

Chapter 1

‘The sun and moon were made to give them light’: Empire in the Victorian Novel

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The following famous passage appears early in the first chapter of Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1846–8):

The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his [Dombey’s] eyes, and had sole reference to them. A. D. had no concern with anno Domini, but stood for anno Dombei – and Son. (p. 2)

A concise rendering of Paul Dombey Sr.’s sense of himself and his importance, this passage appears to epitomize the imperial attitude. Dombey runs a trading firm based in London. As a consequence, that great metropolis constitutes the center around which all else revolves. Other parts of the globe are significant only insofar as they relate to Dombey and his pursuits. Not even mentioned by name, they are represented by and assimilated into a natural world (earth, rivers, seas, rainbows) made expressly for Dombey’s use. The diction, cadences, and sentiment of the passage are Biblical, reminiscent in particular of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: ‘And God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and

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over every living thing that moveth upon the earth' (Genesis 1: 28). A Victorian Adam, Dombey assumes centrality and dominion as a birthright. Not merely the earth and the stars but the past, present, and future take their meaning from him: the final sentence effects a momentous renomination of the current era as 'anno Dombey – and Son'.

One account of the relation between empire and the Victorian novel might put this passage in evidence to argue that Dickens and other novelists functioned as apologists for empire. According to this account, their fictions reflected imperialist assumptions and aspirations, including most crucially an anglocentric world view and a sense of obvious, perhaps divinely sanctioned British superiority. With that superiority came, in turn, the implication of a right or obligation to seize other lands, subdue other peoples, replace outmoded customs and pernicious superstitions with British laws, mores, and religion – in short, to rule the globe. Moreover, because of the far-reaching influence of the Victorian novel as an instrument of instruction as well as entertainment, texts such as *Dombey and Son* might be understood not simply to have reflected but in fact to have disseminated and naturalized the correctness, desirability, and inevitability of British imperial rule. The earth was made for the British to govern, Dickens and other novelists seem to say, and the sun and moon were made to give them light; history signifies nothing but a prelude to their rule, futurity nothing but its triumphant, infinite extension.

A host of difficulties, however, beset this familiar version of the interimplication of narrative fiction and imperial expansion in the nineteenth century – difficulties that can be shadowed forth by way of another look at the passage above. To begin with, *Dombey and Son* is neither a political nor a military entity but a business: the novel's original title reads *Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son: Wholesale, Retail and for Exportation*. Trade, although an essential component of the British Empire from its inception, cannot be conflated with imperialism as such without eliding distinctions of historical, ideological, and practical significance. If the vision of the world conveyed in the passage can fairly be labeled anything other than megalomaniacal, that vision is more nearly mercantilist than imperialist: 'The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in' – not necessarily to govern, occupy, or convert. Dombey's subordination of all things and relationships to the interests of business implicates empire, but a series of negotiations is required before it will be possible to suggest in what ways and with what consequences.

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More important still, neither the narrator nor the author of *Dombey and Son* can easily be understood to support Dombey's cynosural sense of himself and his firm. As evidenced by the pervasively ironic tone, the narratorial stance is one of critique. 'Stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they [Dombey and Son] were the centre': the claim need not be refuted directly; it refutes itself by virtue of its absurd hyperbole. The deployment of Biblical language reinforces rather than undermines such irony, for it invites readers to condemn the outrage of Dombey's arrogation of the Adamic compact. The patriarchal pretensions of Dombey's merchant house, neatly encapsulated in the name 'Dombey and Son' itself, are rendered at once monstrous and comic by way of contrast to those other founding fathers and sons, the patriarchs of the Book of Genesis. By the end of the passage, what was at first merely outrageous becomes blasphemous. The final substitution, which reads A. D. as an abbreviation not for anno Domini but rather for 'anno Dombey – and Son', places Dombey in the position not of a latter-day Adam but of the Christian God. The passage may offer up a judgment on empire, but any account of that judgment must attend closely to the ways in which it seems more nearly to condemn than to endorse the scope of imperial ambitions.

A moment of apparent clarity on closer inspection yields complexities and ambiguities: such a sequence exemplifies the difficulty of discussing empire in the Victorian novel, and most especially the difficulty – the impossibility, I want to argue – of settling on a single answer to the question of what the former had to do or might still have to do with the latter. Perhaps the only accurate general pronouncement that may be made in this context is that neither the novel, nor empire, nor their interimplication can be reduced to merely one thing. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Friedrich Nietzsche avers: 'only that which has no history is definable' (p. 80). Since both the novel and the British Empire came into being long before Queen Victoria's 1837 accession to the throne, and since both underwent extensive alteration during the 64 years of her reign, neither is likely to be brought to book by way of static and straightforward definition.

Taking Nietzsche's dictum seriously, we might begin by attending to the history of the first of our two undefinables, the novel. The word in one sense means 'new' or 'the new thing' and so is peculiarly appropriate as a name for the most recent of major literary genres. Whereas the epic, for instance, can be traced back several thousand years, the European novelistic tradition is a matter of merely a few centuries.

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Two of the most popular candidates for the probably dubious title of 'first novel in English' were published around the turn of the seventeenth century: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* appeared in 1688, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. In his influential account of *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), Ian Watt contends that the birth of the novel at this time coincided with the birth of a new economic system, capitalism, as well as a new understanding of the place of individuals in society – or, more precisely, a new understanding of humans as 'individuals'. On this view, the typical protagonists of early novels are best thought as autonomous agents driven chiefly by pecuniary desires, and their appearance in a new literary form tailored to representing their activities marks the advent of modern economic and social organization. As Watt writes of Robinson Crusoe himself: 'his travels, like his freedom from social ties, are merely somewhat extreme cases of tendencies that are normal in modern society as a whole, since, by making the pursuit of gain a primary motive, economic individualism has much increased the mobility of the individual' (p. 67).

Nancy Armstrong, Lennard J. Davis, Michael McKeon, and many others have revisited and revised Watt's story of the origins of the English novel. That story remains useful, however, in part for what it acknowledges but does not address directly: the novel's ties to imperialism. For Crusoe's travels, which Watt reads as a metaphor for increased social mobility under capitalism, in their specificity trace a line that connects Britain to Africa and South America by way of the slave trade and British colonization of the New World. Behn's novel features the same set of geographical, political, and economic connections: *Oroonoko* tells of the enslavement of its eponymous central character in West Africa and his transportation to a plantation in the British (later Dutch) South American colony of Suriname. Dating the beginnings of the British novelistic tradition back to *Robinson Crusoe* and *Oroonoko* allows us to see that Britain's mercantile and colonial relations with non-European parts of the globe were just as indispensable to the foundations of the genre as capitalism and individualism.

Further, because *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe* interrogate as well as naturalize the role of Britons in making use of other people and places as avenues to wealth and individuation, we can note in addition that the English-language novel from the outset fits Mikhail Bakhtin's account of the novel as such. In 'Discourse in the Novel' (1934–5; English translation 1981), Bakhtin asserts that '[d]iversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organize themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing

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feature of the novel as a genre' (*Dialogic Imagination*: p. 300). According to Bakhtin, the novel provides a locus for the social conflict inherent in language. The story the novel tells can never be one story – can never be 'monologic', as Bakhtin styles it – since the very stuff of novelistic discourse consists of a welter of differing ideologies and points of view. If, for example, *Robinson Crusoe* in some sense endorses its title character's usurpation of the island on which he finds himself shipwrecked, it also and at the same time casts doubt on the legitimacy of that action. Thus the passage from *Dombey and Son* with which I began becomes legible as an exemplary novelistic moment insofar as the same words that convey a vision of London at the center of the world satirize it too.

This view of the novel and the novel's representation of imperialism in particular comports well with the emerging critical consensus about empire. Catherine Hall best expresses that consensus when she writes in *Civilizing Subjects* (2002): 'It is not possible to make sense of empire either theoretically or empirically through a binary lens' (p. 16). In one way, of course, imperialism always involves binarism or dualism insofar as it names a relationship of unequal power between one country and another (or others) whose land and resources have been seized and whose sovereignty has been abrogated. The same may be said of colonialism, a form of imperialism in which members of the colonizing country inhabit in large numbers the territory seized, in the process typically displacing or exterminating indigenous peoples. (It may be useful to note that, although technically distinct, the terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' are often used interchangeably – as will be my practice throughout this chapter.) In both abstract and concrete ways, the British Empire functioned dualistically: it featured structures of governance by which Britons ruled colonized peoples, systems of economic exchange that sought to exploit resources abroad for enrichment at home, and a military apparatus that brought force to bear in spectacular as well as quotidian ways. But an analysis that goes no further is inadequate to the task of coming to terms with empire, for beneath such dualisms imperialism can be characterized by a remarkable heterogeneity. Addressing the British experience, Bernard Porter points out in *The Lion's Share* that '[t]here was no single language covering the whole of empire, no one religion, no one code of laws. In the forms of government the disparities between colonies were immense. . . . There was no kind of overall logic' (pp. 1–2).

The absence of an 'overall logic' was in part the result of the long and varied history of Britain's imperial activity, which may be said to

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have begun during the second half of the sixteenth century. It was at that time that Queen Elizabeth I and, later, James I encouraged 'plantations' – the settling of English and Scottish people in Ireland on land forcibly taken from the native Irish. It was also Elizabeth I who, in 1600, chartered the British East India Company, a trading concern that was eventually – by the middle of the nineteenth century – to rule over much of the area occupied by present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The seventeenth century witnessed the beginnings of large-scale British settlement in North America and parts of Caribbean, settlement that increased in scope and pace over the course of the eighteenth century. The loss of the American colonies late in that century (1776–83) marked the end of the so-called First Empire, but enormous territorial gains elsewhere, especially in India, initiated the Second. During the Victorian era, the British occupied Australia (claim beginning in 1770) and New Zealand (claimed 1840), seized parts of China (including Hong Kong in 1841), and expanded their holdings in Africa and Southeast Asia (annexing Burma, for instance, in 1886). Expansionist activity reached a crescendo with the 'scramble for Africa' in the 1880s and 1890s, a race among European powers to establish territorial rights to those parts of the continent as yet unclaimed.

Coming into contact with and subduing vastly different societies at different times in those societies' history as well as in their own, the British shaped imperial and colonial policy in an *ad hoc* manner, producing an empire united in name but varied in fact. Precisely because of such variety, however, much of the impetus behind representations of empire in the novel and elsewhere had to do with establishing and shoring up stark differences between colonizer and colonized that, although fundamentally untenable, were nevertheless often an essential component of the rationale for conquest. To quote Hall once again, this time from the introduction to her collection *Cultures of Empire* (2000): 'The work of orientalist discourse, whether in museums, Colonial Offices, the academy or popular fiction, was to secure the binaries between West and East. This could be done only by constant discursive work, fixing and refixing the boundaries between Western rationality and oriental irrationality, Western industry and oriental laziness, Western self-control and the oriental lack of it' (p. 14). Hall is writing about Western representations of the East, but her claims may be widened to include imperialist discourse more generally, which sought in manifold ways to maintain distinctions between Europe and other places, Europeans and other peoples. Several pioneering

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accounts of the culture of imperialism emphasize this view, including Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the seminal study whose argument Hall's comments summarize. Said draws attention both to the systematic nature of writing on empire and to its function in constructing an 'otherness' that the inhabitants of Europe understood as unlike themselves in nearly every way. In the words of Frantz Fanon, among the first thinkers rigorously to interrogate the place of culture in colonial societies: 'The colonial world is a Manichean world. It is not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is to say with the help of the army and the police force, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil' (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963: 41).

Acutely aware of the differential of power between colonizers and colonized, Fanon also recognizes the imperative for colonizers to supplement the use of force with ideas by distinguishing themselves absolutely from those they rule. Subsequent analyses, while continuing to acknowledge that differential and that imperative, contend that imperial Manicheism constitutes a place to start rather than a place to come to rest. Said himself, in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), takes his earlier work to task for too dualistic a view of empire: if nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europeans could be said to have been orientalists to the degree that they imagined a monolithic East, Said suggests, then in *Orientalism* he might be said to have given way to 'Occidentalism', minimizing historical and geographical variations among the various European imperial powers. Sara Suleri makes a different but equally trenchant argument for the need to move away from dualistic thinking when she observes that 'alteritism represses the detail of cultural facticity by citing otherness as a universal trope, thereby suggesting that the discursive site of alterity is nothing other than the familiar and unresolved confrontation between the historical and the allegorical' (*The Rhetoric of English India*, 1992: 13). To emphasize the opposition of 'self' and 'other' in studying the literature and culture of imperialism is tantamount to repeating the divisive work of imperialist discourse itself – and, in so doing, to risk losing the particulars of both colonizers and colonized. For Said and Suleri, the analysis of the relation between imperialism and a cultural artifact such as the novel, while striving to hold constantly in view the ineluctable framework of unequal relations of power between the parties involved, should take the shape not of 'alteritism' but of something that could be called 'particularism'.

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To begin to see what such particularism might look like in the case of attention to Victorian fiction, recall that both the early novels to which I make reference above achieve their distinctive form by deploying the conventions of a recognizable genre of non-fiction: the travel narrative. In *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe*, first-person narrators purport to tell of their experiences abroad, away from the English land of their birth. In this, too, these novels can be considered representative, for the novel as a genre tends to incorporate other genres into itself, borrowing from forms of writing like the newspaper, the letter, and the diary. Such an encyclopedic or parasitic tendency might be described as figuratively imperialist as well. Said proposes as much when he writes in *Culture and Imperialism*: 'Without empire . . . there is no European novel as we know it, and indeed if we study the impulses giving rise to it, we shall see the far from accidental convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel on the one hand, and, on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism' (pp. 69–70). I will have more to say below about novelistic 'patterns of narrative authority'; for the moment the interesting thing here is the opportunity to add specificity to the case about the close ties between the novel and empire. The novel, this new thing, needed to tell a new story, and novelists met that need in part by writing about new worlds, by throwing in their lot with travelers and explorers. Drawing on and developing the work of writers such as Behn and Defoe, many Victorian novelists craft fictions about Britons in foreign lands that were actual or prospective parts of the empire. Their novels belong in the context of – to borrow the title of a book by Bernard Cohn – *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (1996), for they share characteristics of some of the earliest and most enduring of those forms: not only the travel narrative but also the ethnographic report, the map or chart, and the collection.

Consider what is arguably the Victorian novel (or novella, given its relatively short length) most frequently discussed in terms of empire: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Marlow, the principal narrator, delivers his story to a group of Englishmen on the deck of a yacht waiting the turn of the tide in the Thames River. Recounting his time as the captain of a steamer on another great river, the Congo, Marlow marks what he has to say as a traveler's tale brought back from a strange place. Its interest is in large part exoticist, and nothing it details could be more exotic than Africa. 'We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth', Marlow reports, 'on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. . . . We could not understand, because we were too

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far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories' (p. 62). The 'we' of the statement, a motley assortment of Europeans working for the Belgian King Leopold's colonial enterprise in central Africa, find themselves unable to comprehend the location of that enterprise because it is not a place in space so much as a place in time: 'prehistoric', 'the night of the first ages', the dark (mysterious, savage, ineffable) childhood of the human race.

Modeling his account on the familiar form of the travel narrative, Marlow employs a familiar trope of imperialist discourse as well. Johannes Fabian, writing about anthropology in *Time and the Other*, has called this trope the 'denial of coevalness' (p. 31); Anne McClintock, writing in *Imperial Leather* about the Victorian novel, names it 'anachronistic space' (p. 30). Both formulations convey the curious way in which certain European representations of non-European peoples and places transform geographical distinctions into temporal and ideological ones. It is as if the distances separating London or Paris from Cape Town, Beijing, or Buenos Aires could be measured in years or millennia as well as in miles. Europe, presumed to be at the geographical center of the world, also stands at its temporal 'center' – or, rather, at its temporal leading edge: its vital, modern present. *Heart of Darkness* and other texts that construct Africa (and Asia and Latin America, too) as an area of barbaric archaism provide a ready-made rationale for colonization in the name of modernization. Despite the fact that Marlow makes scathingly critical remarks about Belgian colonialism, anatomizing its cruelties and hypocrisies, his depiction of the African continent as a vast anachronism may be said to constitute participation in and even endorsement of empire.

Working through *Heart of Darkness* with an eye toward its implications for imperialism, then, demands as much attention to how Marlow describes the site of European depredation as to what he says about that depredation. This is to say, more broadly, that it is not enough to think about empire in the Victorian novel in terms of content alone. Matters of form are of equal significance. To recall the issue of narrative authority as well as that of colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the perceived value of a map or an ethnographic report often inheres as much in how and by whom it has been drawn up as in what it depicts. So while it is interesting that *Heart of Darkness* opens with the words of an unnamed frame narrator who rehearses the most clichéd sentiments in favor of expansionist activities and the civilizing mission, these sentiments can hardly stand as sufficient evidence of

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the novella's or Conrad's view of empire. They are complicated and undermined by Marlow's words and the words and actions of other characters – not least those of Kurtz, whose initial enthusiasm for the spread of Western 'light' to the 'darkness' of Africa is rendered questionable when viewed in connection with his final murderous directive, scrawled on the last page of an unfinished report drafted for the 'International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs': 'Exterminate all the brutes!' (pp. 83, 84). *Heart of Darkness* depicts Africa as savage or barbaric and so implicitly in need of an infusion of European modernity, but it also represents European colonialists in Africa as themselves savages or barbarians, all too ready to believe in the concept of barbarism and to commit atrocities in the name of combating it.

Conradian complications of this sort reach an apogee in the (still slightly post-Victorian) *Nostramo* (1904), a novel that chronicles how the apparent backwardness and great mineral wealth of the fictional Latin American republic of Costaguana summon adventurers from Great Britain as well as from the United States. Backing a successful war of secession in a silver-rich coastal province called Sulaco, those outside powers help give birth to a new, efficient, and thoroughly up-to-date nation-state. Such a plot may seem to constitute an allegory about the ability of the West to bring geographical anachronisms back to the future, a praise-song for Euro-American interventionism. Before reaching such a conclusion, however, it is necessary to note that the bulk of the praise is dispensed by Captain Mitchell, the most garrulous and imperipient of the novel's several narrators. Like the Dombey-centric vision of the world quoted at the outset, Mitchell's fatuous celebration of Sulaco's new-found prosperity satirizes itself. And like the easy reasonableness that characterizes the frame narrator's comments at the beginning of *Heart of Darkness*, the air of common sense about that celebration becomes insupportable in view of the rest of the novel. As Benita Parry concludes about *Nostramo* in *Conrad and Imperialism* (1983): 'Against the mystification of the profit motive and the idealism of economic activities . . . the fiction's discourse mobilises a relentless attack, and the illegitimate joining of utilitarianism with idealism is condensed in the key phrase "material interests"' (p. 115).

No British or U.S. troops occupy Costaguana; no foreign rulers are installed to govern the new nation of Sulaco; no land is seized for the purposes of settling immigrants. Nonetheless, it is fair to speak of *Nostramo* as a text about a certain kind of imperialism. John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson (1953) term it 'the imperialism of free trade',

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D. C. M. Platt (1977) calls it 'business imperialism': a subtle attenuation of local self-determination involving external control over loans, monopolization of infrastructural development, and application of political pressure in the service of economic gain – or, in Conrad's phrase, 'material interests'. In their monumental *British Imperialism* (1993), historians P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins demonstrate that informal imperialism was a major aspect of Britain's expansionist activity in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. 'The distinguishing feature of imperialism', they write, 'is not that it takes a specific economic, cultural or political form, but that it involves an incursion, or an attempted incursion, into the sovereignty of another state' (p. 46). Anticipating such later theorizations of empire, Conrad in *Nostramo* implies that nations need not literally be incorporated into the British Empire to be considered in some sense a part of it.

Conrad also shrewdly rewrites a familiar element of the fantasy and the actuality of imperial adventure by focusing his plot on a silver mine. Britons traveled to far-flung regions pursuing mineral wealth from at least the time of Sir Walter Raleigh's 1595 and 1617 expeditions in search of El Dorado, the fabled city of gold. As Sir Richard Francis Burton's *Explorations of the Highlands of Brazil; with a Full Account of the Gold and Diamond Mines* (1869) and countless other travel narratives like it show, the appetite for gems and precious metals – as well as for writing about them – continued unabated throughout the nineteenth century. By that time, armchair travelers could easily be armchair prospectors: private investment in mining concessions all over the world but especially in South America reached into the millions of pounds from the 1820s on. The Victorians had no need to leave home to stake a claim; they could participate in the extraction of riches from the earth by proxy, as readers and investors.

Novels from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1881–3) to H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1886) and G. A. Henty's *The Treasure of the Incas* (1903) regularly traded on the narrative possibilities afforded by such riches. Moreover, those 'riches' were imagined more broadly than as simple economic returns – as *She* (1887), another Haggard novel, shows. *She* plays on the trope of anachronistic space by depicting Africa as a mausoleum on a continental scale. Introduced by a fictional editor whose frame narration provides verisimilitude as well as homiletic commentary on the adventures inside the frame, *She* is primarily narrated by Horace Ludwig Holly, whose conclusions about Africa as 'full of the relics of long dead and forgotten civilizations' echo archaeological truisms of the time (ch. 5: 62). Buried treasure,

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although neither gold nor diamonds, those relics attest to a majestic African past and thus, by way of contrast, to a degenerate African present. The African 'savages' found in the pages of this novel are not, as they are for Conrad's Marlow, remainders from a primitive era that have survived into the nineteenth century. Rather, they are throwbacks – people who have returned to the primitive after once having reached some 'higher', more 'civilized' stage. But the Englishman Holly, too, is a throwback or atavism, a 'monster' whose simian visage and frame confirm the 'monkey theory', the contention that humans evolved from earlier forms of life (ch. 1: 8). *She*, in evoking a savage Africa, manages to raise the question of the savagery of Great Britain as well – and even of imperialism. Holly encounters a country that is in some sense already part of an empire: that of the She of the title, a 2000-year-old Egyptian priestess who has ruled over the Africans among whom she finds herself while patiently awaiting the arrival of the reincarnation of her former lover in the form of Holly's traveling companion and charge, Leo. The inevitable comparison to the British Empire invited by the scenario of dark-skinned 'natives' governed by a White Queen is made still more pointed when She announces to a horrified Leo and Holly her plans for worldwide domination. Although those plans never come to pass, their failure with the death of She leaves Leo and Holly themselves relics, shells of broken manhood.

It is no accident that *She* and the other novels discussed so far deal largely with male Britons. They borrow from the adventure tale as much as from the travel narrative, and for much of the nineteenth century most adventure fiction was self-consciously boys' fiction – a claim not so much about its readership as its characteristic protagonists and concerns. Part of the tangled skein of Victorian masculinity, which included games and sports and which fostered a competitiveness mythologized as the English sense of 'fair play', such fiction imagined the empire as a playing field writ large. Like other spaces allegorizing national manhood, empire presented challenges to be overcome and complexities to be mastered. Walter Hartright, a character in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1860), well expresses this sense of untamed and unexplored places as male testing grounds when he writes of a voyage in Central America: 'In the waters of a new life I had tempered my nature afresh. In the stern school of extremity and danger my will had learnt to be strong, my heart to be resolute, my mind to rely on itself. I had gone out to fly from my own future. I came back to face it, as a man should' (p. 427). Countless novels by Henty, John Buchan, R. M. Ballantyne, and others represent

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non-European parts of the world in these terms: as places of maturation or regeneration where boys can discover – or, in cases like Hartright's, where incomplete or failed men can rediscover – their adult masculinity.

Those novels also represent other parts of the world as sources of pleasure, portraying imperialism as if it were, again like a sport or a game, difficult but fun. Thus was empire enlisted in the service of boyhood and boyhood tied closely to imperialism. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) is particularly clear about the nature of the connections between the two. An Irish orphan growing up in British-held India, Kim finds boundless possibilities in empire. This is nearly always the case in Victorian fiction: with few exceptions, that fiction figures the space of empire as Britain's outside, free from the strictures of life at home. As *Kim* demonstrates, however, the relation between inside and outside, home and away is always an intimate one. Kim revels in an earnest and demanding play, requiring fluency in multiple dialects, costumes, and sets of mores. Ethnographer and spymaster Colonel Creighton recognizes his expert negotiation of the variegated cultural, religious, and linguistic landscape of India as precisely suited to the needs of British intelligence. By way of Creighton's fatherly intervention, which provides a formal counterpart to Kim's informal education in the ways of empire, Kim and his expertise are almost seamlessly integrated into British expansionism in the form of Britain's competition with Russia for control of Central Asia – a competition referred to, fittingly, as 'the Great Game'.

Whether empire provides a fictional space for securing manhood, as in *Kim*, or for problematizing it, as in *She*, it always stands in relation to Britain as an elsewhere, an other scene. When Hartright writes 'I had gone out to fly from my own future. I came back to face it, as a man should', he assumes that what one flies from or returns to face is home, Britain. Even in this instance, the distinction is temporal as well as spatial: 'home' is where the 'future' lies; empire or abroad is connected with the past, with childhood – the childhood of humanity and the childhood of the Briton. But the permeability of the two spaces disallows understanding them as if they were utterly distinct from one another, or as if the traffic between them proceeded in one direction only. To do so would be to subscribe to another dualism that scholars in several disciplines have recently exploded. When discussing imperialism, it is necessary to speak not of a 'center' that makes history and a 'periphery' that merely endures it but rather of a mutual constitution of colonizing and colonized society. Robert J. C. Young (1995) and

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Homi Bhabha (1994), albeit in quite different work, both demonstrate one aspect of that mutual constitution by exploring the discourse of 'hybridity' in the imperial context. Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes* (1992), provides a way to think about influence moving in both directions when she invokes the term 'transculturation' – the process by which subordinated or colonized groups make use of materials from the metropole or colonizing power, but also the process by which the colonizing power comes to be influenced or shaped by those it has colonized (p. 6).

Victorian novels often register the latter kind of transculturation: even when set in domestic space, the presence of empire insistently marks them. In Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), for example, the transformation of the patrician, humanitarian Jekyll into the sensual, selfish, and apelike Hyde reveals anachronism within the boundaries of Great Britain, the home, even the self. Whereas Conrad's Marlow and Haggard's Holly assert the archaism of a distant land, Stevenson's characterization of a London physician's descent into a simian monstrosity draws on the denial of coevalness to locate atavism at the heart of the imperial power. The empire bites back – or, rather, imperialist discourse does, in that Stevenson brings one of its dehumanizing tropes to bear on the imperialists themselves. But this novel also features another, more literal, and more typical instance of transculturation. When, in the first chapter, a character named Enfield recounts how he witnessed Hyde trample a young girl, he describes Hyde as a 'Juggernaut': a massive force that blindly destroys whatever it finds in its path. According to the *OED*, the word derives from a name for the Hindu god Krishna, and specifically for 'the uncouth idol of this deity at Puri in Orissa, annually dragged in procession on an enormous car, under the wheels of which many devotees are said to have formerly thrown themselves to be crushed'. In Enfield's casual use of 'Juggernaut', *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* reveals the deep, abiding presence of empire in the English language itself.

Addressing that presence in his 'Introductory remarks' to *Hobson-Jobson*, an omnibus 'Anglo-Indian glossary' first published in 1886, Henry Yule writes: 'Words of Indian origin have been insinuating themselves into English ever since the end of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of that of King James, when such terms as *calico*, *chintz*, and *gingham* had already effected a lodgment in English warehouses and shops, and were lying in wait for entrance into English literature' (Yule and Burnett, p. 466). '[I]nsinuating themselves' and

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'lying in wait', the words in question seem oddly threatening – even as they and the types of cloth they name are also desirable, welcomed first into 'English warehouses and shops' and then into 'English literature'. Drawing together imperialism, trade, and language, Yule conveys the widespread influence of empire and the unsettled disposition of the English toward its products, which were seen as alluring but dangerous. A number of novels register that doubleness or contradiction, from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) to Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), but few make it as sustained an object of concern as Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868). Centered on an Indian diamond looted by a British Army officer during the Siege of Seringapatam, a historic battle for British control of India, *The Moonstone* moots the question of the effects of empire at home. As Franklin Blake exclaims about a country estate: 'When I came here from London with that horrible Diamond . . . I don't believe there was a happier household in England than this. Look at the household now! Scattered, disunited – the very air of the place poisoned with mystery and suspicion!' (First Period, ch. 23: 188). A synecdoche for all imperial commodities, the Moonstone's overwhelming beauty is matched only by the overwhelming disturbance of English domestic life to which it gives rise.

The diamond in *The Moonstone* reflects the function of empire in the production of wealth. The confident references made in that novel to 'the' Indian or oriental character provide a reminder that empire was also a locus for the production of knowledge – ethnographic knowledge in particular. Kurtz's report on 'savage customs', Creighton's series of 'monographs on strange Asiatic cults' (ch. 10: 223), Holly's observations on the ways of the Amahagger tribe over which She rules: all attest, in the pages of fiction, to the extra-fictional role of the imperial encounter in the development of anthropology. Of all the products of that discipline in its Victorian infancy, perhaps none was more momentous than that of 'race'. Previous to the nineteenth century, conceptualizations of the differences among various humans from various parts of the world tended to view those differences as subject to change. Although Europeans during the Enlightenment, for example, ranked themselves at the top of a hierarchy of peoples, the qualities that they believed placed them there could be learned, acquired. The nineteenth-century sense of 'race', by contrast, anchored perceived differences in biology and, hence, understood them as permanent. Further, one interpretation of the implications of Darwinian biology (a misinterpretation, even though sometimes

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endorsed by Darwin himself) used evolutionary theory to provide scientific support for the denial of coevalness: different races, on this view, represented different stages on an evolutionary time-line to 'modern' European humanity.

In *Daniel Deronda* (1876), George Eliot at once relies on and refuses the biological account of racial difference. As in *Middlemarch* (1871–2) before it, Eliot in *Daniel Deronda* explores the fate of a remarkable woman in a society that neither educates women fully nor allows them to practice professions. Registering a protest against such limitations, the novel focuses on one of the few consequential choices women were allowed, that of whom to marry. Like courtship in so many Victorian novels, Gwendolen Harleth's choice of a mate is emplotted as a crisis of selection. I use the term 'selection' deliberately: insofar as that language evokes Darwinism, for which natural selection serves as the principal mechanism of evolution, it recognizes a link between the courtship plot and the novel's other plot, that involving Deronda and his Jewishness. From the perspective of her own choice of mates, Gwendolen figures the vicissitudes of Victorian womanhood. From the perspective of Deronda's choice, however, she figures the novel's investment in race as biology. For Deronda, to decide between Gwendolen and Mirah Cohen is also to decide between his Englishness and his Jewishness. *Daniel Deronda* connects race to biology by way of heterosexual romance and sexual reproduction. The novel's seventh book, tellingly titled 'The Mother and the Son', confirms that series of connections by relying on Deronda's first meeting with his mother to establish his Jewishness with certainty.

Deronda's meetings with a mystic named Mordecai, however, reveal another, countervailing version of race in *Daniel Deronda*. Divorced from sexual reproduction, it imagines a figurative reproduction through the male line, and it connects that reproduction not only to race but also, through race, to nation and empire. Dying of a wasting disease but convinced he has discovered the person who will take up his lifelong dream of founding 'a new Judaea' (ch. 41: 459), Mordecai explains to Deronda: 'You will be my life: it will be planted afresh; it will grow. You shall take the inheritance; it has been gathering for ages. The generations are crowding on my narrow life as a bridge: what has been and what is to be are meeting there; and the bridge is breaking. But I have found you' (ch. 40: 428). 'But I have found you': the language of romance conveys the homosocial reproduction of the next generation, the transmission of the legacy of what Mordecai elsewhere calls the Jewish 'race' from man to man.

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Moreover, as Mordecai spells out, that transmission entails a nationalist and indeed an imperialist project:

I cherish nothing for the Jewish nation, I seek nothing for them, but the good which promises good to all nations. . . . How long is it? – only two centuries since a vessel carried over the ocean the beginning of the great North American nation. The people grew like meeting waters – they were various in habit and sect – there came a time, a century ago, when they needed a polity, and there were heroes of peace among them. What had they to form a polity with but memories of Europe, corrected by the vision of a better? Let our wise and wealthy show themselves heroes. (ch. 41: 458)

Explicitly analogous to the British settlement of North America, the Jewish polity Mordecai hopes for is to be built on land outside Europe, occupied by others. *Daniel Deronda* in some measure rewrites race as an elective affinity and nationality as the offspring of male homosocial romance, but it can do so only by envisioning a return to origins and national greatness contingent on the seizure and colonization of territory.

Daniel Deronda's valorization of this version of national belonging invites reconsideration of a novel in which an expansionist, corporate entity forged between men receives less enthusiastic treatment: *Dombey and Son*. As I argued, *Dombey* mistakenly conflates personal relations with business transactions. 'Dombey and Son' itself, the name of Dombey's firm and of his family, in effect incorporates that family, defining it as exclusively male and subordinating it to commercial purposes. Dombey's assumption that '[t]he earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in' betrays not only a megalomaniacal view of the earth but also an entirely economic view of the family. His travails – his son's death, his daughter Florence's alienation from him, his sham second marriage, even the eventual collapse of his firm – dramatize the catastrophe that results from his whole-hearted embrace of that view. But the novel does not rest with critique. Putting to rights what it portrays as an inverted relation between family and business, *Dombey and Son* concludes not simply with the dissolution of a capitalist enterprise that subordinates the familial to itself but with the formation of a new enterprise subservient to the family. As Mr. Toots reports on the novel's penultimate page, 'from his daughter, after all, another Dombey and Son will ascend . . . triumphant' (ch. 63: 733).

Springing from a daughter who incarnates domestic virtues rather than from a father who scorns them, the second iteration of *Dombey*

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and Son, readers are given to understand, will place love and family first, economic gain second. The novel registers the difference in manifold ways, but perhaps never more clearly than in a sentence in one of the final chapters that closely echoes the passage from the first chapter with which I began: '[T]he voices in the waves are always whispering to Florence, in their ceaseless murmuring, of love – of love, eternal and illimitable, not bounded by the confines of this world, or by the end of time, but ranging still, beyond the sea, beyond the sky, to the invisible country far away!' (ch. 57: 679). As in that initial passage, in this sentence a Dombey and a Briton seems to stand at the center of not only the world but also the universe. Waves whisper to Florence, and what they whisper of is, like Dombey's vision of his importance, 'not bounded by the confines of this world, or by the end of time'. The crucial change, however, is that not 'trade' but 'love' constitutes the center around which all else revolves – love 'eternal and illimitable': the love Florence bears for Walter Gay, her husband, and most especially the love she bears for her brother Paul, who, now dead, resides in that 'invisible country far away'.

But commerce and imperialism are not far to seek. The waves that whisper to Florence float a merchant ship carrying her and her beloved Walter from Great Britain to China (ch. 56: 657). Walter's success at Canton, a Chinese port opened to British trade by force of arms in 1841, at the conclusion of the First Opium War, provides the stability that emboldens him to propose marriage to Florence, the experience that leads to his appointment to 'a post of great trust and confidence at home', and some of the funds that underwrite the rise of that second 'Dombey and Son' from the ashes of the first (ch. 63: 733). Dickens's novel offers up the illimitable reach of love in place of the deleterious fantasy of the illimitable reach of money and power, but it also attests that such love is itself enabled by British adventurism abroad. The 'invisible country far away', which in *Dombey and Son* names the site of an afterlife, might serve as a fitting description of empire in the Victorian novel: invisible or only partially seen but ubiquitous, far away but never beyond reach.

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