is quite a treat to have so much leisure'.⁴⁴ However, in December of that year, after another long exhausting day, it would appear that Georgiana found a rare moment to sit by the water's edge, hoping to sight the vessel that would bring her husband home to her, and read a narrative which 'painted a sweet picture of conjugal bliss and domestic contentment'.⁴⁵ Georgiana found great delight in this story about a shipwrecked couple, who 'considered their island an earthly paradise', and 'who took seriously their duty to care for it, to dress it and keep it'.⁴⁶

It is unclear how Georgiana came to be in possession of the novel. Although she and her husband brought with them many books, given that *Seaward's Narrative* was published in 1831 it could not have been among their collection, as they left England in 1829. Both Georgiana and her husband were avid readers, despite different tastes in subject matter. Captain Molloy was very fond of reading for pleasure rather than 'spiritual enlightenment' and occupied any spare time with reading exploration narratives, especially those by fellow soldiers and sailors.⁴⁷ One of Captain Molloy's favourite books was *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade* by John Kincaid, published in 1830. The book was sent to the Captain by Georgiana's sister Mary. However, in a letter to her sister Eliza, Georgiana said that she did not intend to read the book, despite Kincaid being an ex-officer of her husband's, because on perusing it she noted it contained the occasional '*damn*', writing that because of the 'apparent language...I do not intend to read it'.⁴⁸ In contrast to her husband Georgiana preferred to read religious tracts, favourite books being Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and Robert Pollock's *The Course of Time*, a collection of religious poems first published in 1828. Pollock's collection was sent to Georgiana by

⁴³ Lines, p.187.

⁴⁴ 'The Letters of Georgiana Molloy', p. 48. (Letter December 1834).

⁴⁵ Lines, p.189.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Lines, p. 143. Lines notes in his biography that John Molloy's collection included Jonathon Leach's *Rough Notes of the Life of an old Soldier* (1831) and John Kincaid's *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade* (1830).

⁴⁸ Hasluck, p. 128.

her sister Mary, who wrote that Georgiana would much enjoy the discursive and pedagogical nature of the verses it contained.⁴⁹ I can only deduce from her letters that the most likely scenario for Georgiana having possession of *Seaward's Narrative* is that it was sent to her by a friend, or family member in England. No matter how Georgiana came into possession of the novel, it is note-worthy that within three years of publication its reach extended as far as Australia, and not only that, to the remote south-west of Western Australia.

The fictional Eliza Seaward had many things in common with Georgiana. Both were devoutly religious and both were young brides when they followed their husbands to begin new lives in far away places: Captain Molloy and Georgiana to the Swan River colony in Australia, Edward and Eliza to Jamaica. Marriage for Georgiana was sacred, and like Eliza Seaward she believed its existence and maintenance were vital to the wellbeing of society. Like Eliza also, Georgiana was strong, determined, independent and active. As a wife, Georgiana wished to be a helpmate to her husband, valuing friendship as the foundation of her marriage. This mirrors the fictional narrative of the relationship between Eliza and Edward, one that Georgiana wished to emulate. Just prior to her marriage to Captain Molloy Georgiana wrote to him:

I saw in some of the papers that the Rifle Corps was not to go abroad and I hope that the report is correct, for whatever you may say of the nothingness of so long a voyage, I cannot bring my untravelled mind to regard it so lightly, and as I always consider you are one of my greatest friends, I should be glad to retain you on this side of the Atlantic.⁵⁰

Moreover, the letter highlights another similarity between Georgiana and Eliza. Both women had not travelled outside their native England prior to setting forth as young brides and, while willing and happy to be following their husbands, they were both saddened to leave their family and friends. As with Eliza, Georgiana took her role as wife and helpmate very seriously. Captain Molloy, writing to Mary Dunlop just after his marriage to Georgiana, referred to the seriousness of his new young wife. He wrote:

She is a very dear creature, Mary, and really seems happy although she is separated from her dear friends at Keppoch. She is quite notable in the way of equipping herself and has accomplished the whole of her affairs in as quiet and easy a manner as if she had been a wife for two years' standing.⁵¹

Throughout *Seaward's Narrative*, Edward Seaward refers to his wife as his constant companion and helpmate, and is in admiration of her hard labour. He is

⁴⁹ Lines, p. 140.

⁵⁰ Hasluck, p. 17.

⁵¹ Hasluck, p. 45.

always in awe of his wife's industriousness:

Having finished dinner, my industrious Eliza with the old basket for a pattern, made the frame-work of a new one; and I, never so happy as when employed near her, began to plan a fish-pot (p. 157).

When not busy with domestic chores, both Eliza and Georgiana read, especially religious texts, and Milton is a favourite of each. Edward Seaward notes that:

My dear Eliza's favourite was the *Paradise Lost* by Milton... From this sublime work she would sometimes read a fine passage to us and always with great pathos; for her soul was in the subject, and she therefore did the author justice (p. 139).

For Georgiana and Eliza, the Sabbath was sacred and adherence to it imperative. However, Georgiana did not have the same mutual support either from her husband or the other members of the colony, as Eliza had from Edward and the settlers on their island. Captain Molloy did not share his wife's religious fervour, while he was, however, happy to observe the Sabbath. Georgiana, in a letter to Helen, exclaimed that she 'has no Physician here to apply to' and constantly prayed 'for some faithful minister' with whom to share her devoutness.⁵²

Despite the austerity of the conditions, both women found pleasure and solace in planting, tending and cultivating their gardens, especially their vegetable gardens from which they could reap sustenance both nutritionally and spiritually. Georgiana also enjoyed flower gardening and proudly wrote to her mother in England that she was 'the only lady in the colony possessing a flower garden'.⁵³ The fictional Eliza shares her love of gardening with her husband, working side by side to produce enough food for their sustenance, as Edward recalls:

I again went to work with my spade; during which [Eliza] cut the yams: and before noon-tide, we had planted a good space with both yams and coccos [sic] (p. 123).

Given that both women name Milton's *Paradise Lost* as among their favourite books, it is of little surprise that gardening is such a deep passion for them both. Milton's text must have resonated loudly for Eliza and Georgiana as they experienced the physical and spiritual struggle of being cast adrift from their beloved England. The lushness of England is replaced by a land that is 'empty and challenging', a place where the weather seemed continually hot and there is a 'constant irritation of flies, fleas and mosquitoes'.⁵⁴ While Adam and Eve's 'departure from Paradise is tearful', they gradually begin to realise that their 'quest is to restore a Paradisal order', to

⁵² Lines, p.142.

⁵³ Ibid., p.131.

⁵⁴ Hasluck, p. 82

regain Paradise.⁵⁵ So too Eliza and Georgiana set about restoring order, planting their garden, growing their crops and finding delight in their new Eden. Two years after arriving in Augusta, Georgiana wrote to her family at Rosneath that although to the emigrant eye ‘nothing can be described to feast the imagination’, with her domestic eye she now looks upon her ‘home’ as a ‘very beautiful place’.⁵⁶ From *Paradise Lost*, Georgiana learnt ‘the virtues of patience not passivity, of enlightened learning not submissive ignorance’ and the importance of finding ‘Paradise within thee, happier far’.⁵⁷ Stella Revard, in ‘Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*’, points out that in Book XI Eve ‘withdraws her hand from her husband’s hand and goes alone to tend her garden’.⁵⁸ While Eliza shared her love of gardening with her husband, like Eve Georgiana had to tend to her garden alone.

Scholars of Georgiana all record the turning point in her life to be the receipt of a letter from Captain James Mangles, a prominent London horticulturist, requesting her to collect, label and send to him as many varieties of native seeds as she could gather.⁵⁹ After visiting the Swan River colony, Mangles took a professional interest in the native vegetation in the Augusta area and, on the advice of some friends, wrote to Georgiana with his request. Georgiana took up the challenge from this stranger with relish and worked tirelessly collecting and identifying seeds, even after the tragic drowning of her only son, John, at the age of nineteen months. Georgiana’s work and correspondence with Mangles became, along with the maintenance of her family, the focus of her life until her premature death six years later.

Although Mangles first wrote to Georgiana in 1837, she began to find purpose and passion in her life earlier than this, when reading the story of Edward and Eliza Seaward. It was after reading *Seaward’s Narrative* that she began to take positive steps in building her new life. Thus, when she received Mangles’s letter some three years later, Georgiana was receptive to the possibilities it offered. It is also clear from her letters and diary that after reading the novel Georgiana made significant changes in her life, the most fundamental being her request to Captain Molloy not to leave her and the children again for any long periods. She requested he remain at home to help with the household chores and attend to his work as the resident Magistrate. Captain Molloy agreed to his wife’s request, promising never to leave her alone unless absolutely necessary. It is clear from reading Georgiana’s biography that she wished for her and her husband to live with, and for each other, in the same way that Edward and Eliza Seaward did. Evidence of Captain Molloy’s compliance with his wife’s wishes is found in Georgiana’s letter to Helen Story, writing how her husband ordered her to bed on seeing her exhaustion with caring for their sick daughter: ‘And he’, wrote Georgiana, ‘dearest creature that he is, sat up with Sabina, who remained in the

⁵⁵ *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, ed. by Andrew Sanders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 233-34.

⁵⁶ Hasluck, p.129 (Letter 7 November 1832)

⁵⁷ Sanders, p. 233.

⁵⁸ Stella, P. Revard, ‘Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*’, *PMLA*, 88/1 (January 1973), 69-78 (p. 69).

⁵⁹ See particularly, Jessica White, ‘Efflorescence: The Letters of Georgiana Molloy’, *Hecate*, 28/2 (2002), 176-190.

same state till about three, when [finally] the medicine took effect'.⁶⁰ Georgiana also expressed to her husband the need for a servant to assist in the care of the children and to relieve them of some of the many daily chores required to be done. Molloy agreed, and even promised that if necessary he would pay the passage for someone, and should they prove themselves loyal and hardworking he would grant them a piece of land. Georgiana was delighted and wrote to Helen: 'I shall be most thankful for a sensible and pious young woman, or even a widow, that would [...] assist me in any way, either as a servant or companion'.⁶¹

In *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*, Edward and Eliza create an empire in miniature, a representation of England. After reading the story of the Seawards, Georgiana also began to create her representation of the home she had left behind in England. Delys Bird, in her essay 'Gender and Landscape: Australian Colonial Women Writers', states that in creating her garden, Georgiana began to adjust to her new environment and even began domesticating it by planting an English garden in the remote, arid land which she now inhabited. In addition to English plants, Georgiana also began growing Australian native plants in her garden and by doing so '[civilised] the landscape, creating a domestic hybrid'.⁶² Bird believes that it was in this way that Georgiana began to integrate into her new environment. Importantly, Bird concludes her essay by saying that for women, and for Georgiana in particular, 'domestic concerns remain central to their relationship to the land and this allows a closer relationship with that land [...] which is different from a typically masculine, imperialist, exploitative relationship'.⁶³

The powerful presence of Eliza in *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative* in essence created a blueprint from which Georgiana was able to recognise the importance of the domestic by accepting, and integrating into, the harsh and unfamiliar landscape. Georgiana read the domestic space in *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*, 'that patch of earth that she scraped and swept until it was smooth', as a metaphor for the national, the England left behind.⁶⁴ The story of Edward and Eliza Seaward was for Georgiana Molloy a bridge to a new beginning because, as William Lines writes in his biography of Georgiana, it gave her 'a glimpse of a heartbreaking perfection', a perfection that, I believe, Georgiana had not been able to achieve thus far, but which she strove to achieve from that point on.⁶⁵ The fictional heroine, Eliza Seaward, gave to Georgiana the key to her own liberation, a frame of reference in which she was able to flourish and succeed against, at times, overwhelming odds. Indeed, on hearing of her death, the eminent horticulturalist, George Hailes, wrote '[n]ot one in ten thousand who go out into distant lands has done what she did for the Gardens of her Native Country'.⁶⁶ Georgiana succeeded in creating not just a garden but a 'home'.

⁶⁰ Pickering, p. 52.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 53.

⁶² Delys Bird, 'Gender and Landscape: Australian Colonial Women Writers', *New Literature Review*, 18 (Winter 1989), 20-36 (p. 32).

⁶³ Bird, p. 34.

⁶⁴ Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2005), p. 149.

⁶⁵ Lines, p.189.

⁶⁶ Hasluck, p. 311.

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WORKING FOR THE EMPIRE: PROFESSIONS OF MASCULINITY IN H. G. WELLS'S *THE TIME MACHINE* AND R. L. STEVENSON'S *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE*

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Abstract

This article situates the novellas of Stevenson and Wells within late nineteenth century discourses of degeneration and imperialism, establishing connections between fears of imperial decline and anxieties concerning the concept of masculinity at the *fin de siècle*. Identifying these works as examples of the late-Victorian romance revival, the piece considers the extent to which they advocate the regeneration of the empire through the revitalization of middle-class masculinity and its incumbent values: hard work, productivity, and self-discipline.

The Sphinx that watches by the Nile
Has seen great empires pass
The mightiest lasted but a while;
Yet ours shall not decay-¹

‘St George’s Day’ (1896) was a tribute to the imperial might of Great Britain. The poet, John Davidson, was a man for whom the ideology of imperialism and national progress had come to replace a more conventional form of religious faith. Davidson was just the latest addition to a cacophony of nineteenth century literary voices, valiantly singing the praises and lauding the eminence of the great British Empire. As the world’s greatest imperial power Victorian Britain was, ostensibly, a nation of confidence and security.

Such confidence, however, had not been easily won. The publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859, for example, had not only consolidated and encouraged wide scale religious doubt, it had also challenged the fundamental concepts of human identity. Nevertheless, as the British Empire continued to extend its borders, and religious uncertainties were alleviated by the transference of fervour to imperial ideology and scientific materialism, national identity had become inextricably entwined with the health of the Empire.² However, for many late

¹ John Davidson, ‘St George’s Day’, in *The Poems of John Davidson*, ed. by Andrew Turnbull, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), ll. 215-18, I, p. 228.

² Victorian imperial ideology asserted the racial superiority and uniqueness of white Europeans, particularly the Anglo-Saxon race, and established a biological hierarchy, at the top of which was the white middle-class male. Because morality and intellectual capacity were, like physical traits, deemed to be biologically determined, it was not unusual for white women, ‘natives’, the working-class and children to be grouped together as inferior subjects. Scientific materialism is a denial of the possibility of metaphysical or supernatural explanations for phenomena, in favour of the belief that the world is governed entirely by natural or physical laws.

John Tosh has suggested that in this climate even personal relationships were perceived as

nineteenth century readers, 'St George's Day' would have seemed more like an elegy to rather than a celebration of the nation. The Empire continued to grow but cracks were beginning to show:

The decay of British global influence, the loss of overseas markets for British goods, the economic and political rise of Germany and the United States, the increasing unrest in the colonies and possessions, the growing domestic uneasiness over the morality of imperialism – all combined to erode Victorian confidence in the inevitability of British progress and hegemony.³

For earlier Victorians evolution had been synonymous with progress, but by the mid-1880s society lay in the shadow of its darker twin: devolution. This accorded with a time when theories of degeneration were abounding. Since the 1850s, the work of French psychiatrist, Benedict-Augustin Morel, had been gaining currency on the continent. Morel sought to develop criteria by which to identify the degenerate subject, and in so doing had located the causes and effects of individual degeneracy within a wider movement towards social decay. Following Morel, the degeneration debate, and the subject of atavism in particular, was taken up by Italian criminal anthropologist, Cesare Lombroso, and subsequently entered British culture through the writings the psychiatrist Henry Maudsley and respected zoologist Edwin Ray Lankester, culminating in 1895 with the English translation of Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.⁴

Although it had its origins in Europe, degeneration theory developed a singularly British form of expression once it had crossed the channel, as, according to Arata, the absence of a distinct school of thought ensured that in Britain 'degeneration "theory" [...] was less a coherent system than a form of common sense'.⁵ For the Victorians degeneration theory was, to a large extent, conveyed through the vernacular of the popular press, and, having thus installed itself as part of the national consciousness, proceeded to create what, for Nordau, was a veritable degenerationist 'hysteria'.⁶ The period 1885-89 produced ample evidence of the

having far reaching imperial significance, as the particular gender roles demarcated by the domestic ideology of the period were conceived as a 'central feature of the Victorians' supposed superiority over both their Georgian forbears and their contemporaries in other countries', John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 54. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text.

³ Stephen Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation', *Victorian Studies*, 33.4 (1990), 621-645 (p. 622).

⁴ Atavism is usually regarded as measure of evolutionary regression. However, a variety of traits or behaviours generally regarded as 'primitive' or 'savage' could be seen as evidence of possible atavism.

⁵ Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.3. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text.

⁶ Nordau writes: 'We stand now in the midst of a severe mental epidemic; a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria', Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1895),

degenerative scourge sweeping the nation. Journalistic exposés surrounding child prostitution and homosexual brothels, as well as the press coverage of the Whitechapel murders, publicly pathologised male sexuality, while ‘degenerationist scaremongers’ complained about the enervation of the national stock and its contamination by deviant ‘foreign bodies’.⁷ The principal casualty of this hysteria was the concept of masculinity, or, more to the point, middle-class masculinity.⁸ For what the examples above serve to demonstrate is that, increasingly, whether the issue was deviant sexuality or racial and national purity, the locus of degeneration was perceived as the bourgeois male body.

Several critics have identified the closing decades of the nineteenth century as a period which witnessed a crisis of masculinity.⁹ This ‘crisis,’ however, occurred at a time when male authored fictions, in particular those under the broad heading of Romance, were undergoing something of a revival.¹⁰ It is not possible within the scope of this essay to delve into the genesis of such a revival, though it has been variously suggested that the rise of the romance genre was a reaction against high Victorian Realism, a response to fears surrounding the ‘feminization’ of the literary market place, or distaste for an emerging modernist trend towards a literature characterised by introspective analysis.¹¹ What is important, however, is that Romance fiction became one of the primary vehicles for the expression of bourgeois

p.537.

⁷ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.215. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text. W.T Stead’s series on the horrors of child prostitution, ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’, appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* 6-10 July 1885. A ‘frank warning’ to readers was issued on 4 July 1885. For a discussion of this and the Whitechapel murders (particularly with relation to Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*) see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992). For a detailed discussion of the exposé of the male brothel known as the Cleveland Street scandal see Colin Simpson, Lewis Chester and David Leitch, *The Cleveland Street Affair* (Boston: Little Brown, 1976).

⁸ Though the term ‘masculinity’ did not come into general use until the twentieth century, as the term is now accepted as being applicable to nineteenth century concepts of manliness and manhood I will be using it alongside and to refer to these more traditional concepts.

⁹ See especially Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, vol 2 ‘Sexchanges’ (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ The adventure novel (such as those by H. Rider Haggard), the Gothic novel, and Science Fiction were all sub-sets of the Romance genre. Many late-Victorian romances are now discussed under headings such as: Imperial Romance – often, but not exclusively, concerned with the revitalisation of masculinity in the imperial landscape. Imperial Gothic – Patrick Brantlinger defines the sub-genre as fiction which ‘combines the seemingly scientific, progressive, often Darwinian ideology of imperialism with an antithetical interest in the occult’, Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.227. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text.

¹¹ For an analysis of these arguments see Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), especially chapter 5 ‘King Romance’, pp.76-104; Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.115-17, and Stephen Arata, ‘Men at Work’ in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (1996), pp.79-104.

masculinity at the *fin de siècle*. As two of the genre's most famous proponents, H.G. Wells and R.L. Stevenson belong to a collection of late nineteenth century novelists, including Stoker, Haggard, Doyle, and Kipling, identified by Arata as writers who consistently 'situate questions of "degeneration" [...] within the context of *fin de siècle* imperial politics' (*Fictions*, p. 80).¹² Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of late Victorian male Romance is its dual engagement with imperial discourse and issues surrounding the redefinition of middle-class masculinity, for, as Andrew Smith has suggested, 'in order to revitalise the nation it [first] becomes necessary to revitalise masculinity'.¹³

Hard Work and the Professional

Just as degeneration theory found a distinct expression within Britain, so too it inspired a specifically British response, a response Smith identifies as arising out of 'a culmination of a peculiarly British tradition of self-help' (p. 17). The infamous stiff upper lip ensured the British attitude to the crisis was one of hope: if degeneration was possible then regeneration was the goal. It is this attitude, Smith writes, which helps 'to situate [...] concerns about masculinity within a specific national context' (p. 17). Perhaps the foremost article of self-help was hard work, that bastion of middle-class virtue.¹⁴ Indeed, Martin Danahay has noted that 'in the Victorian period [...] "men" and "work" were used as virtual synonyms', and for the advocates of self-help, hard work was the one sure way for a man to achieve physical, moral, social, and economic wellbeing, and, most importantly, contribute to the future success of

¹² Wells, who is often cited as the 'father' of Science Fiction, referred to his novels as scientific romances. Stevenson's work, on the other hand, has been identified under the headings of both imperial romance and the Gothic. While the British settings of *Jekyll and Hyde* (1886) and *The Time Machine* (1895) may not immediately reveal their engagement with issues of imperialism in the way that, for example, *Treasure Island* (1883) or *The War of the Worlds* (1898) do the protagonists' exploration of the 'other' worlds of the novellas - figured, respectively, as a descent into a primitive underworld or a movement forward in time which is actually a cyclical return to a primitive past - enables a consideration of the anxieties surrounding imperial decay and how this relates to the deterioration of the national stock.

¹³ Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p.18. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text. Both Smith and Arata emphasise that male romance fiction of the *fin de siècle* was centrally concerned with notions of, and the relationship between, imperial and masculine renewal, with Arata declaring that 'imperialism as a conscious ideology was inseparable from anxiety over the decline of the British race figured in masculinist terms' (*Fictions*, p.94).

¹⁴ *Self-Help* was the title of the 1859 book by Samuel Smiles, the foremost proponent of the movement. Although, Thomas Carlyle is the author most commonly associated with the doctrine of self-discipline, Smiles is widely credited with spreading the message internationally. Indeed, according to Asa Briggs, Smiles' *Self-Help* was spread throughout the world 'as efficiently and fervently as any of the great nineteenth-century missionary enterprises, Asa Briggs, *Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.126. In this way it seems to have developed its very own brand of colonizing zeal.

the Empire.¹⁵ However, the process of self-help through labour promoted the need for balance in all things: hard-work, therefore, did not merely entail physical exertion, but intellectual and social development as well. Thus it is that we find the narratives of Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) are driven by a collection of successful, professional men.

Wells's novella opens with a 'luxurious after-dinner' tableau.¹⁶ A company of gentlemen sit, glasses full, around a drawing room fire discussing the latest scientific debates, prior to the Time Traveller's revelation of his new invention. Present at this meeting, and at the dinner following the Time Traveller's return, are no less than six representatives of varying professions: the Time Traveller himself – an inventor, the Psychologist, the Medical Man, the Provincial Mayor, the Editor, and 'a certain journalist' (p.13). The Time Traveller has undoubtedly orchestrated a gathering of such respectable gentlemen in order that they might bear witness to his uncanny experiment. Similarly, *Jekyll and Hyde* has its cast of assiduous gentlemen, comprised of two Doctors and a Lawyer, or, technically, two Doctors, two lawyers, and a scientist: for, such is the dedication of 'Henry Jekyll, M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.' that he is in fact 'qualified as both medical doctor and lawyer, and has done sufficiently pioneering work in science to be elected Fellow of the most influential scientific society in London'.¹⁷ In both Stevenson's and Wells's texts the nature and purpose of work becomes a central theme, and the apparent diligence of the British middle-class is thrown into relief by the seeming lassitude encountered in the 'Other' realms of the novels.

From the protestant work ethic, through the writings of Carlyle, to the proponents of self help, in the nineteenth century 'work' was used not only to define national and masculine character but also racial identity. According to Anne McClintock, of all the stigmas invented by colonialists to differentiate themselves from a country's native inhabitants, 'the most tirelessly invoked was idleness':

It is scarcely possible to read any travel account, settler memoir or ethnographic document without coming across a chorus of complaints about the sloth, idleness, indolence or torpor of the natives, who the colonists claimed, preferred scheming and fighting, lazing and wanton lasciviousness to industry.¹⁸

In this sense, the Time Traveller's account of an England of the future hardly differs from the tradition of the imperial narrative. Arriving in the future, one of the first

¹⁵ Martin Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.1. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text.

¹⁶ H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* [1895] (London: Penguin, 2005), p.3. Further references to the novella will appear after quotations in the text.

¹⁷ Roger Luckhurst, 'Introduction' in R.L.Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.11; p.185, n.11.

¹⁸ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.252.

questions it occurs to the Time Traveller to ask himself is: 'What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness?' (p. 22). Though such an anxiety proves to be valid, his initial fear is that mankind may have 'developed into something [...] unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful', yet he is soon to find that the reality is rather the opposite (p. 22). The Eloi, the friendly inhabitants of this future land, are characterised by a particular 'consumptive' beauty and, regardless of gender, a 'girlish rotundity of limb' (p. 29). The marked effeminacy of his hosts begins to make sense to the Time Traveller, however, when he realises that so far he has 'found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economic struggle' (p. 32). Although he makes a concerted effort to learn their language, the Eloi's lack of concentration ensures that these attempts produce nothing but frustration and leave him feeling 'like a schoolmaster amidst children [...] for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued' (p. 28). The effortlessness with which the Eloi accept a life which has declined into a state of inertia is both alarmingly effeminate and irritatingly childish, but decidedly not manly.

For the zoologist Edwin Ray Lankester effort, or work, was a necessary condition for the sort of progress of which Victorian Britain could proudly boast, which if absent would lead to certain decline: 'In Elaboration there is a new expression of form, corresponding to a new perfection of work in the animal machine. In Degeneration there is a suppression of form, corresponding to the cessation of work'.¹⁹ Is it the lack of gainful employment, then, which renders Edward Hyde so unspeakably degenerate in the eyes of all who encounter him? Each player in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is positioned with regard to his or her occupation: Utterson, the Lawyer; Dr Jekyll, of course; Sir Danvers Carew, the M.P.; Dr Lanyon; Mr. Guest, the Clerk; and Sawbones, the apothecary; even Mr. Enfield, though of no known profession, receives the appellation 'man about town' (p. 5).²⁰ On the other hand, marginal female characters such as Hyde's housekeeper and the maid who witnesses the Carew murder, not necessitating names, are characterised entirely by their occupations. Hyde, however, appears to do very little. His entry into the narrative is both violent and criminal: the reader is asked to envisage a scene in which he tramples a little girl to the ground. However, though the principal figure in this scene, Hyde's presence is nonetheless purposeless, for while we are told that the child was 'running as hard as she was able' to summon a doctor, we learn nothing more of Hyde's untimely excursion than that he 'was stumping along eastward at a good walk' (p.7). Furthermore, having been compelled by Enfield to compensate the family for the child's injuries, Hyde, quite shamelessly, presents a cheque made out in another man's [Jekyll's] name. Thus Enfield, and indeed Utterson, the recipient of his tale believe they have arrived at the crux of the case: blackmail. Hyde, therefore, could be involved in anything from extortion to prostitution but he is almost certainly

¹⁹ Edwin Ray Lankester, 'Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism (1880)', in *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History*, ed. by Sally Ledger & Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.3

²⁰ R.L. Stevenson, 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' [1886], *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.5. Further references to the novella will appear after quotations in the text.

not working.

Stevenson's narrative implies that Mr. Hyde is, in fact, engaged in all manner of unspeakable activities, but as the text never explicitly reveals the nature of these 'crimes,' numerous readings have been offered to account for the secret vices he enacts for Dr. Jekyll. Whether the secret is debauchery, homosexuality or addiction, what most critics agree on is the importance of the implication that Jekyll is leading a double life. Danahay, however, has suggested that 'since the text [...] take[s] place entirely in a world of male professionals, this aspect of the story is as important an element as that of repressed sexuality' (p.148). This reading posits *Jekyll and Hyde* as a story 'primarily [...] about the loss of class status', and thus potentially contradicts many other readings, as an analysis of class would appear to deny the centrality of the motif of psychic splitting in favour of a focus upon social inequality (Danahay, p.148). Nevertheless, Danahay's emphasis upon the professional status of Dr Jekyll raises interesting questions about the constitution of the professional male in an age which deemed domesticity, or the home, to be 'central to masculinity' and yet identified work or occupation as the 'main constituent of middle-class manhood' (Tosh, p. 2; p. 33).

This ambiguity is compounded by the concept of separate spheres, a division which, while by no means absolute, was firmly entrenched in nineteenth century ideology.²¹ Significantly, according to John Tosh, the separation of the public sphere of work from the private sphere of the home 'acquired psychological and emotional dimensions as well as a physical reality' as the middle class man began to develop 'two sets of consciences': one for work and one for home (p. 30). That such a division has occurred in the psyche of Dr Jekyll is indicated prior to his entrance into the narrative by the incongruous appearance of his house, the façade (symbolic of the personal life) of which appears to wear 'a great air of wealth and comfort', while the rear (the location of his laboratory) bears 'in every feature, the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence' (p. 16; p. 6).²² Subsequently, of course, Jekyll's desire to procure peace in the 'war among [his] members' propels him toward the experiment which will see the conflicting elements of his personality 'housed in separate identities' (pp. 52-3).

The condition represented by Stevenson is reflected through the Time Traveller's observation 'that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals' (p. 46). Whereas Jekyll's transformation is both instant and miraculous, in *The Time Machine* the situation is presented to us as the result of the gradual evolution of thousands of years. In the characterisation of the

²¹ For a discussion of the ideology of separate spheres and the contention that it was, in many ways, more of a metaphorical device than an actual division see, for example, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Routledge 2002).; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1999); Linda Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *Journal of American History*, 75 (1988), 9-39.

²² There is also an indication that, as the area designated for work bears 'the marks of prolonged...negligence,' personal or leisure concerns are taking precedence.

toiling Morlocks and the domesticated Eloi, therefore, Wells presents us with a terrifying vision of the kind of absolute physical separation which could potentially evolve out of the psychological disassociation of the middle class male professional in the nineteenth century. Ultimately, then, the transformations of Jekyll/Hyde and the men of the future, though presented as the outcome of alchemic experiment or monstrous evolution, have more in common with the day-to-day conflict experienced by the professional male than may first appear. Danahay has identified William Hale White's autobiographical novel, *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* (1885), as the work which 'registers most profoundly' the separation of work from the personal (p. 17). In the narrator's confession we can discern the germ of the predicament so startlingly represented by Stevenson and Wells: 'I cut off my office life [...] from my life at home so completely that I was two selves, and my true self was not stained by contact with my other self' (quoted in Tosh, p. 140). Nevertheless, according to Tosh, such splitting or 'layering' of identities was customary within professional circles, as men juggled the duties of their private and public lives, and, if managed correctly, this was certainly not perilous to a conception of self: 'the important thing [he writes] was to maintain a balance between them' (p. 140). In the tales of Stevenson and Wells, however, it is precisely this notion of balance which becomes distorted.

Consuming Passions

In The Three Piece Suit, David Kuchta notes that not only was the Victorian middle class 'ideal of masculinity [...] an explicitly political construct', designed to assert their superiority over the aristocratic and proletarian inhabitants of Britain, as well as their subjects in the colonies, it was also a 'hand-me-down' from an earlier (aristocratic) ideology.²³ However, as Tosh points out, during the nineteenth century this ideal was subject to a subtle but significant evolution as, increasingly, the concept of manliness became tied to that of character, with the result that, for the Victorians, masculinity acquired a distinctly moral element:

The traditional vocabulary of manliness [...] was redefined to include a moral as well as a physical dimension [...] Character was formed by two areas of experience, moralized work and moralized home. Work acquired almost hallowed authority. Manly energy was to be focussed not on anti-social self-assertion, but on occupation or "calling". The material reward for living by the work ethic was not only personal wealth, but true freedom from dependence or patronage (p. 112).

This idea of individual success and freedom as dependent upon moral vigour was one of the principal defining features of middle class masculinity, and thus finds

²³ David Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England 1550-1850* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 2002), pp.135 -6. Further references to this work will appear after quotations in the text.

expression in a variety of contemporary sources. For the eminent evolutionist T. H. Huxley, for example, social progress was synonymous with ethical process, ‘the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest [...] but of those who are ethically the best’.²⁴ Ensuring that one adhered to this ideal of moral masculinity, however, entailed not only hard work in the public sphere but also the private exercise of self-discipline, self-denial, and self-reliance.

In her introduction to *The Time Machine* Marina Warner identifies William Morris’s *News From Nowhere* (1890) as having a direct influence on Wells’s story.²⁵ One of the most significant differences between Morris’s utopian future and nineteenth century Britain is that the economic imperative to work has been completely replaced by a tradition of labour motivated by moral duty and creative joy, a circumstance which has, according to Danahay, ensured the tale’s status as ‘the most extreme [literary] example of the internalization of the work ethic’ (p. 9). Although Wells’s more pessimistic vision of the future identifies the cause of human and imperial degeneration in the decline of creative and physical labour, it nevertheless values the individual’s willingness to trade personal comfort and security for the advancement of mankind. At the beginning of his tale, the Time Traveller confesses to his audience that, during the construction of the machine, he had been repeatedly struck by the very real danger that time travel was likely to incur. Eventually, however, he reasons that mortal danger is simply ‘an unavoidable risk – one of the risks a man has got to take’ in the spirit of scientific discovery (p. 20). Similarly, it would seem that Dr Jekyll’s standing in society is predicated to a large extent upon his professional commitment to ‘the furtherance of knowledge [and] the relief of sorrow and suffering’, which suggests that his work is not only intellectually progressive and practically useful, but is also motivated by a sense of duty (p. 52). As these marks of altruism work to reinforce the ideological separation between the middle-class males and their degenerate counterparts, asserting the moral superiority of the industrious man, any cessation of work would, therefore, be indicative of a degradation of the moral sense and a consequent narrowing of the gap between the savage and the civilized.²⁶

Towards the end of Stevenson’s novella, Dr Jekyll, in his ‘statement of the case’, explains that he initially conceived of his transformative serum as a means to separate the good and evil elements of his moral constitution, thereby allowing Hyde to indulge his desires without restraint, while simultaneously enabling Jekyll to continue a life of propriety uncontaminated by the lower elements of his nature. However, for Mr Utterson, unaware of this very peculiar relationship at the novel’s opening, there is already a strong indication that his friend has in fact fallen prey to

²⁴ T.H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* [1893] (New Jersey & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p.81.

²⁵ Marina Warner, ‘Introduction’ in H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* [1895] (London: Penguin, 2005), p.xviii.

²⁶ Both Hyde and the Eloi are notable for their blatant selfishness. While Hyde’s ‘every act’ is said to be ‘centred on self’ (p.57), the Time Traveller remarks on the ‘strange deficiency’ in the moral make-up of the Eloi after he is forced to rescue Weena from drowning because none of her compatriots are prepared to go to her aid (p.42).

the malign influence of the mysterious Mr Hyde. For Jekyll has for some time past relinquished any claims to 'practising' medicine, his sole occupation, his obsession, in fact, being the perfection of his elixir; and the lapse has occasioned a breach in the friendship with his colleague, Dr. Lanyon, for whom Jekyll's 'unscientific balderdash' is unworthy of the name of medicine (p. 12). In his fixation with the transformative serum, Jekyll has utterly abandoned his profession, his calling. His laboratory 'once crowded with eager students and now lying gaunt and silent, the tables laden with chemical apparatus, the floor strewn with crates and packing straw', is a poignant symbol of his fall into torpor (p. 24). In the eyes of the conscientious lawyer, Jekyll's dereliction of his professional duties is confirmation that his will is increasingly subject to the indolent Mr Hyde.

If, as Danahay suggests, '[t]o be a successful man is to be a productive man', then Jekyll's fall is twofold, both social and moral (p. 39). For not only does the cessation of his professional activities indicate his withdrawal from the bourgeoisie, that 'virtuous class of producers', his dependence upon the elixir aligns his behaviour with that which was popularly thought to be the preserve of an 'idle, parasitical class of consumers' (Kuchta, p. 136). Jekyll's compulsive consumption of the elixir, which is referred to alternatively as a 'medicine' and a 'drug', is presented as the antithesis of Mr Utterson's tendency to drink gin when alone 'to mortify a taste for vintages' (p.37).²⁷ For while Utterson's asceticism positions him (rather ironically in this case) as the epitome of 'middle-class men's sober relation to the means of consumption' (Kuchta, p. 142), Jekyll's reliance upon his alchemic concoction is viewed as utterly 'unmanning' (p. 30). Ultimately, then, Jekyll's association with a type of conspicuous consumerism not only occasions a change in his social and ethical status but also leads to a disturbing shift in his gender identity, which suggests that his distinctly 'flighty' nature is more in accord with the effeminate Eloi of the future than his professional colleagues (p. 47).

In *The Time Machine* Wells's characterisation of his protagonist has much in common with Stevenson's representation of the diligent Mr Utterson. Repeatedly the sterile frivolity of the Eloi and mindless toil of the Morlocks is thrown into relief by the intellectual and imaginative 'fecundity' of the Time Traveller, whose quest to achieve a 'wider view' of the alien environment is comparable to Utterson's determination to 'seek' out Mr Hyde (p. 3; p. 28).²⁸ Having arrived at the conclusion that the marked delicacy of his hosts' appearance is due to the complete absence of

²⁷ The references to 'medicine' and 'drug' contribute to the question of whether Jekyll's compulsion to consume the elixir is in fact figured as an illness or a moral failing, the result of physical or psychological incoherence. Utterson's reference to his friend's 'voluntary bondage' further clouds the issue (p.31).

²⁸ With reference to the labour of the Morlocks it is important to consider that in the nineteenth century ideological conceptions of the value of work differentiated between occupation and toil or drudgery, i.e. work which was conceived as a calling and that which was experienced as a chore. The morality of the Morlocks' employment is highly dubious, for while they are distinguished from the Eloi by their physical labour in the industrial underworld of the future, their notable physical resemblance to a species of 'sloth', together with their anthropophagous diet, identifies their apparent industry as being without any pecuniary or social reward, as one undertaken merely to ensure the maintenance of their food supply.

the necessity for labour, either industrial or agricultural, he continues to assert his comparative masculinity by declaring that they are ‘so frail’ he could quite easily imagine himself ‘flinging [a] dozen of them about like ninepins’ (p. 24). Fortunately, however, the Time Traveller resists the urge towards vigorous play, for the Eloi have evolved in an environment with such a surfeit of ‘ease and security’ that the need for any kind of physical resistance is a veritable obsolescence (p. 29). As a result, these people of the future have developed such a graceful appearance that the Time Traveller is inspired to portray it as a ‘Dresden-china type of prettiness’, a description which incorporates a sense of both their extreme physical fragility and almost total femininity (p. 24). For Michael Sayeau the constitutional daintiness of the Eloi only serves to exemplify the way in which ‘limitless consumption...cancels out the necessity for aggression of any sort and [thus] the necessity of “masculinity” itself’.²⁹ Indeed, the comparison of the Eloi with the kind of commodity value represented by a product like Dresden china seems to suggest that amongst the Eloi the practice of consumerism has been internalised to such an extent that it has become an inherent part of their physical and social make-up. It is not until the discovery of the Morlocks, however, that the Eloi’s dual status as, simultaneously, consumers and consumer items becomes horrifically apparent.

According to Kelly Hurley ‘[c]annibalism is the great “secret” of’ *The Time Machine*.³⁰ Though Stevenson’s Hyde is not actually a cannibal, there is certainly an element of vampirism in what Jekyll describes as his alter ego’s practice of ‘drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another’ (p. 57). The ‘strange preference[s]’ which lead Jekyll to habitually imbibe his elixir and the Eloi to limit themselves to a strictly ‘frugivorous’ diet are presented by Stevenson and Wells as the ‘preferences’ of people who opt for the path of least resistance and are then compelled to remain upon it for good or ill (Stevenson, p. 13). The consequence of Eloi’s inattention to the cultivation of their lands is that agricultural knowledge is lost and future generations must therefore limit their diet to what is readily available.³¹ For Jekyll, meanwhile, though the transformative serum initially promises to replace the moral struggle of the professional man, with the liberty which awaits him in the body of Edward Hyde, he is soon compelled to administer it in order to escape ‘the horror of [that] other self’ (p. 65). The loss of masculinity which such choices incur has been noted. However, that both the Morlocks and Hyde are not only denied a sense of masculinity, but are instead referred to in terms which deny their essential humanity, suggests that conscious desire rather than compulsion

²⁹ Michael Sayeau, ‘H. G. Wells and the “Odd Consequence” of Progress’, *Contemporary Justice Review*, 8.4 (2005), 431-445 (p.436).

³⁰ Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.86.

³¹ For Thomas Carlyle, the Eloi’s dependence on fruit would present itself as a mark of their ‘primitive’ laziness. In ‘Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question’ (1830) he seems to suggest the necessity of imperial activities in the West Indies by reasoning that, otherwise, the easy availability of certain food sources would encourage the naturally lazy inhabitants to neglect the cultivation of the land: ‘what say you to an idle Black gentleman [...] pumpkin at his discretion, and the fruitfulest region on earth going back to jungle around him?’ (Quoted in Danahay, p.28).

motivates their consumer behaviour.³²

There is something distinctly savage in the kind of gratuitous violence which both the Morlocks and Hyde are accused of enacting. In particular, the Morlocks' merciless hunting and consumption of the Eloi makes them appear, in the eyes of the Time Traveller, more like 'human rats' than fellow men (p.74). Like Hyde, who 'with ape-like fury' bludgeons his victim, Sir Danvers Carew, until his 'bones were audibly shattered' (pp. 20-21), they can be viewed as examples of Lombroso's criminal atavist, as figures who feel 'the irresponsible craving of evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood' (quoted in Pick, p. 122). Such horrifying behaviour is grotesquely parasitic in nature, and associates Hyde and the Morlocks with other late nineteenth century literary embodiments of the criminal atavist such as H. Rider Haggard's anthropophagous Amahagger (*She*, 1887) and Bram Stoker's vampires (*Dracula*, 1897). However, unlike the generic parasite which, according to Lankester, is subject to a process of retrogressive metamorphosis, Hyde and the Morlocks gain in both strength and vitality. Consequently, the increasing vigour of Hyde is directly proportionate to a corresponding decline, not merely in the professional output of Dr Jekyll but also in his physical health. While the early narrative describes him as 'a large, well-made, smooth-faced man', after the Carew murder Utterson finds his old friend 'looking deadly sick', and soon enough Jekyll himself begins to feel like 'a creature eaten up and emptied by fever' (p. 20; p. 24; pp. 64-5).

Such a reversal represents for Rebecca Stott a terrifying 'version of the evolutionary maxim: the survival of the fittest – the victim of the struggle will be consumed by the evolutionary superior victor to increase its size and strength'.³³ A similar fate awaits the Eloi. While the upper world inhabitants have been subject to a 'general dwindling in size, strength and intelligence' and 'their numbers had rather diminished than kept stationary' (p. 33; p.49), the Morlocks are at once 'more abundant' and more cunning, as well as being 'dexterous [social?] climbers', and the Time Traveller makes it quite clear that as 'mere fatted cattle' the Eloi's colonisation of the upper world is tolerated 'on sufferance' (p. 51; p.58; p.62). Finally, then it is the threat of this monstrously inhuman appetite, and the corresponding absence of any hint of self-denial, through which the true horror of the novellas is conveyed.

As Jekyll finds it increasingly difficult to control the oscillation between his two identities, he acknowledges a fear that 'the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown [...] and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine' (p. 59). Although Jekyll's predicament is persistently represented in language – 'slavery', 'bondage', which implies his powerlessness, the text nevertheless continues to indicate that he could still tip the balance in his own favour if he wished.³⁴ After all, 'energy of will' was, according to Smiles, 'the very central power of character in

³² The Time Traveller notes that there is something distinctly 'inhuman and malign' about the Morlocks (p.56), whereas For Dr Lanyon there is 'something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of' Hyde (p.48).

³³ Rebecca Stott, *The Fabrication of the Late Victorian Femme Fatale: The Kiss of Death* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.53.

³⁴ For example, he assures Utterson that 'the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr Hyde' (p.19).

man' (quoted in Smith, p. 18). As Smith highlights, Smiles's regime was really 'all a matter of balance', a fact which is best illustrated by the emphasis he placed on the 'relationship between work and leisure' (p. 18). The significance for the argument here lies in the implication that if Jekyll had continued to perform his customary tasks, to attend to his medical duties and thus maintain his professional identity following the creation of Hyde, he would have been in a much better position to curtail his vicarious pleasures. For as Joanna De Groot has written, to the nineteenth century mind '[h]ard work, (mental or physical), and self-discipline, involved a control of the self which in turn allowed men to control others (their women and children, their subjects, and their employees)', and, perhaps, even their alter egos.³⁵ The consequences of Jekyll's failure to maintain his medical practice and learning can be most clearly seen in his inability to replicate the transformative serum. His failure eventually leads him to conclude that there must have been an 'unknown impurity' in one of the ingredients from the original batch (p. 66). However, it is quite possible that, through inattention, his scientific knowledge has degenerated in a similar fashion to his written communications, which we learn from Utterson are often 'pathetically worded', making it nearly impossible for him to rekindle the spark of genius which produced the original draught (p. 29).

The loss of Jekyll's scientific verve is comparable with the loss of fire among the future races of Britain. The endurance of the myth of Prometheus has ensured that fire is a symbol for independence, creativity and risk. In Wells's novella the Eloi's ignorance of the properties of fire corresponds with the simplicity of their language, the absence of productivity and ingenuity, and a general lack of understanding of their own land and their position in it. Most significant, however, is that the loss of this knowledge has a direct bearing on their continued survival as throughout *The Time Machine*, fire is the only element that deters the onslaught of the Morlocks.

Performing Tasks

In the nineteenth century the propagation and enactment of industrious middle-class masculinity was seen as essential to the health of the Empire. Indeed, as Tosh declares, '[i]mperial reputation was grounded in a small repertoire of masculine qualities: stoicism as in the death of General Gordon, steely self-control exemplified by Kitchener, self-reliance in the case of Baden-Powell' (p. 174). Nevertheless, as Kuchta stresses, it is important to understand that '[t]here was nothing "genuine" about middle-class masculinity' (p. 137). Rather, cultivating the standards of nineteenth century middle-class masculinity was seen by many as a process of suppressing one's baser instincts or, as Smith writes, 'quell[ing] the insistent...demands of the body's appetites' (p. 20). While the exercise of moral judgement, in terms of the aforementioned manly triptych - self-discipline, self-denial,

³⁵ Joanna De Groot, "'Sex' and 'race': The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth-Century' in *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies in Gender in the nineteenth century*, ed. by Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (London: Routledge, 1989), p.108.

and self-reliance – played a crucial part in the construction of manly character, men such as Smiles recognised that ‘the theatrical dimensions of gentlemanly behaviour’ were equally as important to the maintenance of a congruent masculine identity (Smith, p. 20). What these examples illustrate is that to a certain extent, Victorian middle-class masculinity was predicated on a fairly small set of performance requirements, consciously maintained. Patrick Brantlinger provides an illuminating example of how such a performance was believed to preserve a man’s sense of his standing in the world:

[T]he narrator of Erskine Childer’s Spy novel *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) starts his tale in this way: “I have read of men who, when forced by their calling to live for long periods in utter solitude – save for a few black faces – have made it a rule to dress regularly for dinner in order to [...] prevent a lapse into barbarism” (*Rule*, p. 227).

Good manners, it seems, can be a powerful tool for maintaining one’s dignity. However, in the future, dining in Britain has descended into something of a free-for-all. The Eloi, having dispensed with the formalities commonplace in the nineteenth century, tuck into their food ‘with their hands, flinging peel and stalks and so forth’ about them in the process (p. 27). The battle for control between Jekyll and Hyde follows a similar course which begins with a decline in Jekyll’s social obligations and nears its close with his refusal to venture outdoors to converse with Mr Utterson and his declaration that he is unable to invite him in because ‘the place is really not fit’ (p. 32). These descents into sloth or hysteria are contrasted with representations of healthy middle class masculinity, such as the gentlemanly dinner with which *The Time Machine* opens, or the convivial and civilized exchanges between Utterson and characters such as Lanyon, Guest and Enfield, in order to reinforce the notion that such a performance is ‘a component part in developing a strategy which guarantees the health of the nation’ (Smith, p. 18).

While the emphasis upon the performance of masculinity may superficially seem to be re-enacting the very repressions of which the Eloi and Jekyll are guilty, the texts go to some lengths to differentiate between the irresponsibility of the Eloi and Jekyll, and the challenges which are overcome by the Time Traveller and Utterson. Ruth Robbins has said that Jekyll’s ‘is a story of “going native” in the urban slums’, and this certainly seems to be the case.³⁶ From the moment Jekyll rejects the gentlemanly performance of self, his gradual descent into atavism in the body of the simian Hyde reads like a narrative of addiction: ‘my new power tempted me until I fell in slavery. I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor, and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde’ (p. 56). That Jekyll’s intoxication by the lower elements of his character is thrown into relief by the ‘austere’ habits of the more cautious, gin drinking Mr Utterson suggests that, in the lawyer, Stevenson does not present us with a character who represses his desires but one who, recognising the dangers of over-indulgence, works to temper them.

³⁶ Ruth Robbins, *Literary Feminisms* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 225.

Similarly, the Time Traveller is not above temporary displays of effeminate emotion, or even hysterics, as having felt utter despair upon discovering the loss of his time machine, the Time Traveller admits to ‘bawling like an angry child’ (p. 36). However, in the cold light of day he resumes a more reasonable demeanour:

I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself [...] I must be calm and patient, find its hiding-place, and recover it by force or cunning. And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me wondering where I could bathe (p.37).

Issues of personal appearance go hand in hand with those of personal responsibility in these tales, as the attention to detail and the habit of self reliance work to assert both the cultural and moral superiority of the protagonists over the more primitive elements of the texts.

The Work of the Writer

Although the proponents of self-help stressed the importance of middle-class masculinity being dependent upon a sense of balance, between the physical and the intellectual, work and leisure, contemporary culture continued to place ‘a premium on physical prowess and readiness for combat’ (Tosh, p. 111). This in turn placed the intellectual worker in a rather uneasy position, for as Danahay explains, ‘the “manliness of intellectual labour” was undercut by Victorian domestic ideology which implicitly feminized men’s work’ carried out in the home (p. 3). Even literary heavyweights like Thomas Carlyle were plagued by questions surrounding the manliness of the literary life. As a young man he coined the term ‘strenuous idleness’ to describe the peculiar mixture of grinding intellectual labour with almost complete physical inactivity which constituted his occupation.³⁷ Writers were not the only members of the intellectual community to express ambivalence about the manly nature of their work. Ford Madox Brown’s diaries are replete with ‘troubling questions’ surrounding the value of the artist’s work and peppered with expressions of ‘loathing’ for his calling (Danahay, p. 87). However, just as Brown’s paintings idealized physical labour ‘as compensation for the experience of working as an artist’, so Stevenson and Wells, in common with other Romance writers of the period, created fictional scenarios in which both writer and reader could engage in a vicarious experience of idealised masculinity (Danahay, p. 87).³⁸ For this reason their work can be considered in terms of its function as ‘an alternative means of reproducing English masculinity’ in the late nineteenth century.³⁹

³⁷ Norma Clarke, ‘Strenuous Idleness: Thomas Carlyle and the man of letters as hero’, in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. by Michael Roper and Joseph Bristow (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 26.

³⁸ Brown’s famous painting *Work* (1852-63) is generally considered a testament to the Victorian concept of heroic labour.

³⁹ Angelia Poon, *Enacting Englishness in the Victorian Period: Colonialism and the Politics of*

It has been widely noted that fictions belonging to the Romance genre often plunge their male protagonists into a colonial landscape in which the enactment of the kind of manly heroics no longer necessary in nineteenth century Britain becomes a necessity, thus working to revitalise and redefine a beleaguered masculinity.⁴⁰ The more pedestrian settings of *The Time Machine* and *Jekyll and Hyde*, however, would seem to suggest that they are less concerned with these kinds of theatrics. To a certain extent this is the case. By training their focus upon the professional or intellectual community within Britain these novellas attempt to negotiate an appropriate balance between manly force and civilized restraint. For though there is an implicit admiration and respect for man's innate primitive tendencies, this is tempered with the acknowledgement that the kind of 'physical prowess and readiness for combat' which have been historically associated with masculinity may 'be hindrances – to a civilized man,' and may even be 'out of place' in nineteenth century society (Wells, p. 33). As such the blood-thirsty cannibalism of the Morlocks and the gratuitous violence of Hyde are balanced out by the more appropriate displays of masculine power exhibited by the Time Traveller and Mr Utterson.⁴¹ The enduring popularity of the works indicates that tales such as these responded (and may respond still) to an abiding need in the modern man for just such an appropriately vicarious experience.

The *fin de siècle* witnessed something of a revolution in the literary market place as the traditional three volume novel of the high Victorian period was seemingly superseded by the vastly less expensive and prolifically produced one volume offerings of the late-Victorian romancers. At the same time the market was flooded with new journals, new technology (in the form of the typewriter) and a new sense of competition, all of which contributed to 'the wholesale redefinition of writing as commodified labour in the period' (Danahay, p. 144). The increasing industrialisation of writing, however, was not without its attendant anxieties. As masculinity and pecuniary success were so closely related, writers now had to negotiate the shifting identification of literature as both art and business. An element of this ambivalence can be seen in R. L. Stevenson's response to the success of *Jekyll and Hyde*, for though the text's reception consolidated his reputation as a writer, he was motivated to consider whether its popular appeal was in fact rather damning evidence of the level of its intellectual depth or artistic merit.⁴² Nevertheless, Stevenson was a writer for whom financial success was essential. Writing in *Empire Boys*, Joseph Bristow remarks on the speed at which *Treasure Island* was produced (in fifteen days) as Stevenson, over thirty and still financially dependent on his father,

Performance (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.138.

⁴⁰ The novels of H. Rider Haggard are good examples of this type of fiction.

⁴¹ In *Jekyll and Hyde* for example Utterson's decision to break into Jekyll's laboratory to perform his feat of 'vengeance' upon Hyde for the suspected murder of Jekyll, is accompanied by a declaration that should he be mistaken in his suspicions then his 'shoulders are broad enough to bear the blame' (p.39). Utterson's willingness to take responsibility for his actions reaffirms the role of morality in the constitution of the masculine character.

⁴² Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), p.167. Interestingly, Brantlinger notes that *Jekyll and Hyde* was, like Haggard's *She*, written with 'white-hot haste'.

was under pressure to make his name as an author. This practice mirrors that of Haggard who, as one of the most famous romancers of the period, seems to have been intent on injecting some of his characters' virility into his own writing process. *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) is believed to have been produced in just six weeks, and Haggard claimed to have written *She* in a similar timeframe, 'at white heat, almost without rest'.⁴³ What these anecdotes suggest is that while the nineteenth century novel continued to oscillate between contradictory definitions as first art, then commodity, it was in no way immune to the language of capitalism in which the masculine 'ideal of "productivity" was seen in opposition to the feminine and "useless" consumption' (Danahay, p. 43).

According to Arata, fictions of the late-Victorian male romance genre reveal 'an array of anxieties', anxieties surrounding the definition of masculinity, the threat of degeneration and impending imperial decline; while discernible alongside such anxieties is a corresponding fear of the potential 'decline of the great tradition of English letters' (*Fictions*, p.89). Significantly, in a move which apes the development of the literary market place, both *The Time Machine* and *Jekyll and Hyde* represent this fear as the seeming triumph of consumerism over productivity, of the fanciful over the real, of femininity over masculinity, of the future over the past. Perhaps the most powerful image Wells offers of the consequences of this loss of familiar values is the Palace of Green Porcelain which, like a museum of his own time, houses the remnants of history. Inside, the sight which strikes him most forcibly is that of the 'decaying vestiges of books [...] long since dropped to pieces [...] every semblance of print [having] left them' (p. 67). Not being literary minded, the Time Traveller is able to refrain from moralizing 'on the futility of ambition' but is nevertheless moved to comment on 'the enormous waste of labour to which this sombre wilderness of rotting paper testified' (pp. 67-8). Interestingly, the Time Traveller's comments are in some way reminiscent of contemporary debates concerning the decline of realism, and the subsequent rise of the Romance, which many believed signalled a decline of the British novel. In *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* Arata provides a useful summary of some of the main arguments: indicating that, while proponents of romance, men such as Andrew Lang, believed the genre's value to lie in its expression of the innate passions of mankind, many others were of the opinion that it was an adulterated or diluted form of literature from which English literature would never recover.⁴⁴

However, while Arata characterises the *fin de siècle* as a period burdened by a sense of cultural loss, the tales of Stevenson and Wells conjure the prospect of hope through the revitalisation of literature, masculinity, and, ultimately, the empire. For, while they stand as fantastic tales about supernatural feats and 'flighty' characters, each tale carries a serious meaning: hard work or struggle is an indispensable aspect of life which brings its own rewards. Both writers issue an attack on complacency,

⁴³ H. Rider Haggard, *The Days of My Life*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1926), I, p. 245.

⁴⁴ Andrew Lang, literary critic and anthropologist, was an outspoken proponent of romance fiction and great supporter of both Stevenson and Haggard. However, he acknowledged, as did Stevenson, that much modern literature was inferior to the classic Victorian novel.

figured as the inattention to professional duties and personal standards, that spells disaster for the individual, for masculinity and thus for the empire. Each text displays its comfort in its identification as fantasy, for if Jekyll's 'unscientific balderdash' can bring forth Hyde, what might their fictions reveal? Wells provides the answer when the Time Traveller discovers a box of matches, for the discovery restores to the world 'the [lost] art of fire-making' (p. 72). The match, then, represents the revitalising, creative spark embedded within the text. However, it comes with a final warning, as the conflagration it leads to, like the violent rampage of Hyde, is a testament to the kind of chaos that can ensue in the absence of responsible production when 'the savage instincts of adventure finally spin out of control'.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys*, p. 122.

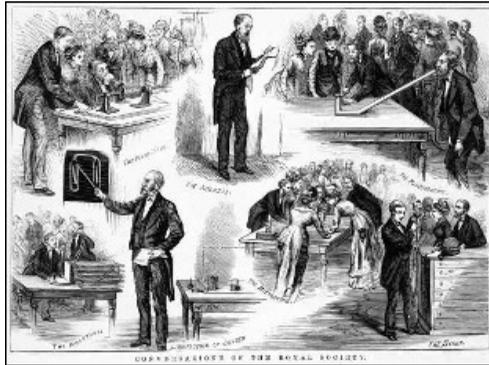
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