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No Higher Love: Clerical Domesticity in Kingsley and Eliot*

Laura Fasick

The prolonged crisis of faith that shook nineteenth-century England had many ramifications, but one particularly significant literary consequence adds its own twist to the debate over the sources of priestly authority. The origins and scope of that authority were hotly contested throughout the worlds of Victorian church and chapel, of Established Anglican Church and of dissenting congregations. Literary representations of clergymen, however, in authors as different in their private beliefs as Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, draw upon a source of authority far different from consecration, Biblical statements, church history, or any of the other sources claimed by theologians of various persuasions. In fictions as diverse as Kingsley's *Two Years Ago* (1857) and Eliot's *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857) and *Adam Bede* (1859), a priest's effectiveness and authority run parallel to the current of his erotic and domestic life. Examining these representations of priests, especially in the context of Thomas Carlyle's contrasting vision of priestly excellence in his 1840 lecture and 1841 essay on "The Hero as Priest" helps to illustrate the more general pattern in nineteenth-century fiction of casting all of life in a domestic mold. Ultimately, one might argue, much nineteenth-century fiction emphasizes the centrality of domestic life, particularly in the form of romantic relationships, to the point where it subsumes all the rest of existence.

It is true, of course, that a thread of erotic metaphors has run throughout Christian discourse since the origin of Christianity itself. The glossing of the Song of Solomon as a celebration of Christ's relationship with his Church and the "mystical marriages" of such saints as St. Theresa are among myriad examples of the way in which love-relationships have provided an image whereby to explore and explain religious experience. At the same time, the nineteenth-century idealization of domesticity made religion more than ever a matter for hearth and home: a binding and sanctifying force for the slowly emerging nuclear family. As historian John Tosh puts it, the middle-class Victorian home became the site and centerpiece of "domesticated religion" (37). The fact that clerical celibacy was one of the crucial distinctions between Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy sharpened the desire among Protestant apologists to uphold domestic life (including its sexual component of marriage and parenthood) as beneficial, even necessary, for a strong priesthood. Furthermore, during a time when the supernatural basis of Christianity was being increasingly debated and doubted, many among both believers and non-believers preferred a version of Christianity whose claims to allegiance were primarily its applicability to and amelioration of the ordinary

conditions of human life. What remains striking, however, is that the range of human life to which novelists, at any rate, typically applied this "humanized" Christianity was that of romantic love-relationship.

The configuration of domestic love and religious vocation in various nineteenth-century novels thus offers a particularly intriguing view of a typical strategy in nineteenth-century fiction: the placing of domestic life at the center of human existence. Using Charles Kingsley and George Eliot as representative authors enables us to see how this placement unites even authors who were widely different in other ways. Kingsley was an ordained Anglican clergyman while Eliot was an agnostic. Moreover, Kingsley's anti-intellectualism and hyper-masculinity separate him from Eliot's scrupulous mental cultivation and celebration of stereotypically "feminine" qualities of tenderness and nurturance. Indeed, Eliot felt sufficient disdain for Kingsley to be angered at a reviewer's comment that the author of *Adam Bede* "had obviously 'sat at the feet of Mr. Kingsley'" (Martin 181).¹ Yet Eliot, although she differs from Kingsley in her rejection of organized religion, resembles him in her desire to present and advocate for a universally applicable "moral philosophy, her religion of humanity" (Pace 77). Most significant for the purposes of this study, both Kingsley and Eliot were profoundly influenced by Thomas Carlyle, although (as we shall see) their shaping of moral imperatives in their fictions differs sharply from Carlyle's emphases. Thus, in order to see even more clearly the connection between religion and domesticity in representative novels by Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, it will be helpful first to look at the alternative vision given by Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle, who moved from early training for the ministry to a fiercely independent spirituality divorced from organized religion, was one of the few nineteenth-century voices raised stridently against domesticity. His version of priestly authority thereby differs radically from that offered by Kingsley and Eliot.²

* * *

In "The Priest as Hero," Thomas Carlyle emphasizes the public role of the priest. Carlyle initiates his discussion by stating that he will not look at the priest who deals with individual souls but rather with reformers who transformed institutions.

Luther and Knox were by express vocation Priests, and did faithfully perform that function in its common sense. Yet it will suit us better here to consider them chiefly in their historical character, rather as Reformers than Priests. There have been other Priests perhaps equally

*I would like to thank Donald J. Gray for his richly insightful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

¹Valerie Dodd gives a brief account of Eliot's ambivalence about Kingsley in *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, 306.

²It is worth noting that Carlyle's distaste for priestly domesticity emerged in his life as well as in his writings. His disillusionment with his erstwhile

friend, the ordained minister Edward Irving, began with Carlyle's horrified disgust at Irving's willing immersion in childcare for his newborn son. In a letter to his mother, Carlyle deplors that "the worthy preacher dandles and fondles and dlynurses and talks about [the baby] in a way that is piteous to behold" (*Collected Letters* 195).

notable, in calmer times, for doing faithfully the office of a Leader of Worship; bringing down, by faithful heroism in that kind, a light from Heaven into the daily life of their people; leading them forward, as under God's guidance, in the way wherein they were to go. But when this same way was a rough one, of battle, confusion and danger, the spiritual Captain, who led through that, becomes, especially to us who live under the fruit of his leading, more notable than any other. He is the warfaring and battling Priest; who led his people, not to quiet faithful labour as in smooth times, but to faithful valorous conflict, in times all violent, dismembered: a more perilous service, and a more memorable one, be it higher or not. These two men we will account our best Priests, inasmuch as they were our best Reformers. (116)

In Carlyle's hands, "daily life" is not the important stuff of the priest's ministry; rather, it is the exceptional, violent, public action that matters most. Just as Carlyle had emphasized the public voice and content of the author in his lecture-essays on "the poet" and "the man of letters," so he emphasizes the public reforms of the priest.

By contrast, the famous chapter in *Adam Bede* called "In Which the Story Pauses a Little," Eliot's ardent defense of realism in literature, uses the peacefully domestic Reverend Irwine as its exemplar of the hidden beauty and virtue that realism uncovers for readers in everyday life. Eliot explicitly compares the Rector's public lack of heroism with his private virtues. Having anticipated her readers' objections to the "unideal" character of the Reverend Irwine, she continues:

On the other hand, I must plead, for I have an affectionate partiality toward the Rector's memory, that he was not vindictive—and some philanthropists have been so; that he was not intolerant—and there is a rumour that some zealous theologians have not been altogether free from that blemish; that although he would probably have declined to give his body to be burned in any public cause, and was far from bestowing all his goods to feed the poor, he had that charity which has sometimes been lacking to very illustrious virtue—he was tender to other men's failings, and unwilling to impute evil. He was one of those men, and they are not the commonest, of whom we can know the best only by following them away from the market-place, the platform, and the pulpit, entering with them into their own homes, hearing the voice with which they speak to the young and aged about their own hearthstone, and witnessing their thoughtful care for the everyday wants of everyday companions, who take all their kindness as a matter of course, and not as a subject for panegyric.

Such men, happily have lived in times when great abuses flourished, and have sometimes even been the living representatives of the abuses. That is a thought which might comfort us a little under the opposite fact—that it is better sometimes *not* to follow great reformers of abuses beyond the thresholds of their homes.

(*Adam Bede* 69)

Here, Eliot's irony is founded upon her subversion of the hierarchy of values she seemingly acknowledges: the man who can safely be followed beyond the threshold of his home is clearly superior to him whose virtues vanish in front of the domestic hearth. Eliot's apologies for the Reverend Irwine are actually claims for his entitlement to our admiration. Like the Reverend Farebrother in *Middlemarch*, Irwine shows his best—and by implication, his most authentic—self by his patient submission to household responsibilities, even to the only apparently "insignificant" "detail" of changing from boots to slippers so that he may tread more lightly in his invalid sister's room (*Adam Bede* 66). Carlyle had singled out the 'reformer' as the type of priest most worthy of inclusion in his pantheon of heroes. Through her explicit and implicit comparison of the reformer with Mr. Irwine, Eliot accentuates Irwine's virtue by suggesting that the public reformer is all too likely to be privately contemptible—and therefore a poor candidate for our respect.

Carlyle further characterizes his favored priests by emphasizing their adherence to a code that respects the concerns of men over the griefs of women. He praises John Knox for the very "cruelty" and "coarseness" toward Mary, Queen of Scots, that led some historians to condemn him as unchivalrous (148). Indeed, Carlyle suggests that the fact that Knox's speeches "are not so coarse" as Knox's enemies claim leaves the reader "rather disappointed" (148-49). He quotes approvingly the declaration, "Better that women weep than that bearded men be forced to weep" (149). Here, the concerns of "bearded men" are automatically privileged over the woes of women. The former are assumed to be serious and the latter trivial, and in order to attend to the first it may be necessary to increase the last. The fact that Knox is not "always . . . in the mildest humour" (150) is inevitable and necessary for the priest who wants reform, for the priest who "wanted leprosy and darkness to be thrown out of the lives of men" (150).

Eliot, however, proposes a reforming usefulness to the "soft temper" that Carlyle despises (210), although—as is consistent with her usual patterns—she keeps reform at the individual level of one person (in this case, one blood relative) reaching out to another. In *Adam Bede*, Hetty Sorrel needs the soothing ministrations of her cousin Dinah Morris, because the "harsh" chaplain who attends Hetty during her trial (424) is revealed as one of "the fag-end o' the clergy" (428) precisely because he is "sharp" and lacks Mr. Irwine's tenderness (428). His harshness is a barrier against Hetty's confession and repentance; it is not until Hetty finds a sympathetic and loving listener in Dinah that she is able to reach even the limited moral growth she finally achieves.

The relationship between domesticity, public reforms, and femininity in Charles Kingsley's *Two Year Ago* is equally unCarlylean. In that novel, Frank Headley initially fails as a curate for the fishing town of Averalva because he alienates his congregation with a series of high-handed actions. Kingsley draws a sharp contrast between the rough-hewn, burly fishermen who mock Frank to his face and Frank himself, who is "delicate in person, all but consumptive; graceful and refined in all his works and ways" (1: 79). Yet Frank's problem is not the femininity implied in this description but the forcefulness with which he acts. He opens "a

crusade against the Dissenters, and denounced where he should have conciliated" (1: 80). In Kingsley's presentation, "power" (1: 273) comes not from the "intolerance" that Carlyle praises for inspiring men "to resist, to control and vanquish" (*Heroes* 210), but from the pliancy "of 'becoming all things to all men'" (*Two Years Ago* 1: 273). Frank eventually wins the hearts of his parishioners not by persuading them to accept the validity of his religious practices (they end up regarding his High Church ritualism as an amiable eccentricity), but through romantic love and suffering.

The story of Frank Headley thus joins other examples of Kingsley's insistence on the centrality of domestic life to moral heroism, an insistence so strong that literary scholar Claudia Nelson wryly comments for him and for some others, "fatherhood became . . . a prerequisite for ordination" (167). Kingsley's ardor on the subject doubtless is an inseparable part of his opposition to clerical celibacy. Some biographers have suggested that Kingsley's fierceness against clerical celibacy sprang from the intensity of his own sexual urges. Yet it is striking that Kingsley routinely presents celibacy, rather than marriage, as the more self-indulgent path. Perhaps there is some defensiveness in his protestations that those who choose celibacy choose "mere selfish safety and easy saving of one's own soul" (*Letters and Memories* 1: 165). Yet his unvarying insistence upon the "self-humiliation" necessary for marriage lends credibility to his belief that "married love [is] the noblest education a man's character could have" (1: 166). Kingsley explicitly links human marriage to the divine when he writes:

The highest state I define as that state through and in which men can know most of God, and work most for God: and this I assert to be the marriage state. He can know most of God, because it is through family ties, and by those family names that God reveals Himself to man, and reveals man's relations to Him. Fully to understand the meaning of "a Father in Heaven" we must be fathers ourselves; to know how Christ loved the Church, we must have wives to love, and love them; else why has God used those relations as symbols of the highest mysteries which we (on the Romish theory) are the more saintly the less we experience them? And it is a historic fact, that just the theologic ideas which a celibate priesthood have been unable to realize in their teaching, are those of the Father in Heaven—the Husband in Heaven. (1; 166)

Of course, as noted above, visions of "mystic" marriage, of God or Jesus as the lover/husband of the human soul, and of Creator and creature as existing in familial closeness (e.g. "Our Father Who art in Heaven") are common ways to express the relationship between the human and the divine. As Claudia Nelson notes, in the Victorian period in particular, "the family provided a ready-to-hand context for the discussion of religion" (166). But Kingsley refuses to accept these images as metaphors. He insists instead that they must be literalized into actual familial and sexual relations in order for people to achieve full spiritual development. Kingsley is able to accept celibacy only among those who submit to it as a sacrifice that God has called upon them to make. Under those conditions, the celibate "would

deserve all names of honor which men could heap on him, just because the sacrifice is so great—just because he gives up a present and manifest honor and blessing" (*Letters* 1: 165). This crucial distinction emphasizes that the celibate who *prefers* and *values* celibacy over wedlock is wrong-headed at best, subtly immoral at worst. By contrast, the celibate who submits to celibacy as necessary loss for the sake of serving others is all the more heroic because he recognizes and accepts the superiority of marital fulfillment to the emptier life of singleness. George Eliot also celebrates celibacy as self-sacrifice. Mr. Farebrother in *Middlemarch* and the Reverend Irwine in *Adam Bede* sacrifice themselves thus for their female dependents—and in Mr. Farebrother's case, the sacrifice extends to yielding a beloved woman to his rival.

Yet romantic love, according to Eliot as much as to Kingsley, is an ennobling force: indeed, whereas Kingsley sanctifies human love by presenting it as a type of the divine, Eliot uses it to replace divine love altogether. Even within the world of purely human relations, romantic love supersedes other human relationships to become all-in-all. In "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," the title character's love for, and loss of, his young wife are the crucial facts of his existence and of his own nature. "[I]t is with men as with trees," the narrator remarks, "if you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk" (244). The Vicar's widowerhood has deformed him into a "poor lopped oak," but he retains "the main trunk of the same brave, faithful, tender nature that had poured out the finest, freshest forces of its life-current in a first and only love—the love of Tina" (244). Even setting aside the love of God as a motive that one might expect to find in a priest, one notes the apotheosis of all emotional ties in an ideal romantic love.

Even more strikingly, in *Felix Holt*, the Dissenting minister Rufus Lyon encounters through romantic love a spiritual discipline far surpassing his ministerial duties either before he meets his future wife or after his wife's death. The time of his love and of his marriage are a period that Rufus himself regards as a "backsliding by which he forfeits his spiritual crown" (72). Yet "the passion for this woman . . . induced a more thorough renunciation than he had ever known in the time of his complete devotion to his ministerial career" (75-76). His love for his wife brings Rufus to "a period of such self-suppression and life in another as few men know" (75) and "which meant untiring work, untiring patience, untiring wakefulness even to the dumb signs of feeling in a creature whom he alone cared for" (76). Here romantic love does what ardent ministerial zeal cannot do; it brings Rufus to immerse himself completely in self-abnegating service.

Returning now to Charles Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*, we see a new significance in the pattern of Frank Headley's emergence as a beloved and effective priest. Kingsley proselytizes throughout his novel, constantly reminding his readers that his religiously skeptical hero Tom Thurnall must embrace religious faith in order to be a complete man. Given the shape of most nineteenth-century narratives, it is no sur-

prise that Tom's metaphysical embrace of Christianity occurs simultaneously with his physical embrace of the pious Grace Harvey, who has prayed for his conversion and whose example helps inspire it. Yet it is more striking that the ordained clergyman Frank Headley likewise must come to understand and practice his religious duties by experiencing romantic love. Frank's love for Valentia is "his fate" (1: 347) and it inspires his heroism during the cholera epidemic, for his conviction that his love for Valentia is hopeless gives him the courage to face death. After all, battling cholera on behalf of his stricken parishioners gives "a way out of his difficulty—and a very simple one; and that was to die" (1: 349). Yet Valentia's willingness to give Frank her favor enables him to survive, and after the crisis is passed, "[a]ll was understood now, all forgiven, all forgotten, save his conduct in the cholera, by the loving, honest brave West-country hearts" (2: 388) of Frank's formerly surly congregation. Significantly, that congregation demonstrates its new acceptance of Frank by hailing him and his bride—"the new-married pair" (2: 388)—as the couple return from their honeymoon to set up housekeeping. Frank's marriage to Valentia coincides with his rise from the curacy to the rectorship of Aberalva: having succeeded as a suitor, Frank also succeeds as a priest.

Kingsley's imbrication of religious with sexual feeling is well-known, especially since the discovery and publication of his openly erotic drawings and letters to his wife.³ Again, his celebration of achieving closer union with the Godhead through the experience of human love and of family life might seem a natural way to dramatize the essential unity of all love and to protest against the Catholic doctrine of clerical celibacy. Yet George Eliot's investment of eroticism in ostensibly religious feeling parallels Kingsley's despite the lack of theological underpinnings to support her version of sexualized religion. In "Janet's Repentance," the narrator is remarkably candid about the mixture of sexual attraction in the townswomen's "discipleship" for their beloved minister. Even more strikingly, the narrator is openly supportive of this mixture of eroticism with ostensible piety. The female "susceptibility towards the clerical sex" and "all the little agitations" that "a zealous evangelical clergyman" can inspire belong to "the divine necessity of loving" (275-76). Mr. Tynan's success with the women may be largely due to the romantic longing that he inspires, but the results are beneficent nonetheless: for the woman who dreams intensely of him as a future husband, he is simultaneously "the pastor who had opened to her a new life of piety and self-subjection" (328). His erotic appeal is part of what makes him an effective spiritual leader.

Indeed, the story of Mr. Tynan's success as a minister unfolds as the story of a relationship in which sublimated romantic interest is predominant. Janet Dempster moves from scorning Mr. Tynan to being his most faithful disciple,

and that "conversion"—which might also be labeled a "falling in love"—is simultaneously the process by which she redeems herself from the alcoholic degradation into which she has fallen. Although ostensibly a spiritual narrative, "Janet's Repentance" is shaped startlingly like a love-triangle: Janet escapes her abusive husband through his death and enters a blissful new union with Mr. Tynan, although one that will be consummated only in a vaguely promised afterlife.⁴ Here, the pastor's rescue of one "lost sheep" loses much of its force as a depiction of priestly activity because the story is so essentially a love tale. Yet by casting it as a "scene of clerical life," Eliot implicitly equates the caritas of universal altruism with the eros of individual attraction. The love that redeems becomes romantic in nature.

To some extent, this equation might seem a logical, even inevitable one. After all, both believers and non-believers can agree that one's direct experience of love most often comes through family and spousal interactions. And certainly the home allows ample scope for the exercise—or the neglect—of numerous virtues. Yet the idea that romantic love and family life necessarily provide an adequate moral arena is only one possible attitude among others. Both conservatives and early feminists questioned the association between family ties and a higher moral life. Kingsley's fervent celebration of purification through domesticity is at an opposite extreme from John Henry Newman's scathing portrayal of self-satisfied and self-centered married clergy in *Loss and Gain*. Nor were concerns about the extent to which family might detract from other responsibilities unique to Roman Catholic clergy. Staunchly Anglican Oxford dons were forbidden to marry lest marriage interfere with their college responsibilities.

In a similar pitting of familial against more general values, Florence Nightingale's private writings denounce family tyranny and protest that the individual must pursue higher goals than those of adorning the home hearth. Nightingale emphasizes that "The family has 'Too narrow a field for the development of an immortal spirit'" (Jenkins 43). In the previous century, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft had suggested that women's domesticity could actually be corrupting, leading them to a selfish concentration upon family concerns at the expense of more general welfare. Even mother-love, the subject of so many sentimental effusions, receives short shrift from Wollstonecraft's hands: "Parental affection is, perhaps, the blindest modification of perverse self-love," she begins, and goes on to add

The affection of some women for their children is, as I have before termed it, frequently very brutish: for it eradicates every spark of humanity. Justice, truth, everything is sacrificed by these Rebeahs, and for the sake of their own children they violate the most sacred duties,

that Kingsley is keenly aware of the erotic power of a man who is also a spiritual guide—and especially a confessor—to a woman, but he warns against the temptations involved in women seeking such guidance from men other than their husbands. The unmarried man who becomes a spiritual confidante of susceptible women is a *bête noire* for Kingsley.

forgetting the common relationship that binds the whole family on earth together. (226)

Throughout *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* Wollstonecraft argues against the idea that personal love (whether familial or sexual) can adequately fulfill and represent the full range of human duty and moral responsibility. Yet in Eliot and Kingsley, we see love relationships, and most often relationships based on sexual love, offered as the basis and starting point for moral development among both men and women, lay and clergy. Critic Dorothea Barrett supports such a view when she suggests apropos of her discussion of Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*, that "vocation and sexual fulfillment" are such closely allied "needs" that "the complete satisfaction of one [is] impossible if the other is denied and frustrated" (43). Barrett's claim that "[t]he celibate with a vocation will work less well . . . than the individual who finds fulfillment in both [vocational and sexual] hemispheres of her life" (43) is applicable to the full range of vocations, but it is especially striking in its application to spiritual life. No wonder, then, that the loves-lives of clerical characters receive such attention.

The fictional presentation of the priest both in Kingsley and in Eliot differs radically, then, from the ideal set forth in Carlyle's "The Hero as Priest." Both Kingsley and Eliot domesticate the priest, transferring his most important realm of action from that of public reform to that of domestic virtue. Even more strikingly, both unabashedly use the priest's romantic life, whether fulfilled or frustrated, as a way to demonstrate the full range of his priestly potential. The reader can recognize fully Mr. Irwine's heroism by the telling instance of Irwine's submission to an unwelcome celibacy for the sake of his female dependents. On a happier note, the reader can rest assured that Frank Headley will succeed as a cleric once he has succeeded as a lover. Modern commentators frequently note the patriarchalism of almost all forms of Victorian Christianity, and yet the type of church "patriarch" celebrated by Kingsley and Eliot gains authority by renouncing authoritarianism and achieves public acclaim by private tenderness.⁵ The tolerance and compassion of these representations cut across denominational boundaries (as the authors surely intended) and even across the boundary separating belief from disbelief and remain appealing today. Yet these representations are part of a pattern in Victorian fictional representations of a wide range of professions: they make romantic and familial relationships the type and trope

for all human ethical and emotional life.

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³Susan Chitty discusses these drawings in detail in her biography of Kingsley, *The Beast and the Monk*.

⁴Elisabeth Jay suggests that George Eliot's characterization of Mr. Tynan is close enough to conventional romance to be reminiscent of the "Orlando of Evangelical literature" that Eliot satirized in "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" (*Religion of the Heart* 230-31). Meanwhile, it is worth noting

⁵Christine Kreuger in *The Reader's Repentance* and Beth Tobin in *Superintending the Poor* have noted the tendency of female authors to attribute

"feminine" characteristics to the priestly characters of whom they approve and whom they present for the reader's admiration.

Victorian Ghostbusting: Gendered Authority in the Middle-Class Home

Susan E. Schaper

As the focal point of both domestic life and family identity, the Victorian home was inscribed with overlapping, often conflicting, components of middle-class authority. Under the dichotomy of separate spheres, the home celebrated the nurturing woman's intuitive insights, compassionate spirituality, and orderly conduct, while the commercial and professional realm allowed the middle-class man to prove himself through personal merit and acquired expertise. Both the domestic woman and the self-made man formed a rejoinder to upper-class assertions of inherited worth. Yet under scrutiny, these divisions between gendered roles and gendered territories are confounded by the invocation of the very aristocratic ideals they profess to reject: the domestic woman reveals a curious blend of resources and frailties drawn from the refined eighteenth-century woman of sensibility, whereas the self-made man embraces the values of domesticity while entertaining dynastic ambitions. When the house's position in the domestic province is privileged, women's particular talents are accentuated, but when the house is defined as a patrilineal site, the exercise of patriarchal power highlights the ostensible deficiencies in the female psyche. Through their depiction of homes beset with a rather unusual source of discord, haunted house stories offer an intriguing glimpse into the dynamics of gendered constructions of cultural power. Some haunted house stories present ghosts as either a disruption in domestic order or as a threat to dynastic stability, offering both sexes the opportunity to employ their particular form of authority. However, other stories portray the house as a palimpsest inscribed by both domestic and patriarchal values, admitting competing definitions of home and expressing the anxiety that occurs when either sex finds itself disempowered in an *unheimlich* perception of home.

Most recent studies of fiction's haunted houses have been explorations of the female Gothic, finding in the haunted house an expression of women's discomfort in the social and economic space assigned to them by a patriarchal culture.¹ In traditional Gothic novels, villains reveal the aristocracy's depravity in part by calculating women's worth according to their breeding, the size of their dowries, and their probable reproductive capabilities, that is, according to their potential contributions to dynastic succession. As an unwitting victim of patriarchal machinations, the Gothic heroine lacks both socio-economic strength and a shrewd understanding of how the patriarchal system of defining and transmitting power places her at risk. Her vulnerability is compounded by her nature as delineated by the cult of sensibility: after she learns that the house harbors some supernatural mystery, usually associated with a patriarchal plot, the aristocratic Gothic heroine is often too overcome by

her heightened emotions to efficiently uncover the secret mechanisms controlling her fate. When she verges on a face-to-face encounter with the source of her terror, she becomes incapacitated, fainting or losing command of her faculties of thought and speech.

In contrast, Victorian haunted house stories depicting the home as a domestic sphere governed through feminine influence feature protagonists who actively engage and exorcise disruptive ghosts. By casting the house as a feminine domain rather than a patriarchal realm, these stories authorize women to identify, diagnose, and remedy household disturbances. Furthermore, because the Victorian domestic woman is defined not only through her feelings, but also through her deeds, she typically extends to a troubled ghost the same attentive care she would apply to distressed mortals in her household. Examples of such stories include Lanoe Falconer's "Cecilia de Noel" (1891), Oscar Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost" (1887), and E. F. Benson's "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery" (1911). In Falconer's story, the ghost inhabiting the Atherley family home throws the house into turmoil. Housemaids become hysterical, the cook threatens to seek a new position, and houseguests who witness the tormented lost soul question their religious convictions. The ghost is released from its earthly hauntings and domestic order is restored when Atherley's cousin, Cecilia de Noel, a woman known for her generosity and natural piety, receives it with selfless compassion and guides it towards spiritual salvation. The Canterville Ghost is laid to rest when the sympathetic daughter of an American businessman charitably offers to expose herself to the terrors of death to effect his salvation. Similarly, the murdered twin toddlers in Benson's story are transformed from deadly apparitions to endearing supernatural guests when a distant descendent, Madge, is so touched by their plight that she greets them with pity and affection, dissolving the curse.

And yet the female protagonists of Victorian haunted house stories, emboldened by selflessness, personify not only a reaction against the aristocratic Gothic heroine, but also a mutation that shapes the latter's sensibility into a source of female empowerment. When compared to the active heroines in Victorian haunted house stories, the Gothic heroine may resemble an inept product of over-refinement, but her attention to emotional attachments, virtue, and taste rather than inherited status embodies the gendered construction of authority with which the middle class challenged aristocratic values (Armstrong 41). Furthermore, the impulses that move the haunted house heroine to action are rooted in the Gothic heroine's psychology. The eighteenth-century gentlewoman's finely tuned sentimentality imbues the Victorian domestic woman with empathy. Drawn as a creature of

thought and feeling rather than action, the Gothic heroine bequeathed to the Victorian woman the sensibilities required to transcend the material realm in the occult and related pseudo-sciences. Women played the primary role as subjects seeking healing in mesmeric trances, mediums serving as liaisons between the living and the dead, and powerful otherworldly figures in mid- and late-nineteenth-century literature, demonstrating the pervasive attraction of this form of feminine power.²

Women's susceptibility to occult manifestations, real or imagined, was often attributed by both skeptics and believers to women's innately and distinctly feminine nature. In *The Night-Side of Nature* (1850), Catherine Crowe explains that the biological and mental distinctions between the sexes make women more prone to visionary states that grant them access to the spirit world, claiming that "phenomena of this kind are more frequently developed in women than in men" because of "the essential difference between the sexes, which is not merely a physical but a psychological one" (216). She goes on to explain:

Man is more productive than receptive. . . . Thus the ecstatic woman will be more frequently a seer, instinctive and intuitive; man, a worker and a doer; and as all genius is a degree of ecstasy or clear-seeing, we perceive the reason wherefore in man it is more productive than in woman, and that our greatest poets and artists, in all kinds, are of the former sex, and even the most remarkable women produce but little science or art; while on the other hand, the feminine instinct, and tact, and intuitive seeing of truth, are frequently more sure than the ripe and deliberative judgement of man; and it is hence that solitude and such conditions as develop the passive and receptive at the expense of the more active, tend to produce this state, and to assimilate the man more to the nature of the woman; while in her they intensify these distinguishing characteristics; and this is also the reason that simple and childlike people and races are the most frequent subjects of these phenomena. (216-17)

This widely held view is supported by much Victorian supernatural fiction. In Mrs. Molesworth's "The Shadow in the Moonlight" (1888), for example, Lelia, the narrator, observes that her father and brothers are much more unsettled by the appearance of a ghost than are the women in the household. Lelia attributes her father's and her brothers' shock and bewilderment to men's rational nature; women, being more irrational, are more attuned to supernatural manifestations.

Although ghost-seeing could be attributed to some of the celebrated traits in woman's character—her intuition, compassion, spirituality, all qualities bestowing on her a value divorced from old family history—it is important to note that here, as in many issues centering on Victorian women, woman's innate strengths are inextricably bound up

with her weaknesses. Woman's power was paradoxically her frailty and consequently suspect and potentially destructive. If women were more sensitive to the supernatural, it was due to their affective natures, and as creatures of emotion rather than reason, they were subject to poor self-discipline. Therefore, an excessive devotion to otherworldly concerns or indulgence in introspection rather than outward interest in domestic affairs could deteriorate into mental illnesses such as morbidity and hysteria. As a result, ghost-seeing could be read as evidence of a selfless, sympathetic nature. Furthermore, skeptics often traced supernatural experiences to an afflicted female physiology—brain lesions or abnormalities in reproductive organs.³ As Alex Owen notes, "specialists in insanity were swift to categorize a belief in spiritualism as symptomatic of a diseased mind" (139).

Margaret Oliphant's story "The Library Window: A Story of the Seen and Unseen" (1896) dramatizes the ambivalent nature of female ghost-seeing in Victorian culture. The narrator, an adolescent girl visiting her elderly Aunt Mary, learns that a window in the college library across the street is a local curiosity because no one knows if it is a real window that looks into a room in the library or merely a blind window painted on the wall to give the building a symmetrical appearance. The narrator concludes that the window is real, and as the summer evenings grow longer, she is able to see into the room beyond the window, observing a man reading inside. She spends her evenings reading in a window seat and watching the scholar despite vague warnings that women of her family who are touched with the second sight become bewitched by this figure. When the narrator visits the library and discovers that there is no interior window corresponding to the one she has been watching for weeks, she is deeply distraught. Her sympathetic aunt explains that a female ancestor became infatuated with a scholar who studied in the library across the street. She persistently sought his attention, waving nightly from her window, and when her brothers discovered her brazen behavior, they murdered the scholar. Since then, his ghost has appeared to her female descendants, stealing their hearts in revenge.

Thus summarized, the story sounds like an account of supernatural visitation. However, an alternative reading attributes the girl's vision to adolescent female mental instability. As Elaine Showalter notes in *The Female Malady*, girls entering puberty were thought to be very susceptible to mental illness because Victorians associated female sexuality with female madness. Signs of emerging mental instability included restlessness, a desire for solitude, introspection, an avid interest in reading, and an active interest in the opposite sex (74-77). The narrator in Oliphant's tale displays all of these symptoms. She has been sent to visit her aunt to recover from an unidentified illness, and she is by nature "fantastic and fanciful and dreamy," "a girl who may happen to like poetry and to be fond of thinking" (211). After weeks of voluntary seclusion, reading, and day-

²See Basham, Oppenheim, Owen, and Auerbach.

³For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between nineteenth-century perceptions of women and spiritualism, see Owen. Her chapter "Medicine,

Mediumship and Mania" in particular explores the attacks leveled against spiritualism based on medical assessments of the causes and symptoms of insanity in women.

¹See, for example, Moers, Doody, Ellis, and Fleenor.

dreaming, the narrator first glimpses the scholar and becomes increasingly fascinated with him until he is an obsession. Her anxious aunt advises her niece "you must not aye be dreaming—your little head will turn" (230). The narrator remembers that her aunt's guests notice that she has become "pale and . . . could not be well because I paid no attention when they talked to me, and did not care to go out, nor to join the other girls for their tennis, nor to do anything the others did" (233). One night she daringly slips out unchaperoned to keep watch under the window, hoping for a sign from the scholar—arguably immodest sexual behavior. Her mother, urgently summoned, comes to take her daughter abroad to restore her mental equilibrium.

"The Library Window" portrays an almost exclusively female environment. The narrator leaves her mother's bustling household to live with her aunt, whose life centers on gossiping women visitors. Nevertheless, this female enclave is haunted by its patriarchal history and suffers encroachment from the surrounding contemporary masculine world. The scholar, after all, was murdered by autocratic brothers intent on preserving the family's reputation. The busy street divides the college buildings and the masculine community of scholarship from the aunt's cloistered home, yet the parallel windows allow disruptive glimpses of the male world into the female sphere. Although the narrator's aunt receives only one male visitor among her flock of callers, the women readily submit to him, clustering around and treating him "like an oracle" (214). Indeed, he is the one who first draws the narrator's attention to the mysterious window looking in on her own. This intrusive masculinity displaces the domestic woman's authority, translating the matrilineal gift of second sight into women's weakness.

Female ghost-seeing, then, is profoundly equivocal in Victorian culture. It can serve as a testimonial to woman's highly developed sensitivity and offer her the opportunity to extend both her talent for care-giving and propensity for religion into the realm of spiritual suffering. However, ghost-seeing can also indicate psychological instability. When the home is depicted as a feminine realm, as in "Cecilia de Noel" and "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery," female ghost-seeing registers women's strengths, but when the home begins to assume patriarchal nuances, as in "The Library Window," the debilitating aspect of the feminine ghost-seeing gains the upper hand, and the female protagonist may find herself, like the Gothic heroine, disempowered by her femininity in an *unheimlich* house.

If, as Nancy Armstrong claims, "the modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (8), and the middle class initially distinguished itself from the upper classes by endorsing domestic morality, then the earliest construction of Victorian masculinity implicitly partakes of feminine values, and

masculine social orientation directs men toward the female domain, blurring the boundaries between gendered consciousness and separate spheres. Although most commentators stress the woman's role in domesticity—rearing children, managing servants, and developing the social and aesthetic arts considered imperative to an agreeable middle-class home—in reality, Victorian men often attended seriously to their duties as fathers, acknowledged some responsibility in overseeing servants, and appreciated feminine contributions to the family's moral atmosphere.

During early decades of the Victorian period, perceptions of masculinity rooted in what Walter E. Houghton has called the "cult of benevolence" valued deep affections openly expressed. The fictional death scenes of Dickens characters, particularly children, famously moved men to tears, and in real life, many early Victorian fathers committed to fostering a warm family life exhibited loving attachments to their wives and children (Davidoff and Hall 329-35).⁴ The mid-Victorian period, however, witnessed a reaction against the "domestic man" through a new image of masculinity emphasizing courage, decisiveness, and self-discipline—all qualities dependent on a man's ability to hold his feelings firmly in check.⁵ While such a normative masculinity curtailed participation in a particular construction of home, it was instrumental in the middle-class man's pursuit of economic and social advancement.

Although the middle class liked to imagine their homes as an embodiment of distinctively middle-class virtues, their social aspirations also led them to emulate aristocratic understandings of family homes as a symbol of power. Richard Cobden observed in the middle of the nineteenth century that "every successful trader buys an estate and tries to perpetuate his name . . . by creating an eldest son" (qtd. in Thompson 158). "The House of . . ." had operated for centuries as a standard trope for referring to a living family, its ancestors, and descendants; its political power and social alignments; its customs; and its economic assets and real property. Now ambitious bourgeois men designated their households as budding dynasties. The mystique of the dynastic family had a powerful hold on the British imagination, and middle-class men often espoused a modified version of aristocratic patrimony by envisioning, like *Dombey*, a business venture as a commercial equivalent to a landed estate; others merely adopted the dynastic conception of home and family. While haunted house stories featuring female exorcists typically depict a ghost as a lost soul requiring the protagonist's compassion, male-centered stories present a supernatural visitation as a genuine threat to the family's stability and longevity as a social institution.

Since ghost-seeing's complex association with women identifies it with mental instability, poor physical health, and

effeminacy, one form of haunted house story dramatizes patriarchal anxieties through the figure of the ghost-seeing son. Young boys who have not yet reached puberty or passed through male rites of passage are particularly susceptible to ghost-seeing through their alliance with the feminine. R. H. Benson's "Father Brent's Tale" (1907), for example, features an eleven-year-old boy who has been kept from attending school because he is "a particularly sensitive boy, a little hysterical at times, and very serious" (61).⁶ The boy sees phantom Phoenician ships, a phenomenon he will presumably outgrow, since the adults in the story see and hear only the water from the ships' wake. Most stories, however, present boyish ghost-seeing as a distinctly unhealthy abnormality that must be eradicated before the youthful ghost-seer can mature to sound masculinity. In E. F. Benson's "The Psychical Mallards," Tim Mallard's father is pleased when his prescient and telekinetic son attends public school, excels at sports, and forms "an excellent repugnance for learning" (609) because these masculine developments suggest that Tim's psychic powers are waning. The middle-aged Galbraiths in Louisa Baldwin's "The Uncanny Bairn: A Story of Second Sight" (1892) are relieved when they finally have a son to assure the continuation of the family line. The boy, Sandie, is feeble, sickly child and spends the first seven years of his life being cared for by his mother and nursemaid. When Sandie's premonition that a neighbor is going to die comes true, Sandie's father blames this behavior on feminine influence and makes raising Sandie his responsibility, keeping Sandie with him throughout his days of outdoor farm work. When Sandie is nine years old, his father gives him a gun, thinking it is "high time that he set about learning to kill something or other" (282). Sandie responds appropriately to this gift of masculine rite of passage; the gun brings out the "latent boy." After Sandie foresees his father's premature death, Sandie's premonitions pass away and he grows up to take his father's place as a strong man and prosperous farmer.⁷

In these stories, the ghost-seer is "cured" of his infantile affliction simply through naturally maturing into adult masculinity, with a little help from male institutions and rituals. However, in most patriarchal haunted house stories, the supernatural proves to be a much more challenging opponent, and the conflict between the would-be dynast and the unwelcome ghost dramatizes the bourgeois man's limitations when he attempts a role for which his social status and domestic values have not prepared him.

In Margaret Oliphant's "The Open Door" (1882), Colonel Mortimer and his family return to England from India and rent a country house while they search for a suitable home to buy. Mortimer is particularly pleased to

situate his family in the country because he suspects that growing up in India has effeminized his only surviving son, Roland.⁸ Mortimer fears that Roland is too "fragile in body . . . sensitive in mind" (150). Although Mortimer is fond of all of his children, he dotes on Roland, "the most precious life on earth" (162). Mortimer hopes that living in the bracing Scottish climate will toughen Roland up, making him resistant to the fevers that killed his brothers and instilling manly fortitude. Within a few months, Roland's father is relieved to see that his "pale-faced boy, who had never known anything more invigorating than Simla," begins "to acquire something of the brown and ruddy complexion of his schoolfellows" (150). When winter comes, however, Roland appears to fall ill with brain fever and suffers from auditory hallucinations, hearing a pathetic voice crying "oh, mother, let me in" at the ruins of the old manor house on the estate. Mortimer is chilled by the possibility that Roland is afflicted with the "hysterical temperament and weak health and all that men most hate and fear for their children" (158).

Unlike "Cecilia de Noel" and "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery," which identify a restless household spirit as a subject needing a woman's care, "The Open Door" presents putting the ghost to rest as a man's job. Roland dismisses his mother as a prospective exorcist, asking his father to give succor to the ghost (156-59). Mortimer in turn is assisted by other men—his butler, the neighborhood doctor, and the local minister. The minister, acquainted with the personal tragedies of the old manor's residents, identifies the ghost as Willie, the dead housekeeper's prodigal son, who returned home too late to receive his mother's forgiveness. The vicar instructs Willie to seek his mother in her heavenly home, where she resides with Willie's spiritual Father, and the ghost vanishes. Roland quickly regains his health, and Mortimer realizes the bourgeois ambition of gentrification, purchasing a rural seat and rearing a healthy heir.

In "The Open Door," men rather than women attend to spiritual suffering, illness, and emotional distress within the home. (Indeed, only men hear and respond to Willie's ghost calling out for "Mother.") It is important to note, however, that Mortimer is unable to master the situation himself. Mortimer perceives his home as both domestic circle and dynastic site, and this double inscription forces upon him the roles of domestic man and landed patriarch. As Mortimer discovers, membership in the cult of benevolence disables the late-Victorian male, and his middle-class background has not equipped him to function as patriarch.

Throughout the story, Mortimer seems dangerously close to becoming unmanned by emotional attachment to his son. Learning that "the light of his eyes" has fallen ill, he rushes home, "not capable of anything but to ask questions

⁴Although recent critical attention has focused largely on the angel of the house as the source of parental devotion, it is important not to overlook the caring fathers portrayed in fiction and fondly recalled in memoirs and autobiographies. Elizabeth Gaskell pointedly compares John Barton's tender kindness towards small children to Mr. Carson's loving pride in his son Harry. Paul Davis has demonstrated that for many late Victorians, the most moving aspect of *A Christmas Carol* was Bob Cratchit's attachment to Tiny Tim (83-88). Molly Hughes affectionately remembers her playful,

indulgent father in her reminiscences of her childhood during the 1870s. The last two examples indicate that although the prevalent image of proper manliness prioritized disciplined emotions, many Victorian fathers continued to openly display their love for their children.

⁵See for example MacKenzie, Mangan, Oppenheim (145-51) and Springhall and for a thorough analysis of the tensions embedded in Victorian masculinity constructed as an ascetic regimen, see Adams.

⁶For an account of the pervasive mid- and late-Victorian belief that children's delicate nervous systems easily gave way under the strain of academic pressure, see Oppenheim (239-49).

⁷Sandie's father must die before Sandie can assume his position as the hereditary head of the household, nodding perhaps to the death of the father implicitly invoked in patrilineal efforts to achieve family immortality through a succession of male heirs. This theme is darkly played out in Mrs. Oliphant's eerie, although not ghostly, story "A Christmas Tale" (1857) in which the narrator dreams that each heir to the Witcherley estate

must produce only one son and that each son must kill his father on the eve of his wedding because the estate cannot support two squires.

⁸As James Eli Adams has noted, for much of the Victorian period, "effeminacy" referred to the antithesis of such definitive masculine qualities as courage and self-discipline rather than carrying the later connotations of homosexuality (4, 150). In this analysis of fictional haunted houses, gender constructions position heterosexual masculinity and femininity in opposition, and lapses in "manliness" communicate "femininity" rather than homosexuality.

and hear of the condition of the boy" (154). Mortimer's account of the conversations with his bed-ridden son reveals as much about Mortimer's emotional state as it does about the ghost in the ruins. In these passages, Mortimer devotes considerable attention to describing the expressions on Roland's face, descriptions which not only indicate Roland's distress and sympathy for the suffering ghost, but Mortimer's own debilitating lack of detachment. Mortimer recalls that Roland "looked at me with that grateful, sweet look with which children, when they are ill, break one's heart" (156) and "My boy opened his eyes, which were large with weakness and fever, and gave me a smile such, I think, as sick children only have the secret of" (158). Indeed, Mortimer is so consumed by familial sentiment that he cannot employ faculties he exercised outside the domestic sphere. As a retired military officer, Mortimer should be able to clear his head in a crisis, display self-discipline, and exact obedience from his inferiors. Yet when Mortimer investigates the ruins with his butler, who served under him in India, Mortimer can barely repress his own fear or urge his petrified butler into action. Indeed, in the dark, Mortimer and his butler mistake each other for the ghost: the butler faints from terror, and Mortimer's account of his own reaction to the supposed ghost sounds suspiciously like an evasive reference to a similar collapse: "it was some time before I awoke to the necessities of the moment" (169). When Mortimer's awareness of the situation is restored, he helps his butler home and asks first Simpson, the doctor, and then Moncreiff, the minister, to silence the anguished voice.

"The Open Door" insinuates that a model for a middle-class masculinity adept at resolving domestic troubles must be sought outside the home. In this story, the elderly Moncreiff proves to be the ideal exorcist, a clerical father motivated by benevolence but informed and empowered through a historical patriarchal institution. Unlike Mortimer, he channels his compassion into active service and commands the ghost to go home. Yet Mortimer depicts Moncreiff as something of an anachronism, a relic from a previous age. In truth, Simpson more accurately anticipates an emerging, enduring manifestation of middle-class masculine authority—the rational, educated specialist, whose acquired expertise confirms the powers of the self-made man.

Such a figure serves as the hero of E. and H. Heron's "Real Ghost Stories" (1898-99), twelve tales featuring the exploits of Flaxman Low, a seasoned ghostbuster man whose confrontations with household haunts affirm his masculinity rather than feminizing him.⁹ In fact, the second Low tale goes so far as to claim ghost-seeing as an index of essential masculinity. In "The Story of Medhans Lea" (1898), Harland, the new tenant of a haunted house, is a rugged,

unrefined colonial who made his fortune managing tea plantations. A "muscular, inoffensive, good-natured man, with courage to spare" (137), Harland excels at men's games, and his ruddy complexion testifies to a healthy constitution and hearty disposition. When Harland is interrupted during a billiards game by a wailing ghost, he believes it is a kitten or child in trouble and eagerly sets off to rescue it. While the ghost temporarily invades Harland's body, throwing him into a seizure, it leaves his companions unscathed. Low realizes that "closest of all [to the ghost] would be big, kindly Harland, with more than one strong animal instinct about him, and whose bulk and matter was evidently permeated by a receptive spirit" (145). Distinguishing between an effeminate delicacy and nervousness and a truly masculine propensity for ghost-seeing, the story attributes Harland's interest in the welfare of other creatures and apparent susceptibility to the supernatural to a constitutive manly core of virility, frank simplicity, and staunch camaraderie.

Although Harland's receptiveness to the apparition haunting his house attests to a candid, basic manliness grounded in "animal instincts," it also renders him more vulnerable to spiritual possession. While late Victorians believed that masculinity, like femininity, was founded in a set of inherent, fundamental instincts and impulses, the highest form of manliness showed itself in the careful management of the essential self. Harland's vigor and fearlessness attest to a primal masculinity, but his crude impetuosity indicates that he lacks the self-restraint by which the exemplary man can be identified. Women in haunted house stories best exorcise ghosts by acting on their tender instincts and generous impulses, but Low banishes domestic revenants by exerting the strength through self-discipline. The "Real Ghost Stories" underscore the importance late Victorians assigned to the control over oneself which in turn enabled one to exercise authority over others (Adams 189), in this case, the supernatural. "The Story of Saddler's Croft" (1899) gravely warns that "Extremely few persons are sufficiently masters of themselves to permit of their calling in the vast unknown forces outside ordinary human knowledge for purposes of amusement" (176).

At Saddler's Croft, the primary perpetrators are a pair of moon-worshippers: Mrs. Corcoran, an American with an avid curiosity about the occult, and Mr. Sinclair, a sickly "weak-willed man of strong emotions" whose primary preoccupation is his adulterous "reckless, headstrong admiration" for Mrs. Corcoran (179). Unlike Low's studies, which the narrator suggests can legitimately be labeled "psychology" because of Low's deliberate scholarly habits, Mrs. Corcoran's interests are dismissed as a trendy hobby pursued with an unregulated passion. One of Low's male friends

explains that she is "wild on studying Psychology, as she calls it," and Low responds with a condescending, "So Mrs. Corcoran has a turn that way?" (177). Of course throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, many women "had a turn that way," and the female spiritualist was typically regarded as an influential figure commanding domestic space during the seance. "Saddler's Croft" explores the somber implications informing spiritualism's vocabulary of domination and docility, in which sensitives suspended their active wills and allowed themselves to serve as "mediums" or "channels" through which supernatural "controls" established a dialogue with the living. "Saddler's Croft" asserts that a woman, naturally passive and easily influenced by others, or a man who allows himself to become a slave to his passions, will likely lack the proper "mastery" of self to safely invoke the occult. Mrs. Corcoran's zeal leads her to fall easily under Sinclair's influence when she learns that he once belonged to a cult of Dianists, and Sinclair's unrestrained desire for Mrs. Corcoran softens his resistance to the power of a dead Dianist priest. Dianist ghosts summon sleepwalking Mrs. Corcoran to attend their rites, and the spirit of the dead priest passes into Sinclair's body. When Flaxman Low crashes a nocturnal ritual, he too finds the ghosts' chants alluring, but "habits of self-control have been Low's only shield in many a dangerous hour" (183), and Low exorcises the ghosts by maintaining authority over his mind and body (182). As Low explains in a later story, if "you are fighting against supernatural powers, the very first point is to keep firm and calm control of your thoughts and feelings" ("Sevens Hall" 31). In the "Real Ghost Stories," domestic revenants pose a serious threat to mortal human residents' well-being, often taking possession of their minds and bodies, and only a man in full command of himself can safely confront the supernatural.

In keeping, then, with the conventions informing many fictional haunted house stories, the "Real Ghost Stories" suggest that failure at self-mastery may render one more susceptible to ghostly presences. According to these conventions, the people who are least adept at practicing self-control—women, servants, and so-called savages—claim access to the supernatural as their special province, and inquiries into ghost-lore were typically directed to the unmanly discourse of women's gossip and primitive superstition. Breaking with this tradition, the "Real Ghost Stories" propose an alternative means for obtaining knowledge of the supernatural through delineating the supernatural as a field of serious academic study and designating the professional man as the respectable expert. Low maintains that the "supernatural" is no more than an unexplored dimension of the natural world—it merely seems other-worldly because humans have not yet assembled a complete picture of its components and mechanics. Low explains:

Suppose a saddle and a horse-shoe were to be shown to a man who had never seen a horse, I doubt whether he, however intelligent, could evolve the connecting idea. The ways of spirits are strange to us simply because we need further data to help us interpret them.

("Spaniards" 63)

Low claims his studies endeavor "to eliminate what you would call the supernatural element. I deal with these mysterious affairs as far as possible on material lines" ("Yand Manor" 586). Low describes himself as a specialist in the medical-psychological field, remarking, "I consider that I stand just one step above the specialist who makes a study of brain disease and insanity; he is at work on the disorders of the embodied spirit, while I deal with abnormal conditions of the free and detached spirit" ("Moor Road" 248). By transporting the supernatural into the realm of rational, secular, professional knowledge from which women were largely excluded, the "Real Ghost Stories" effectively deny women expertise or authority in spiritual matters.

In addition to re-configuring the gendered implications of ghost-seeing and ghost-lore, the "Real Ghost Stories" significantly redefine home, formerly woman's sphere or dynastic site, as an extension of the exclusively male world of conquest and discovery. Low is usually invited to the site of the haunting by an acquaintance from his university days or a man who has learned of Low's reputation through the male network of clubs and school ties. Although a number of the haunted houses that Low investigates harbor women engaged in such feminine pursuits as novel-reading, entertaining, aiding the poor, and courtship, their activities are trivialized and assigned a peripheral position to the central business of the stories, exorcising ghosts. The men who gather at the haunted house to "get to the bottom" of the disturbance resemble a hunting party, scientific expedition, or group of military officers planning a coup against an elusive enemy, and the house itself is reconstructed as a battleground, a laboratory, or a supernatural dark continent.

Annexing the home as a male space enables Low to repeatedly immerse himself in haunted households without becoming infected by a pervasive atmosphere of femininity. In fact, each time Low is called into action to expel a ghost, he augments his masculinity like an old campaigner or a seasoned explorer. In many other haunted house stories, ghosts indirectly or unintentionally distress human inhabitants; it is simply their presence rather than any focused desire to harm the living that generates discomfort or danger. In the "Real Ghost Stories," however, most revenants are "animated solely by a blind malignity to the human race" ("Moor Road" 256). One of Low's recurring explanations for hauntings is his belief in a continual struggle between humans and residual "elemental" evil forces. When Low's supernatural opponents assume corporeal form, he engages them in physical combat, and every victory accentuates his skills as a fighting man.

Yet like most professional men, Low relies on mental rather than physical vigor. Reacting to the pervasive fears that bookish habits like those adopted by the narrator of Oliphant's "Open Window" invited effeminate forms of instability, the narrator of the Low stories pointedly construes cerebral pursuits as a rigorous masculine enterprise. Low's studies require of him the same staying power and balance between self-control and daring as sport or military endeavors. Even linguistics becomes a pursuit vaguely akin to combat: "Low is a man who finds defeat intolerable; with him there is no end to a struggle, he will pursue the interpretation of a tough linguistic problem in exactly the same

⁹A number of recent studies, including D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (146-91) and Tamar Heller's *Dead Secrets* have noted the feminine characteristics initially exhibited by male protagonists in sensation fiction. Miller and William Patrick Day (50-61) believe that feminine qualities assist domestic detectives in their investigations, but it is important to note that most sensation novel heroes have shed their feminine traits by the novels' resolutions. In sensation fiction, solving a domestic mystery operates as a male rite of passage; male protagonists must cleanse the household of its dark, destructive secrets before they assume a position at its head. As the

predominant late-Victorian construction of masculinity increasingly strove to separate itself from what was broadly classified as feminine "nerves" (Oppenheim 145-51), the domestic detective became a more ambivalent figure. Ian Ousby has identified a decadent strain of eccentric nervousness and erratic temperament in the Sherlock Holmes of the 1880s stories, but notes that after the Oscar Wilde scandal in the mid-1890s, Doyle portrayed Holmes as a decisive man of steady character, differing from the image of middle-class male respectability only in his superior intelligence and rather unusual choice of occupation (156-70).

spirit as he applies himself to the elucidation of the most baffling and dangerous psychical phenomena" ("Crowsedge" 482). On the forefront of progress, Low develops modern methods marked by their masculine "boldness and originality" ("Spaniards" 60). And in keeping with a number of other developing disciplines—e.g. cultural and physical anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary biology—Low's psychical research turns to the past in order to move forward. Low specializes not only in psychology but in history; he is "a man who has dived deep into the past and also explored daringly beyond the borders of that vast realm of mystery" ("Crowsedge" 482). A noted antiquarian and Egyptologist ("Grey House" 473), Low often uses his knowledge of extinct pagan religions to explain a household haunting. Many of the ghosts Low expels are "Earth elements"—primitive remnants from a spiritual prehistory that may predate human existence. Through his research and experience "in the field," Low is producing a kind of encyclopedic occult history that transcends cultural and epochal boundaries.

Like Low, female ghost-seers must also delve into the past in order to exorcise household ghosts, but the character of their knowledge and the manner in which they employ it emphasize my final distinction between the enterprising man's and the nurturing woman's encounters with the supernatural. Women's liberating sympathy is stimulated by learning a specific, narrowly circumscribed biography—Virginia Otis hears from the Canterville ghost how he met his death through incarceration and starvation, Cecilia de Noel begs the Weald Manor ghost to tell her its sad tale, and Madge remembers the haunted twins' violent death. As Ruskin contended in "Of Queens' Gardens," women have little need of an objective and comprehensive grasp of history because "it is not the object of education to turn the woman into a dictionary." Rather a woman

should be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination; to apprehend with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too often eclipses by his reasoning, and disconnects by his arrangement; it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch sight, through darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with retribution. (126)

Ruskin recommends this fragmentary but empathetic study of history because it will encourage women to apply their inherent sympathies, aroused by reading about the past, to people suffering in the present, just as Cecilia de Noel, Virginia Otis, and Madge extend their pity to the restless dead in homes depicted as domestic spaces rather than fields of conquest.

When these female characters subdue household ghosts with their feminine compassion, they demonstrate the power of the domestic woman, the middle-class symbol of authority embedded in character rather than genteel parentage. Yet the domestic woman was also supposed to present to "old" upper-class families an assertion of distinctly middle-class worth, and Cecilia de Noel and Madge, who administer to

their household ghosts like middle-class domestic woman, have genteel connections. By the end of the Victorian period, the cult of domesticity included much of the upper classes in its membership. The advance of the middle-class female gender constructions into the upper classes confirmed middle-class authority: either the middle-class woman's character was worth imitating, or middle-class influence had become so pervasive that it enacted a subtle conquest of upper-class culture. Stories in which household ghosts are dispelled by the power of the domestic woman, be she a businessman's daughter or an aristocrat, imply that the quiet force of the middle-class feminine character supersedes the authority of family history.

However, in a number of haunted house stories appearing at the end of the century, the ultimate source of cultural authority lay not in essential middle-class femininity but in essential masculine "animal instincts" governed by rational self-discipline, a productive combination that allegedly animated the British empire's economic and territorial expansion. Like the domestic woman, the heroic specialist affirmed middle-class value in the absence of a distinguished family lineage, and, like the domestic woman, disseminated a set of dominant gender norms into the upper classes. Ruskin claimed that

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not; each completes the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give. (121)

This perspective was endorsed by many of Ruskin's contemporaries, but the reality was often that, without suffrage, or access to most professions, limited rights to own property (a condition at least partly relieved by the Married Women's Property Act of 1882), and generally operating under an ideology that stressed women's mental and physical inferiority, the power attributed to women could be readily overridden by the power attributed to men. The "Real Ghost Stories" dramatize this displacement through redefining feminizing ghost-seeing and the feminizing sphere.

Despite repeated affirmations of women's supremacy in domestic space, the stabilizing center from which middle-class men emerged to engage in the aggressive "battle of life," the "Real Ghost Stories" demonstrate the ease with which feminine virtue could be supplanted by masculine athleticism, rational faculties, and educated expertise. Haunted house stories claim the home as a site where the middle class revealed its distinctive merits and confirm that both men and women could employ their respective powers to neutralize the disconcerting effects of an unaccommodating past. Yet by exercising superior masculine strength, intellect, and self-discipline, the figure of Flaxman Low proposes that the most potent authority in late century middle-class identity lay not in the domestic woman or the aspiring bourgeois dynast, but in the expansionist, progressive self-reliant man.

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Pristine Nostalgia in the Novels of Charles Dickens*

John Hulsman

Charles Dickens is the great mid-Victorian icon whose fabulous and uneven canon is fascinating for what it both conceals and reveals of English culture from the 1840s through the 1870s. As we know, he is the producer of a powerful strain of English sentimentality that has had sufficient afterlives to constitute an ongoing history in itself, his greatest sentimental creation being, of course, "Christmas." Lately, he is even the subject of postmodern theory and art. Jay Clayton finds his hyperreal imaginative world a kind of precursor postmodern simulacrum and calls attention to Salmon Rushdie's similar perception in the *Satanic Verses*, where a party takes place on the set of a movie version of *Our Mutual Friend*. The set is a street recreating Dickensian London on which "the landmarks of Dickens' imagination lie shoulder to shoulder in hallucinatory proximity" (619). This Dickensian unreality, now hospitable to postmodern entertainments, is related to his style of romance novel, with its reliance on archetypes of loss of identity and recognition, rather than psychological realism. Ahistorical nostalgia is natural to this style, an examination of which provides useful insight into the life of the works.

Dickens's own most characteristic nostalgia generally consists of pristine, idealizing, mnemonic interludes relating to a lost childhood, hearth and home, the rural retreat, the mother's gaze, and the protective goodness of the yeomanry. Yet these pervasive nostalgic spaces are much more than the implausible totalizing dead-end myth that George Orwell and others have criticized. They are stabilizing images in an extraordinarily mobile world. As such they are transformative, producing the impetus for the great task of recreating the English "national family," even into the colonies, which is the central action of Dickens's fiction, and, within that family, creating the identity of the ideal capitalist. To study Dickens's use of the nostalgic past in his novels is, as Northrup Frye noted of myth, not to find the past but to discover the cultural form of the present (346).

At first such claims seem excessive given the simple structure of feelings in this type of nostalgia, which Sylvère Monod calls "childhood made perennial" (14). All Dickens biographers are fascinated by the extent to which Dickens's famous childhood trauma indelibly stamped his personality and art, making recurrence to a dreamy past an obsessive trait in his narratives. In brief, in 1824, at age 12, he suffered physical deprivation and acute shame over a four-month period when he labored in a blacking factory and lived more or less in the streets while his father was detained in the Marshalsea Prison as a debtor. As a result, the aura of a lost childhood animates every facet of his art. As the narrator of "A Christmas Tree" (*Christmas Stories*) says, "My thoughts are drawn back, by a fascination which I do not care to resist, to my own childhood" (4). The slightest incidents of childhood are unforgettable in his stories, often evoking pas-

sionate longings and regrets. Belying Freudian amnesia, all the sensations, emotions, and thought processes of children remain familiar to him and are presented with an arresting truthfulness in his best work. In "The First of May" (*Sketches by Boz*), the narrator rhapsodizes:

But what are the deep forests, or the thundering waters, or the richest landscapes that bounteous nature ever spread, to charm the eyes, and capture the senses of man, compared with the recollection of the old scenes of his early youth? Magic scenes, indeed; for the fancies of childhood dressed them in colors brighter than the rainbow and almost as fleeting. (169)

Smike, the orphan in *Nicholas Nickleby*, has never known "those lightsome hours which make our childhood a time to be remembered like a happy dream through all our afterlife" (785). Deeply prejudiced in favor of his own vision, Dickens, in "Lying Awake" (*Reprinted Pieces*) finds it "pretty certain . . . that we all dreamed much more of our youth than of our later lives" (433). Such sentiments abound in the fiction, journalism, and letters.

The gauzy romantic longing for unspoiled innocence and perfect harmony, a fantasized childhood enjoyed against a backdrop of the simple rural village of the first quarter of the century, is mythic in a way that would seem to close the world, to build an impassable barrier to historical self-awareness, but instead it is instrumental in an original way, as I hope to show, and should not be confused with the stock-in-trade of English cultural nostalgia of the mid-century, well represented by, for example, George Eliot's idealized communal history of the English Old Order. In *Adam Bede*, the narrator celebrates a personification of the rural past called "Old Leisure":

Leisure is gone—gone where the spinning wheels are gone, and the pack horses and show-wagons, and the pedlars, who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons. . . . He was a contemplative, rather stout gentleman, of excellent digestion,—of quiet perception, undiseased by hypothesis; happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves. He lived chiefly in the country, among pleasant seats and homesteads, and was fond of sauntering by the fruit tree wall. . . . (484-85)

In the mobile world of Dickens, the remembrance of the lost happy world inhabited by Old Leisure is not an end but a beginning; it is a Wordsworthian rejuvenation, a powerful engine for social bonding. The standard movement of the Dickens plot—a rapid, oft repeated, city to country and back motion operating in tandem with a pattern of adult dilemma

interrupted by childhood memories—goes to the heart of the ambiguity of the age. Sensitive heroes like Pip and David are severed from the hearth at a young age, thus treasuring all fragments of joyful memory, and propelled into the isolating and humanly devalued metropolis, which is governed by the ubiquitous, triumphant, occult system of capitalism. In *Culture and Society: 1780-1850*, Raymond Williams has treated the conflict that arose between the new aggressive economic individualism of industrial democracy and the countervailing need to preserve the historical community. Dickens's fiction is the perfect illustration. His heroes and other sympathetic characters like Pip, David Copperfield, Paul Dombey, Little Dorrit, and Nicholas Nickleby, as well as their cohorts—Mr. Micawber, Tommy Traddles, Herbert Pocket, Tom Pinch, and many others—are distinctly unpromising citizens of the Kingdom of Capitalism, innocent children in the world of the New Economics. They confront an emerging society of "red tape," statistics, the Circumlocution Office, market speculation, and the Kafkaesque labyrinth of Chancery. As Foucault has demonstrated, modern Benthamite man is born of regulations. Moreover, the "cash nexus" has replaced the immemorial communal national life based on blood, estate, trade, locale, and other terms of belonging that Carlyle referred to as the "organic filaments" holding a society together. Dickens is confronting, in effect, a mid-Victorian crisis in filiation.

The pull of these two forces is the dynamic of the novels, as the remembrance of the idyllic past, unattainable except in memory or dream, is the energy that impels the hero to "change" In this regard, Dickens offers a representative anecdote in *Great Expectations* in which he plays on the word *change* itself. As Pip, the poor backward child, leaves Joe, the beloved blacksmith forge, and his village to pursue his Great Expectations in the unlikely role of a future London gentleman, he yearns to return home at each "change," or stagecoach stop, on the road to the great city:

I deliberated with an aching heart whether I would not get down when we changed horses, and walk back, and have another evening at home, and a better parting. We changed, and I had not made up my mind, and still reflected for my comfort that it would be quite practicable to get down and walk back, when we changed again. And while I was occupied with these deliberations, I would fancy an exact resemblance to Joe in some man coming along the road towards us, and my heart would beat high.—As if he could possibly be there.

We changed again, and yet again, and it was now too late and too far to go back, and I went on. And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me. (158)

Another example of the transformative nature of Dickensian nostalgia can be seen in the infatuation with the word *old* that runs through the novels, sentimentally attaching itself to anything familiar from the past. In *Oliver Twist*, the "old gentleman," possibly robbed by Oliver, assumes the latter's innocence when he seems to recognize his face in the memory of beloved countenances from the distant past: "faces that the grave had changed and closed upon, but which

the mind, superior to its power, still dressed in their old freshness and beauty" (62). The paradoxical relationship between "old" and "freshness" is typical of Dickens, who found the aura of the old memories invigorating. Pip's recovery from his illness occasioned by the traumatic deaths of Magwitch and Miss Havisham is a "new beginning," one of many in the novel, that will shortly lead him to the colonies and success in business. Not surprisingly, his emergence, as he is nursed by Joe, corresponds to a reversion to the "old," to the past:

As I became stronger and better, Joe became a little less easy with me. In my weakness and entire dependence on him, the dear fellow had fallen into the old tone, and called me by the old names, the dear "old Pip, old chap." that now were music to my ears. I too had fallen into the old ways. . . . But imperceptibly, though I held by them fast, Joe's hold upon them began to slacken. (465-66)

Pristine nostalgia, the pure memory of a past to which one can never return, receives its aura from distance. As the Dickensian hero careens from episode to episode in the great rush of London, the regular occurrence of the memory of a pure past serves a clear function. Walter Benjamin's description of Proust's *memoir involontaire* in his essay, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (*Illuminations*), is apposite. It is the peculiar nostalgia of the mind that can no longer assimilate the complexity of the modern urban world. Such a protective remembrance—focal, intense, and narrowed—is the normal response of the isolated individual in the midst of the crowded city. Wordsworthian "spots of time," remembrances of specific rural impressions, occur, as we are told in "Tintern Abbey," "mid the din / of towns and cities" and bring the speaker back to himself. Dickens's idealizations of the old village, the dead mother's face, Joe at the forge, etc. are restorative "recognitions" in a much larger sense: they become the engine for creating a new extended family to replace the old lost one. In this sense, his characters' reveries have precisely the opposite function of those of the Baudelairean *flâneur*, who, Benjamin observes in the same essay, achieves through them a perfect detached isolation in the midst of the swirling city. As Benjamin explains: "The Mass was the agitated veil; through it Baudelaire saw Paris" (170). Through the agitated veil, Pip sees Joe Gargery at the forge, and David Copperfield sees his dead mother's face; these visions give them the strength to rally their new city "families" against the depredations of the "cash nexus."

Raymond Williams, in *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*, does not exaggerate when he sees the meaning of Dickens as pure connectivity. I would suggest that the frenzy of bonding in his novels is a re-invention of the national family, which has been destroyed by the cash nexus and the new baffling networks that have replaced experience. In *David Copperfield*, which is typical, Dickens offers no fewer than three surrogate mothers, Aunt Betsy Trotwood foremost, to replace David's real one. Three women, who sometimes function as surrogate sisters, become romantic interests, with several others serving as shadows or doubles. A whole cast of lovable eccentrics, Mr. Micawber foremost, gravitates toward the central group, and all of these lives

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begin to intersect in a great series of largely implausible coincidences. Together, somehow, this heterogeneous group, pre-capitalist to the core, defeats the dark forces of self interest. Williams defends the innocence of these characters:

There has been an important critical difficulty about what has been called his reduction of people to caricatures and about what is called the "sentimentality" of his "impossibly pure" heroines. But Dickens was creating, openly and deliberately, a world in which people had been deprived of any customary identity and yet in which, paradoxically, the deprivation was a kind of liberation, in which the most fantastic and idiosyncratic kinds of growth could come about. (53)

This innocence, which is distilled from the protective memory of childhood and transferred to the new city family, is implicated in curious ways in the final phase of the Dickensian adventure, often involving emigration or temporary removal from England. Foreign lands, the colonies in particular, complete the function of pristine nostalgia, which, in rebuilding the national family, must purify capitalism of its alienating behavior. In a pattern described in detail by Williams in *City and Country*, the mid-Victorian colonies, rapidly developing in the '50s through free trade occasioned by the repeal of the Corn Laws, became either the mythical replacement or the extension of the lost rural settlement of Old England. Accordingly, Dickens's unfledged or failed capitalists very often emigrate to the New Eden of the colonies or to foreign lands, which are virtually undescribed, suggesting their ceremonial transformative function. There, it seems, they are able to operate apart from the malign effects of the city and system, and, through virtue and humble effort, recast themselves as humane capitalists. While, early on, convicts could not repatriate and the colonies are seen as Malthusian outposts for England's overpopulating poor, by mid-century the colonies are seen by many as a version of "home." Thus, rehabilitated in the rural home, many of Dickens's characters return to England, temporarily or for good, as successful ranchers, exporters, company agents, entrepreneurs, and inventors, though again the exact nature of occupations is carefully faded out. Affiliative imperial networks are occluded in the novels—glossed over as general destinations for jolly free trading—since the issue at bottom is the return of the innocent.

In his own life, Dickens sponsored a kind of return to innocence when he arranged with his co-philanthropist, Bertha Coutts, to send young London prostitutes, newly arrived from the country, to Cape Town to reform and begin their rural lives anew. Dickens also succeeded in sending several of his sons, slow starters and failures in business, to Australia to start over. Dickens's famous 1842 visit to America, which produced *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, was begun in nostalgic fantasies of a true land of freedom and opportunity, which utilitarian, Chartist England had failed to produce, but Dickens soured on the New World soon after his arrival. The Jacksonian society of tobacco-spitting swindlers, chauvinists, and bumpkins that he discovered was far from what he called, in a letter to W. C.

Mcready, "The Republic of my imagination" (156). His letters to England are full of homesickness, one, to John Forster, ending with the exclamation "Oh home—home—home—home—home—HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" (248). Yet the basic pattern is intact beneath the uncomfortable realities of the visit. Dickens left for the New Eden enraptured but once there lobbied for international copyright in speech after speech, irritating his adoring hosts. His works were pirated and sold in enormous quantities in America and the colonies, and though he was very well off, royalties from these sales would have made him immensely rich. The colonies, then, are occasions for both nostalgic reverie and capitalistic possibility. Impressive in Dickens's life and art is the manner in which colonies and ex-colonies, whether China, Barbados, Australia, or America, are warped into this dual characterization, despite great differences in networks of affiliation.

In the novels, the precipitate of capitalism baptized in foreign lands produces Walter Gay in *Dombey and Son*, who is banished to Barbados on business by his ruthless employer, the London merchant Paul Dombey. Believed drowned in a shipwreck, Walter, sustained by reveries of Florence Dombey, arrives back in England just in time to rescue her from her abusive father, whose financial empire has collapsed. Walter marries Florence and obtains a post in China, where he develops into a philanthropic capitalist (of very vague outline), and then returns to England, restoring the Dombey to a true family, including the chastened father. Martin Chuzzlewit, sustained by visions of the past and of his love for Mary Graham, returns to England from America purged of the family vice of selfishness and ready to take up his profession of architect. Pip, whose childhood memories had been "often before my fancy in the East" (476), returns to England after eleven years, an export agent of sorts with his own independent income, having rejected Magwitch's money. He is also cleansed of his foolish pretensions to class and wealth. Magwitch, himself a low criminal in England, becomes a great financial success as a hard-working sheep farmer after receiving transportation to Botany Bay. And though it means possible death, the sentence for a returned convict, he comes back to London, impelled by the memory of a few moments of kindness Pip showed to him on the marshes many years before while he was a fleeing convict. That the practice of executing returning convicts was virtually ended in 1861, when *Great Expectations* was published, shows that Dickens was more interested in reflecting the transformative power of the past than the facts of contemporary history. Even the preposterous, sentimental dreamer, Mr. Micawber, impecunious, debt-ridden, and unemployable in England, is a success in Australia.

Though David Copperfield's self-exile after the death of his wife is in Switzerland and resembles the Romantic *wanderjahre* more than colonial emigration, it is there that he develops his writing career, bolstered, naturally, by memories of the innocent past, particularly of his true love, Agnes Wakefield, whom he was meant to marry instead of the frivolous Dora Spenlow. David returns to England having "disciplined his heart," a process which is inseparable from his new success as a writer. In fact the precipitate is the image of the humane petit bourgeois capitalist and practitioner of the Victorian "gospel of work." David reflects,

... I could never have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence. . . . Heaven knows, I write this in no spirit of self-laudation. . . . My meaning simply is, that whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well . . . that in great claims and small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest There is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, and sincere earnestness. (606)

It is instructive that the one novel that failed critically with the public and contemporary reviewers—and even among later Dickens commentators like Orwell and Williams—is *Hard Times*, arguably because it violates the familiar pattern of transformative nostalgia. *Hard Times* rejects utilitarian capitalism out of hand, not cleansing it of its pernicious anti-communal self-interest, but attempting to replace it entirely with the values of imagination, feeling, and family represented by Sleary's Circus. There is no dialectic and no transformation. When nostalgia is made attainable, Dickens violates the laws of his own imagination.

In Dickens's attenuated treatment of imperial intercourse with the English colonies, even the most backward characters are securely connected with them because they represent an extension of "home." Pristine nostalgia plays an important part in Dickens's novels. It is a catalyst in these filiating national romances, using the reverie of "home," whether in England or the colonies, to rehabilitate imperial capitalism even while recognizing that England can never go home again.

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Imperial Addictions: West End Shopping and East End Opium

Krista Lysack

The ostensible mystery of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* circulates around the circumstances of Drood's disappearance, and extends to questions of how the novel would have ended had Dickens lived to complete it. The novel's colonial subtext, however, suggests another kind of allure located in the addictive pleasures of shopping and opium consumption. Moreover, these sites of orientalized consumption in the novel, which align West End shopping emporia such as Liberty's East India House with East End opium dens, are negotiated through the figuring of women as a disruptive presence. Women's insertion into both these spaces in the nineteenth century points to an anxiety latent not only in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, but also within Victorian culture itself: to the anxiety of an "Empire within" whose dangers could not be regulated, particularly when these dangers were attached to women, their spending habits, and their shifting place in the domestic sphere.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood opens with Jasper's opium dream in a London opium den, where Princess Puffer is proprietor. She is an Englishwoman who, Jasper notices, "has

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opium-smoked herself into a strange likeness of the Chinaman. His form of cheek, eye, and temple, and his colour, are repeated in her" (38). Her racial ambiguity is underscored by her occult knowledge of how to properly prepare opium for pipes, Eastern style. Of this talent, she boasts: "nobody but me has the true secret of mixing it" (38). This scene establishes the novel's curious Eastern subtext surrounding Princess Puffer and the specter of opium. Opium here stands as a pernicious commodity which threatens to entice British women into a scene of commerce and disrupt racial boundaries in the process.

Chapter two offers a sugar-coated version of Eastern consumption. Here, we are introduced to Jasper's nephew, Edwin Drood, who plans to depart shortly for Egypt to work as an engineer, and to Rosebud, who is Drood's fiancée. As the couple meets to take a walk, Rosebud announces, "I want to go to the Lumps-of-Delight shop" (58), a store that sells Turkish sweetmeats. Once there, Rosebud "partake[s] of [the sweetmeats] with great zest: . . . taking off and rolling up a pair of little pink gloves . . . and occasionally putting her

little pink fingers to her rosy lips, to cleanse them from the Dust of Delight that comes off the Lumps" (58). Rosebud's purchase satisfies both her desire to shop, and her appetite to literally consume. The effect is one of satiety which leaves her feeling "tranquil"—a sign of a very satisfied customer. But more than a shopping episode, the scene stands in odd juxtaposition to Jasper's similar tranquilization when he visits the opium den of Princess Puffer. Both scenes of consumption are ones in which the dangers and delights of the East are literally ingested. Moreover, both Princess Puffer and Rosebud are women who regulate or initiate the consumption, and whose presence points to the commercial or commodified nature of whatever "East"—candy-coated or otherwise—is being consumed. Women, it seems, could enjoy two distinct by homologous sites of imperial consumption: the pleasures of shopping for imported goods in the West End, and those of opium commerce in East End opium dens.

In examining women's relation to the commodified East, I want to avoid what Susan Meyer in *Imperialism at Home* identifies as "the persistence of a metaphor . . . linking white women and people of nonwhite races" (1). This is a relationship which Barry Milligan cannot avoid in *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture*, when he argues that British women and their domestic sphere were largely represented as vulnerable to the contagion of oriental infection within, the conduit through which imperial identity was infected by invading racialized forces from without. Rather than viewing domestic space, women's sphere, as ripe for contamination by the invading other signified by opium, I want to examine how variously coded, contested, and, particularly, commodified, was this domestic sphere in its association with shopping emporia and opium dens. My purpose is to investigate how women exceeded nineteenth-century prescriptions of domestic space in their capacity as consumers who shopped for imported products. The domestic sphere, in this sense, is not configured as an interior, an inner sanctum that could be infected or penetrated—much like the female body—; rather, it is opened out into a marketplace of tempting consumables which traded on commodified images of Empire—including its forbidden side as signified by opium. In such a marketplace, consumption becomes a way to address how new female identities were enabled through reformulations of domestic space, as women moved between the home, the marketplace, and even the East End in search of the fruits of Empire.

A Taste for the East

Of course, the nineteenth century did not mark the beginning of a taste for things Eastern in Britain. As Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace points out in *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century*, England had long imported bulk commodities like sugar and tea, as well as imports like china, some of these earlier than the sixteenth century. Opium, meanwhile, emerged as an important Imperial commodity during the Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-58. Around the time of these wars, a taste of Eastern goods was being disseminated

in Britain. The Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 prompted the popularity of foreign commodities in a strikingly visual showcase which Thomas Richards has called "the first world's fair, the first department store" (17). Moreover, as Henry Cole believed, the Exhibitions taught the British public to think of themselves as potential consumers of goods, instructing "not the manufactures only how to make, but the public how to buy" (207). In 1854, Owen Jones redesigned architectural detail in the re-erected Crystal Palace at Sydenham to feature an Egyptian Court, which helped launch as "Moorish" fashion. Owen Jones's Alhambraic decorations delighted Charlotte Brontë, who imagined the scene as an exotic shopping venue: "it is a wonderful place—vast, strange, new, and impossible to describe. . . . It may be called a bazaar or fair, but it is such a bazaar or fair as Eastern genni might have created" (qtd. in Wise and Symington 3:243). The "oriental" goods of the second Exhibition in 1862 were particularly popular. After 250 years of cultural isolation, Japan included a display for the first time, with great success. When the Exhibition closed, part of this Japanese exhibit was bought up by Farmers & Rogers' Oriental Warehouse. It was here that a young Arthur Liberty apprenticed and dreamed of opening his own "oriental bazaar" (Adburgham 13).

Shopping Ladies at Liberty's

Liberty's own enterprise would become crucial to the articulation of a taste for the East for British consumers, and particularly for a new class of women shoppers. His shop, called "East India House," opened in 1875, just five years after Dickens's death in 1870. This small half-shop on Regent Street in London offered consumers a fully-elaborated dream of Empire: "a place," to borrow from Edward Said, "isolated from the mainstream of European progress," (4)—an exotic location for sale under one convenient roof. At first it sold only imported Indian silks in a rainbow of "Liberty colours," then Japanese imports, but expanded gradually to include other departments with goods from various countries. Liberty catalogues, advertisements in women's periodicals, and store displays instructed women shoppers in particular how to fashion both their bodies and living rooms with Eastern luxuries that promised to transform both cumbersome mid-century dress and cluttered Victorian sitting rooms into elegant Eastern divans. The *Ladies Gazette of Fashion* raved about Liberty's silks and touted their authenticity: "Nothing can be more advantageous . . . than the Oriental silks. They are very serviceable. . . . [T]his is the case with the good qualities which may be procured of Messrs. Lasenby Liberty, of 218, Regent Street. . . . [T]heir white 'Runchender' silks are evidently lineal descendants of those mentioned in the Arabian nights" (100). By 1883, *The Cabinet Maker and Art Furnisher* stated that "an English home can be almost entirely furnished with Eastern goods" (3:182, qtd. in Morris 101) which Liberty's steadily supplied.

The nineteenth-century gendering of consumption, alongside the availability of "oriental" goods, helped produce the conditions for the emergence of a class of "shopping ladies" whose shopping excursions in London turned up the

Eastern treasures that went to grace English interiors. Nancy Armstrong argues that the institutionalization of Empire produced the conditions for a specific kind of female desire, an appetite to consume that illuminates the connection between women's identities and British imperialism (5). Thus, imperialism, combined with the massive industrialization and commodification of the nineteenth century produced conditions for the formation of a class of women shoppers. While there was a commodified sense of the East present in Britain before the nineteenth century, and women shopped for imported commodities on a small scale, it was not until the nineteenth century's revolution in retailing, the conversion of draper's shops into the new department stores, and the increasing institutionalization of imperialism abroad, that the historical conditions for consumerism existed in earnest—and shopping figured as an identifiable cultural practice, and one which was decidedly gendered.

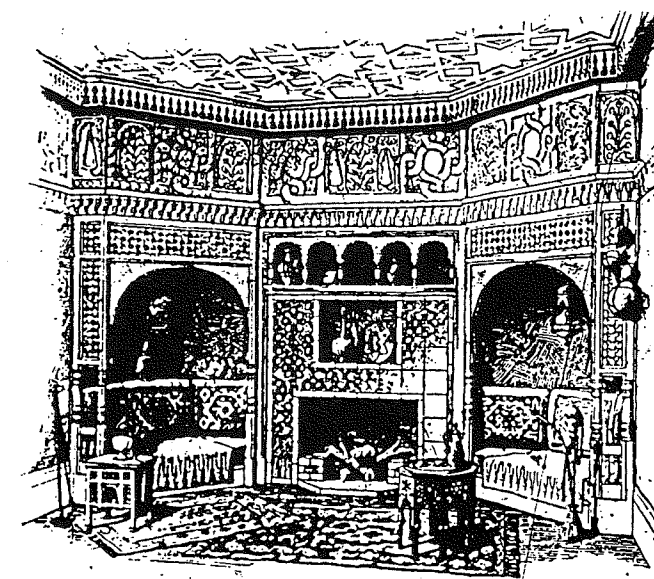
As household consumers, spending was a middle-class women's job and an index to their husbands' prosperity. These shopping ladies who were public figures on the streets of London were thus also the retiring angels-of-the-house. Indeed, one of the things which legitimized respectable women's presence on the streets of the West End was the way in which stores replicated the feeling of a home away from home. Rita Felski writes in *The Gender of Modernity* that the department store "presented itself as an extension of the private sphere, providing the visitor with an experience of intimacy and pleasure intended to reflect, in magnified form, the comforts of the bourgeois home" (68). Women could meet their friends in these respectable shops, and enjoy the amenities of in-store writing rooms, restrooms, and ladies' tea shops, enabling them to spend the day at home, away from home. Shopping was thus a cultural practice not limited, as Erika Rappaport points out, "merely [to] purchasing goods in a shop. . . . A shopper might have lunch out, take a break for tea, and visit a club, museum, or the theater" (5). Women who shopped for imported goods, moreover, could imagine traveling even farther beyond the family home, to the reaches of Empire when they visited Liberty's East India House. For within this "oriental bazaar" in London's West End, they could be tourists to their own desires with an Empire at home.

Den Mothers

Among Liberty's popular home furnishings were designs which imitated and aestheticized opium dens. These opium den furnishings best illustrate Liberty's "bringing home" and domesticating a specific Eastern pleasure. As such, these exotic imports suggest Marx's notion of a commodity as "a very trivial thing . . . that is, in reality, . . . abounding in metaphysical niceties. So far as [it] is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it. . . . But so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent" (50). The commodity is thus mystified in the imperial marketplace, othered and racialized. It was the consumption of imports as commodities rather than the literal consumption of opium in an East End den that naturalized the Liberty smoking room—indeed, naturalized orientalism—in the bourgeois home. As commodities, the opium den furni-

ture at Liberty's was produced as something exotic, as something more than itself.

The displays of Liberty's store, and the illustrated versions in the Liberty catalogues, exoticize a scene of opium consumption, apparently rendering the dangers of the East safe as they seemed to be incorporated into the decor of any fashionable bourgeois home. In the 1889 *Liberty Handbook of Sketches*, one such furnished room is rendered, and dubbed the "Saracenic Smoking Room" (fig. 1). It features



SARACENIC SMOKING ROOM, by LIBERTY & CO.

Fig. 1

divans set into the walls, ornate woodwork, oriental rugs, and, on the far right, even a decorative hookah. A further design, "The Arab Smoking Room," appears in the 1890 *Handbook of Sketches*. It features lattice woodwork, ornamental vases, and a hookah as well (fig. 2).

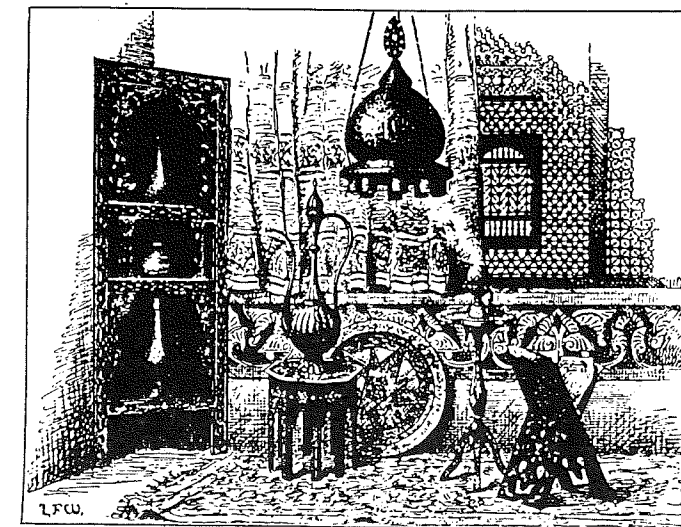


Fig. 2

The shopping lady who was delighted by Liberty's smoking room could buy it up, piece by piece, and assemble it in her own home, where, instead of angel-of-the-house, she could preside as an exotic den mother of sorts in the midst of exotic spoils of Empire which she has so conspicuously consumed. An 1875 watercolor by Nicholas Chevalier pictures

Mrs. Samuel Montagu, wife of a London merchant, in a room which marries Victorian boudoir to Eastern den (fig. 3). The effect is one of hyper-orientalism, a decidedly Victorian take on an Eastern aesthetic. The room combines

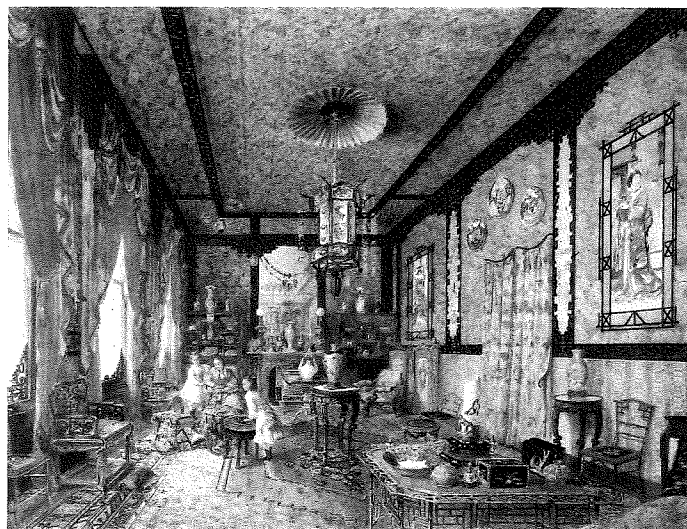


Fig. 3

Japanese and "Moorish" themes with little attempt to differentiate the specific origins of any of the goods. From the Japanese-lantern inspired chandelier, the oriental rugs, the wall hangings depicting kimono-ed figures, and to the assortment of "oriental" but not necessarily Japanese screens, vases, embroideries, and furniture, the room where Mrs. Montagu is depicted with her children is a swirl of objects and colors, as cluttered as we image the typical Victorian interior. The resulting hodge-podge, a rather loose interpretation of the Liberty style, signals an excess or lack of restraint, perhaps a visual index of Mrs. Montagu's spending.

This angel of the house had both the capital and the leisure to pursue lining the nest, Eastern style. But instead of domesticating the East and anchoring women's sphere at home, opium dens—real or imagined—made transparent the uneasy relationship between commercial and domestic space, placing women as much in the market-space as in the home. In short, women's consumption with "the Empire" undercut conventional designations of female identity and of female space, particularly in its associations with the "East." To illustrate, I turn now to East End opium dens, the dangerous correlative to Liberty's more antiseptic and aestheticized version.

East End Dens and West End Consumption

Even as Liberty catalogues tempted consumers with fully-furbished opium dens—opium not included—, newspapers offered accounts of roving correspondents' excursions into the East End of London, journeys referred to as "doing the slums" (qtd. in Milligan 85), in which journalists went in search of "authentic" opium dens. These dens were usually found in London's dock districts, Limestone, Bluegate Fields, places known for populations of sailors from China and South East Asia. These reports were invariably couched in the discourse of an Eastern journey into a dark Empire—within London. In 1885, a reporter for *Good Words* calls East London "this great Babylon" (192) and

begins his opium den adventure by marking out the difference between West and East: "My path led eastward, away from the spacious scenes where luxury and fashion reign, past the palatial buildings wherein the commerce of a world is centered, onward, through narrower and closer streets, into regions where luxury's food is rarely set and fashion's face but seldom seen" (188).

The dens themselves were presented as cramped and unlivable spaces. Journalists estimated that there were at least six or seven such dens in Limestone, Poplar, and Shadwell combined (*Good Words* 191). They generally consisted of low-ceilinged partitioned rooms within tenements. These rooms were at once domestic and commercial spaces—or, as the *Good Words* journalist put it, "[both] shop [and] smoking divan" (188) in which opium was sold to customers, both English and foreign, who immediately consumed it while reclining, boots and hat off, on couches and bunk beds. In 1891, the *Strand* magazine described the refurbishing of one den in what amounts to a parody of a liberty smoking room: "It was dirty and dark, being lit only by a smoking lamp on the mantel-shelf, and was not much larger than a full-sized cupboard. The walls were a dingy yellow. . . . The furniture consisted of three raised mattresses, with small tables on which were placed pipes, lamps, and opium. Huddled or curled up on these mattresses lay two wretched smokers" (625).

Presiding over this parodic domesticity, East End opium narratives also often included a stock description of a resident woman—usually ambiguously English—: a den mother who was either proprietor of the den, or perhaps the wife of the proprietor who assisted him. In 1866, just four years before *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dickens's own *All the Year Round* included an article about a visit to an opium "divan" in New Court and depicted such a woman. Interestingly, she resembles Princess Puffer of *Edwin Drood*, who claims "I'm a mother [to my customers]" (226). "Mother Abdallah," the *All the Year Round* report says, "is a London lady, who, from long association with Orientals, has mastered their habits and acquired their tongue. . . . [she is] a pallid wrinkled woman of forty, who prepares and sells opium. . . . [and who] confesses to smoking it, too, for companies sake" (423). What the opium den narratives produce is a space both commercial and domestic, with a female figure negotiating these two spheres.

It is not until the turn of the century that West meets East in earnest, as cultural documents report fashionable West End ladies appearing in East End opium dens. By 1907, the *East End Advertiser* reported at least two "prosperous" "opium establishments" in the East End which catered to a fashionable white clientele of "society women seeking a new sensation" in a "lavishly" appointed venue which required a secret password for entrance (qtd. in Berridge 15). Other West Enders imported this "authentic" East End experience in order to recreate it within the West End in opium smoking parties, as though to highlight the complete mobility of what had become for fashionable society a thoroughly imaginary and commodified space for which the requisite decor and clothing could be purchased. In January of 1918, newspapers reported that a Mrs. Ada Ping You, a British woman married to a Limestone Asian man, prepared

opium for fashionable West Enders at a party in a flat off Piccadilly. *The Times* reported that "The men [at the party] divested themselves of their clothing and got into pajamas and the women into chiffon nightdresses. In that manner they seemed to prepare themselves for the orgy" (qtd. in Berridge 21). *News of the World* also reported this West End "den of iniquity," as an "opium orgy in night attire," and described Mrs. Ping You as the "High Priestess of Unholy Rites." The article went on to condemn these "most disgusting orgies" in which "men and women. . . recline in a circle of soft cushions, and pass from hand to hand and mouth to mouth the opium pipe, from which they inhale the fumes of the drug and pass for a time into oblivion" (qtd. in Berridge 21). Evident here are anxieties regarding unregulated sexuality and women's risqué association with men, coded by "transgressive dress" and—although opium was not then illegal—consumption of a substance associated with Eastern decadence and irrationality.

The opium den functioned in the middle- and upper-class imagination as a largely phantasmic space which signified forbidden pleasures, orientalized through the effects of commodification. What punctured the orientalized domestic space was the fact that the opium den was not an inside at all, but a space both provisional and portable, whether it masqueraded as East End dive, West End theme party, or Liberty smoking room. Where the Liberty den concealed the coexistence of domestic and commercial space, the opium dens of East London made visible the ways in which women's domestic arrangements and the gendered marketplace were produced through each other, revealing how tenuous and how easily disrupted were the regulations of women's space. If women's presence as consumers in the imperial marketplace re-formed the contours of domestic space by making a home of department stores, a look at the Liberty smoking room and Princess Puffer's opium den also suggest that Britain's imperial identity could not be guaranteed within the symbolic economy of commodified Empire, signalling the failure to completely domesticate the East within the borders of the metropolis and private living rooms alike; for the "East" found within reveals the extent to which imperialism depended upon the imaginings of commodification and the ideology of gender to secure the interests of the Empire at home.

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Stupid Trollope*

Richard Dellamora

Since the publication of John Halperin's *Trollope and Politics* a quarter of a century ago, the name of Anthony Trollope has been linked with party politics as a topic within the Victorian novel. For most of his adult life a supporter of the Liberal party and himself a candidate for Parliament in 1868, Trollope once commented: "I don't love a man . . . who will say that politics are nothing to him. Such a one seems to me to shirk the first of man's duties" (Mullen and Munson 401). During the same twenty-five years, literary critics, feminist, gay or queer, deconstructionist and post-colonial, have come more and more to focus on cultural politics. At times, these discussions are carried on in specific relation to political ideology and Parliamentary legislation, at other times, in a polemical shift away from conventional literary studies in favor of other views of what most pressingly constitutes the realm of politics.

It is possible to make the case—as Georg Lukács does in his reading of the novels of Honoré de Balzac—that Trollope's scrupulous attention to the social surface registers the social and cultural contradictions that underlie both the conventions of novelistic realism and his own adherence to the Tory-Liberal political consensus in mid-nineteenth-century England. To go further, however, in attempting to align him with revisionary critical points of view is, as Priscilla Walton observes in *Patriarchal Desire and Victorian Discourse* (1995), question-begging. In this paper, I draw upon a traumatic incident of Trollope's childhood in order to focus on the metadiscursive issue of what politics are referred to by use of the term and to show how cultural politics motivates the representation of a variety of politics in Trollope, including the Parliamentary sort.

In *Between Men* (1985), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has explored ways in which desire, including sexual desire, between men was rerouted in order to shape the earnest gentlemen who married and staffed the professions of Victorian England. The politics of male homosociality, as experienced when Trollope was a schoolboy, later shaped his politics, leisure, and fiction. In *Masculine Desire* (1990), I argued that, during the period, a well-developed tradition of reflection on the meaning of desire between men enabled a self-consciousness about such relations that issued in new understanding both of cultural innovation and of the possibilities and limits of ties between men. In this essay, my focus rests between these two approaches. Trollope was by no means sympathetic to eroticized ties between men. And schoolboy sex repelled him. Nonetheless, the guilty knowledge of such doings impels his representation of male networks, both negatively, so that in his fiction he represents them in metaphorically sodomitic terms, and positively, so that he was equally motivated by the need to find a respectable male homosocial conviviality in which he could be a

welcome player. Finally, Trollope's central social/cultural/political norm, that of the English gentleman, is doubled by the sense that the gentleman is both untouched by and necessarily besmirched by—dirt.

In *An Autobiography*, Trollope speaks of the following incident, which occurred at a private school at Sunbury, to which his father had transferred him from Harrow, a school where Trollope had proven to be both a social and an academic failure. At Sunbury, a young clergyman named Arthur Drury conducted classes for a small number of boarders. Trollope remained there for two years until he entered the public school of Winchester, where he remained for another three before returning to Harrow. When some of the "curled darlings of the school" (6) were discovered to have been "the perpetrators of some nameless horror" (5), Trollope was blamed as the ringleader on the assumption that he had infected the school with Harrovian vice. "What [their offense] was, to this day I cannot even guess; but I was one of the four, innocent as a babe, but adjudged to have been the guiltiest of the guilty" (5). Trollope continues:

We each had to write out a sermon, and my sermon was the longest of the four. During the whole of one term-time we were helped last at every meal. We were not allowed to visit the playground till the sermon was finished. Mine was only done a day or two before holidays. Mrs. Drury, when she saw us, shook her head with pitying horror. There were ever so many other punishments accumulated on our heads, It broke my heart, knowing myself to be innocent, and suffering also under the almost equally painful feeling that the other three—no doubt wicked boys—were the curled darlings of the school, who would never have selected me to share their wickedness with them. I contrived to learn, from word that fell from Mr. Drury, that he had condemned me because I, having come from a public school, might be supposed to be the leader of wickedness! On the first day of the next term he whispered to me half a word that perhaps he had been wrong. With all a stupid boy's slowness, I said nothing; and he had not the courage to carry reparation further. All that was fifty years ago, and it burns me now as though it were yesterday. What lily-livered curs those boys must have been not to have told the truth!—at any rate as far as I was concerned. I remember their names well, and almost wish to write them here. (6)

Trollope portrays himself as a slow boy. But incomprehension, an inability to respond, silence, and opacity serve both tactical and strategic purposes. Tactically, were the boy to acknowledge that he knew what Drury was imputing to him, he would, *ipso facto*, acknowledge that he

was not as innocent as a babe. To know the boys' offense might well be taken as a sign of guilt on his own part. And were Trollope to indicate knowledge, he would be betraying both his fellow students and the institution, Harrow School, from which he came. Trollope's stupidity counts as a form of group loyalty on both scores. The aporia thereby opened persists even when the text is recognized to be the performance of an adult. The author, for example, deflects attention from Harrow by referring not to it but, generically, to "a public school."

When it comes to schoolboy vice, Harrow in the nineteenth century was not just any public school. Lord Alfred Douglas's brother, Francis, Viscount Drumlanrig, was a graduate of Harrow (Murray 13). In the 1890s, he was widely rumored to be the lover of the Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery. In 1858, when John Addington Symonds was a student at Harrow, he provoked a scandal that resulted in the resignation of the headmaster, the Reverend Charles John Vaughan (Symonds 112-13). In contrast to Trollope's *Autobiography*, Symonds in his posthumously published *Memoirs* describes the scene he encountered as a student there: "The talk in the dormitories and studies was incredibly obscene. Here and there one could not avoid seeing acts of onanism, mutual masturbation, and the sports of naked boys in bed together" (Symonds 94). Earlier, in the 1820s, when Trollope was there, "allusion was made in the public papers to certain rumours which had spread about concerning the unnatural propensities of the boys in Harrow school" (Crompton 79). Lord Byron, beloved of Trollope's mother, Frances, left Harrow in 1805. While a student there, he was involved in romantic friendships, which Louis Crompton, among others, believes to have involved sexual experimentation (82). Sydney Smith described the typical English public school of 1810 as a system of "premature debauchery that only prevents men from being corrupted by the world by corrupting them before they enter the world" (Hall 19). The generic reference to corruption includes references to schoolboy vice. Finally, the *Autobiography* itself signifies Harrow as a source of contagion. Arthur Drury, who suspected Trollope, was the son of Mark Drury, a member of the family that dominated Harrow for many years (Glendinning 15-16, 20-21). Arthur's suspicions indicate that masters at Harrow were well aware of what was going on.

Louis Crompton is right to refer to debauchery at Harrow and other schools as "systematic." Schoolboy vice served in the production of the English gentleman—an artifact that was necessary to ensure continuing social stability at a time when "new men" needed to be accommodated within the elites of a society whose population, influence, and wealth were rapidly expanding. Trollope's "stupidity," then, defends, regardless of personal cost, the studied silences about male sexual subjection that helped constitute this system. While his anger and aversion are evident, Trollope's repeated wish to be included in the boys' "games," indicates his attraction to the play of sexual mastery and subordination in school life.

In the *Autobiography*, Trollope explains: "My boyhood was, I think, as unhappy as that of a young gentleman could well be, my misfortunes arising from a mixture of poverty and gentle standing on the part of my father, and from an utter want on my own part of that juvenile manhood which enables some boys to hold up their heads even among the distresses which such a position is sure to produce" (2). Curiously, "juvenile manhood" was one of the results that was supposed to issue from patterns of dominance and subordination in schoolboy sex. Trollope's aversion from the system, however, suggests that he feared that it would result in effeminacy and eviration—an unfitting of the male subject for the responsibilities of adult citizenship. Homosexuality as a concept did not exist in 1820.¹ Nonetheless, even as a boy Trollope resisted the sort of fate that would be written up later in Krafft-Ebing's case studies, as the result of unsupervised dormitory life among young boys.

The subject of Krafft-Ebing's Case no. 128 tells exactly the story that Trollope did not want to be his. Krafft-Ebing comments: "The following description gives, for the most part verbatim, the details of the autobiography." The text continues:

My parents were healthy. As a child I was sickly; but with good care I thrived, and got on well in school. When eleven years old, I was taught to masturbate by my playmates, and gave myself up to it passionately. Until I was fifteen, I learned easily. On account of frequent pollutions, I became less capable, and did not get on well in school, and was uncertain and embarrassed when called on by the teacher. (298)

In the case study, precocious sex results in subsequent impotence, effeminacy, and, eventually, acquired sexual inversion. In the opening chapter of the *Autobiography*, Trollope signifies the threat of sexual abuse in two ways—first by continual references to dirt, secondly by references to physical assaults, in one instance by his father (the time he hit Anthony with a Bible [*Autobiography* 15]); frequently at the hands of his oldest brother, Tom; and incessantly at the hands of schoolmates and tutors. Dirt and violence have other referents too. In a text which is in some ways knowingly stupid, what is unsayable even to a degree unthinkable, is signified by means of substitutions. For example, the first of his body parts to which Trollope refers in the *Autobiography* is his bum, though he does so without naming it. He refers to it in the form of a memory that sounds like a bad dream. "I remember well," he says:

when I was still the junior boy in the school, Dr. Butler, the headmaster, stopping me in the street, and asking me, with all the clouds of Jove upon his brow and all the thunder in his voice, whether it was possible that Harrow School was disgraced by so disreputably dirty a little boy as I! Oh, what I felt at that moment! But I could not look my feelings. I do not doubt that I was dirty;—but I think

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¹On effeminacy, see Bristow and Sinfield

that he was cruel. He must have known me had he seen me as he was wont to see me, for he was in the habit of flogging me constantly. Perhaps he did not recognise me by my face. (4)

Once again, Trollope is unable to express what he feels. Instead, he appeals to the reader to read the feelings the little boy cannot utter nor express in his visage. Once again too there is an implied sexual question. Does the little boy have a dirty bum? And does dirty bum refer not only to fecal matter but to possible bum play among schoolboys? Is he dirty that way too? (Later Trollope assures the reader that Anthony is not an Antinous [43].) The fact that the Headmaster "constantly" plays upon the little boy's ass with a stick suggests other ways in which one can stick a bum. Moreover, even while Trollope begs the reader to read through his dirt to his innocence, he portrays the adult gaze as punitive, a form of assault in its own right, and perhaps the worst because in addition to violating the subject it refuses to recognize it. Finally, there is an element of ambivalence. The scene is a dispatch from a failed Ganymede, a little boy too awkward, unobtrusive, and besmirched to win the favor of a Jove, of the power of whose glance he is enviously and all too helplessly aware.

Dirt might also, of course, signify a bad habit.² Stupidity—or what Krafft-Ebing's Case no. 128 calls embarrassment—might as well. But dirt also served as a prophylactic from unwanted sexual approaches. Dirty, unkempt boys might not be much fun to play with. At the same time, dirt does not seem to have kept Anthony from flirting or dancing with young girls. The effectiveness of Trollope's defense may be seen in a description of Trollope by one of his schoolmates, written after the publication of the *Autobiography*:

I became intimate with Anthony Trollope, who sat next to me. He was a big boy, older than the rest of the form, and without exception the most slovenly and dirty boy I ever met. He was not only slovenly in person and in dress, but his work was equally dirty. His exercises were a mass of blots and smudges. These peculiarities created a great prejudice against him, and the poor fellow was generally avoided. It is pitiable to read in his autobiography . . . how bitter were his feelings at that time, and how he longed for the friendship and companionship of his comrades, but in vain . . . I had plenty of opportunities of judging Anthony, and I am bound to say, though my heart smites me sorely for my unkindness, that I did not dislike him. I avoided him, for he was rude and uncouth, but I thought him an honest, brave fellow. He was no sneak. His faults were all external; all the rest of him was right enough. But . . . poor Trollope was tabooed, and had not, so far as I am aware, a single friend . . . He gave no sign of promise whatsoever, was always in the lowest part of the form, and was regarded by masters and by boys as an incorrigible dunce. (Hall

42-43)

As a strategy, Trollope's dirt and stupidity kept away friends he'd rather not have. At the same time, it conserved what was most important to him: the sterling quality of his character. His schoolmate notes that Trollope was "an honest, brave fellow." In this way, Trollope held onto the status of gentleman that his appearance and embarrassed domestic circumstances put in doubt.

We shouldn't think, though, that Trollope did not yearn for friends, even among "the curled darlings." Nor should we conclude that he didn't want to be included in games. Trollope's attitude is characterized by necessary ambivalence. After all, it was the games that, to mix a metaphor, were the steps of the silken ladder towards adult belonging.

Of the cricket-ground, or racket-court, I was allowed to know nothing. And yet I longed for these things with an exceeding longing. I coveted popularity with a coveting which was almost mean. It seemed to me that there would be an Elysium in the intimacy of those very boys whom I was bound to hate because they hated me. Something of the disgrace of my school-days has clung to me all through life . . . When I have been claimed as school-fellow by some of those many hundreds who were with me either at Harrow or at Winchester, I have felt that I had no right to talk of things from most of which I was kept in estrangement. (17)

Given Trollope's isolation, defense also lay in learning to fight. An ultimate line of defense lay in Spartan stoicism. Tom, who beat Anthony regularly while his tutor at Winchester School, commented: "Anthony is far my superior in quickness and adroitness, and perhaps in bearing pain too" (Glendinning 42).

In adult life, Trollope's one extravagance was a passion for fox-hunting, which permitted him an endless opportunity to act out the sado-masochistic binds of his school days. The hunt provided a mythic community of male-homosocial camaraderie, crossing lines of ethnic, regional, and class difference. In the hunt, Trollope could briefly escape the childhood sense of being the odd man out. At the same time, the abjection, persecution, and physical violence earlier visited upon him could now be visited on—THE FOX. It's not surprising that, later, Dorian Gray, in Wilde's novel, is haunted by nightmares of being hunted down or that Stephen Gordon, the protagonist of Radclyffe-Hall's novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, has a crucial experience of social estrangement during a fox hunt. In the days when the Marquis of Queensberry's detectives were closing in on him, Wilde too experienced the panic of being the object of the hunt.

Trollope looked at the trade of favors in adult male networking in a similar light. In characterizing it, he makes implicit use of sexual imagery, not of masturbation or mutual masturbation but of sodomy, the trope traditionally used to characterize the abuse of personal power or authority in male

relationships, especially political ones.³ In the chapter of the *Autobiography* that deals with reviewing, for example, he asks: "In what way can the critic better repay the hospitality of his wealthy literary friend than by good-natured criticism,—or more certainly ensure for himself a continuation of hospitable favours?" (264). Victorian writers, Trollope included, usually write about political elections as a mode of interpersonal corruption. And, in *The Three Clerks*, he compares debate in the House of Commons to a game played by boys at Winchester. There, on St. Catherine's Hill, they set dogs upon badgers in their burrows (Glendinning 37). What this blood sport has in common with school-room floggings and sex between older and younger boys is pleasure taken in the spectacle of violence directed against another.

In defending his gentility against the predictable assaults on his name, Trollope claimed a connection to Norman warriors and aristocrats. Trollope told his schoolmates that his surname referred not to a person who is a sexual instrument but to the French phrase, "*Trois Loups*, the nickname given to a Norman ancestor in tribute to his valour in overcoming three wolves" (Glendinning 7). By transference, the name suggests that good blood means having the courage, fierceness, and aggressive capability of three wolves. Lupine cunning and violence were characteristics of masculine honor.

The Trollope family retained distant connections with the gentry, and Trollope's sense of self always hinged on the belief that he was a gentleman. As an adult, he defended the privileges of gentlemen. In his comments on entry into the civil service, he argues that competitive examinations are an inadequate measure of one's aptitudes and abilities (37-38). One could not judge character on the basis of an exam. For that, one needed to depend on those who knew the young candidate, in other words on his family, contacts and connections. The English gentleman embodied upright character, and character depended upon recommendations from the reputable in a selfauthorizing and selfconfirming circuit. In an 1865 article, Trollope defended the public schools as laboratories and certifiers of the gentleman. He knew that contacts and influence were often used to protect and promote men of lesser merit and publicly criticized such practices. But he was wed to the notion that traditional institutions, including the public schools and the older universities, produced that most important English value, "true" character (1865 479). As a character in one of Trollope's novels says: "The Harrow boy cannot answer a question, but he is sure that he is the proper thing, and is ready to face the world on that assurance" (cited in Glendinning 53).

In a well-known essay on ideology and state, Louis Althusser has argued that human beings become subjects of and to the state not so much through the direct exercise of state power—though that too can be a factor—as through the social processes by which individuals are shaped, particularly in infancy, early childhood, and youth. Althusser mentions family, school, and church among these. As a general proposal, the argument makes sense. Nonetheless, the

mechanisms by which the subject comes into existence remains mysterious. I say mysterious because, by the time one can be referred to as *one*, one is already a subject and thereby, in Althusser's argument, already subjected. In offering a gloss on Althusser's assertion, Judith Butler focuses in particular on guilt as the affect whereby one is hailed into the position of subject. Following Althusser, she understands guilt as a phenomenon that is, at least metaphorically, religious in character. "The very possibility of subject formation," she says, "depends upon a passionate pursuit of a recognition which, within the terms of the religious example, is inseparable from a condemnation" (113). The point helps explain why chapel played such a large part in public school life. Trollope remarks that, while at Winchester, he took part in more than twenty-one religious services each week (1865 478).

In this regard, it is absolutely appropriate that Trollope's tormentor and judge at Sunbury was a (married) clergyman just as there could be no more fitting punishment for Trollope's unnamed transgression than his being forced "to write out a sermon." In this context, sermon-writing is both an alibi and a lie, whose repetition is enforced in lieu of a call to truth-telling. In relating the incident many years later, Trollope averts to a sort of truth in his implicit biblical characterization of Arthur Drury. Like Lot in Genesis, who shows a keen interest in angelic strangers, it is clear that "the curled darlings" were darlings of the schoolmaster as much as of the school.

The recognition that Trollope still desires—"fifty years" after the event, as he states—is "the truth" of his innocence. But not only of his innocence. He also has what he calls an "almost wish" to assign guilt to "the curled darlings" and their cowardice in letting him take the blame for their "wickedness." In the language of Colonel Blimp, Trollope addresses the boys as "lily-livered curs." But Trollope, the stage gentleman, is just as "stupid" as was Trollope the schoolboy. Even in writing a book that is to be published posthumously, he insists that he is incapable of guessing what the boys' offense was. At the same time, he can scarcely restrain himself from naming them—and thereby naming their sin—just as his last name, Trollope, had earlier predestined him to ridicule and accusation among his schoolmates. There is even something like confession here of a desire to be accepted by the young boys in their games. Trollope admits that his heart was broken under "the almost equally painful feeling that the other three—no doubt wicked boys—were the curled darlings of the school, who would never have selected me to share their wickedness with them." And still today, fifty years later, he is burned by that shame.

Trollope at sixty is still stupid. He—and the *Autobiography*—function as part of a conspiracy of silence that Trollope also contributed to in 1865 when he published an article in *Fortnightly Review* in which he defended the public schools because of their role in enforcing solidarity among both affluent and less well off sons of the gentry (486). The schools played a key role in overcoming eco-

²J. Hillis Miller sees a reference to the practice of masturbation in Trollope's comments about the early habit of daydreaming that led to his inter-

est in the fiction-making capabilities of imagination (83).

³The troping derives from classical republican discourse. See Linda Dowling's use of this rhetoric as described in the important work of J. G. A.

Pocock.

conomic and status differences since the boys who attended them would be sutured by that common experience in their later, public lives. Given this view, neither Trollope nor other graduates were in a position to name names and deeds. But despite its author's stiff upper lip—and despite the biographers who report this incident without reflecting on it—the *Autobiography* tells its own tales out of school. Resentment of injustice will out. As for Trollope himself, in life and fiction, he obsessively sought substitutes for the sexual desire, fear, and violence impressed upon him as a schoolboy. He did so in the endless series of foxes he pursued as his favorite form of leisure-time activity. And he did so in novelistic surrogates. Trollope acknowledged the law of the pack: there always has to be a comic butt. In *The Prime Minister* (1876), one of his best novels, that butt is Ferdinand Lopez. Both *lupus* and fox, literally butted by the train locomotive that kills him and stalked by the pundit at the Tenway Junction, Lopez falls victim equally to his creator and to the Liberal and Tory betters whose sanctums he had invaded,

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The Illegitimacy of the Colonial Entrepreneur in George Eliot's *Felix Holt*

Aeron Haynie

Harold preferred a slow-witted, large-eyed woman, silent and affectionate, with a load of black hair weighing much more heavily than her brains. He had seen no such woman in England, except one whom he had brought with him from the East. (George Eliot, *Felix Holt* 454-55, emphasis mine)

A series of uprisings spread throughout northern India in May, 1857, to protest the centennial of British rule there.

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Indian sepoy mutinied against their officers, dashing the colonial stereotype of the loyal Indian subject. Early reports of the uprising suggested that the rebellion was scattered and based on Indian religious superstitions. Rumor played a very significant role in accounts focusing on lurid descriptions of the mutilation, torture, rape, and enslavement of innocent Englishwomen.¹

These tales of violence against innocent Englishwomen legitimized the ensuing British show of force, and, in fact,

positioned such military violence as necessary response to Indian brutality. The violence inherent within colonialism was thus effaced and projected onto the figure of the uncivilized and barbaric Indian. The trope of the violated Englishwoman did not exist before the "Mutiny," Jenny Sharpe points out, in *Allegories of Empire* (68). This suggests that although the 1857 uprising was not the first instance of colonial rebellion, it was pivotal in marking a crisis in colonial legitimation and authority.

Recent postcolonial criticism has expanded the spectrum of texts that can be read as constructed by, and contributing to, the discourses of imperialism (including travel literature, journalism, conduct books, children's literature, and domestic novels).² Discussions of imperialism and literature have been reconceptualized to include even those texts whose feminine, domestic subjects are marked as explicitly removed from the foreign, the exotic, or the colonial.

I wish to discuss how dramatic accounts of the 1857 uprising affected British novels in which the colonial situation is not represented explicitly: does the trope of the Englishwoman as signifier of colonial authority significantly impact novels of the 1860s? I argue that the events of 1857 had an enormous effect on the British national consciousness and in particular on the role of women beyond the literature of the imperial project. However, novels do not offer one homogeneous response to this crisis in colonial legitimation; rather, they show the differing ways that issues in colonialism are domesticated and feminized. I focus here on how the male colonial project is appropriated and used as a metaphor to express issues of feminine agency and desire in George Eliot's *Felix Holt*.

Felix Holt, set during the period of the first Reform Bill of 1832 and titled for the novel's hero, a working-class Radical, is often regarded as George Eliot's "political novel" (Coveney 7). Yet, even the novel's graphic depiction of mob violence that follows a local election is eclipsed by the intricacies of the novel's domestic and romantic intrigues. The narrative of radical politics is often regarded as overshadowed by the birth-mystery plot involving Esther Lyon and by the intensity of Eliot's portrayal of Mrs. Transome—a gentlewoman disappointed with her marriage, her former lover, and the long-awaited return of her favorite son.

Critics have noted the centrality of Mrs. Transome in *Felix Holt*. F. R. Leavis argues that "it is in the part of *Felix Holt* dealing with Mrs. Transome that George Eliot becomes one of the great creative artists" (69), while Terry Eagleton claims that Mrs. Transome is the novel's "displaced center" (117). Yet, instead of reading Mrs. Transome, as Henry James does, as "unnatural" or "superfluous" to a presupposed main plot (42), I propose that the strength of her narrative suggests a provocative link between the politic/imperial and the domestic/romantic concerns. It is precisely this connec-

tion, between the struggle for (feminine) domestic power and the presence of colonial forces, that the above critics have misread. Even such a critic as Deirdre David, who links the female domestic concerns with male political action, insists on maintaining that dichotomy. She argues that

The male plot of corrupt contention for political leadership is so undermined by the female plot of abandoned mothers and illegitimate children that the political meaning of *Felix Holt* may be interpreted as a refutation of male political action. (199)

The domestic tragedy of Mrs. Transome's adulterous affair with the lawyer Jermyn and its humiliating aftermath do destroy her son's social identity, yet I wish to challenge David's argument that the female, "anarchic," emotional power of Mrs. Transome upholds the division between the male/political and the female/domestic and undermines the male political ambitions of her son. I want to focus here on what is represented as the central tragedy of the novel—the remorse of Mrs. Transome—and discuss how the figure of the colonial entrepreneur, Harold Transome, is implicated in his mother's ruin.

The novel opens with the long-awaited return of Harold Transome, who had left England as a young man to seek his fortune in the East (Smyrna). He became an imperial entrepreneur and returned home with the relatively large fortune of £150,000. Within the tradition of literary second sons—like Brontë's Edward Rochester—Harold is denied an inheritance and therefore must venture into the colonies to earn his fortune. The eventual death of his older brother allows Harold to assume management of the almost bankrupt Transome estate. However, this return of the favorite son and wealthy colonial businessman is problematic; while Harold Transome improves the material conditions of the family estate, he is portrayed as fundamentally alienated from the values of the community and his family. The alienation is represented as a tragedy within the emotional economy of the novel and manifests itself in Harold Transome's disinterest in his mother and in his callous managerial approach to the family estate.

Mrs. Transome: The Displacement of Female Domestic Authority

Before her son's return, Mrs. Transome ran the family estate: "I am used to be the chief bailiff and sit in the saddle two or three hours every day" (95). She enjoyed both the practical authority of managing the house and grounds and the symbolic power of the sovereign: "she liked every little sign of power her lot had left her. She liked that a tenant should stand bareheaded below her as she sat on horseback" (106). Upon his return, however, Harold makes it clear that

¹One contemporary account of Indian violence comes from Colin Campbell's *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from Its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow*: "Wives were stripped in the presence of their husbands' eyes, flóged naked through the city, violated there in the public streets, and then

murdered. To cut off the breasts of the women was a favorite mode of dismissing them to death; and, most horrible, they were sometimes scalped . . ." (20)

²Sara Mills, *The Discourse of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Literature and Transculturation* (1992); Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of the Woman in the Colonial Text* (1993); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993); Firdous Azim, *The Colonial Rise of the Novel*

(1993); Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (1991); and David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (1993).

his mother's reign is over: "'You shall have nothing to do now but be grandmamma on satin cushions'" (95). The text positions Mrs. Transome as the object of the reader's sympathy, but there is also an implication that both her deposition and her resultant unhappiness are deserved. By committing adultery and usurping her husband's authority, she has transgressed the boundaries of acceptable feminine behavior. The novel uses a language of imperialism to depict her reign over the Transome estate:

She had a high-born imperious air which would have marked her as an object of hatred and reviling by a revolutionary mob. Her person . . . would have fitted an empress in her own right, who had to rule in spite of faction, to dare the violation of treaties and dread retributive invasions, to grasp after new territories, to be defiant in desperate circumstances, and to feel a woman's hunger of the heart forever unsatisfied. (104)

The passage suggests that Mrs. Transome's (imperial) ambition is despotic in nature and also that her desire for sovereignty frustrates any chance for her romantic fulfillment.

Upon returning home, Harold Transome presents his mother with Indian shawls, imported commodities from his colonial entrepreneurship: "'you are straight as an arrow still; you will carry the Indian shawls I have brought you as well as ever'" (93). The Indian shawl is often mentioned in many mid-Victorian texts, most notably in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Gaskell's *Cranford*, and Emily Eden's *The Semi-Detached House*; it is used to signify an aristocratic femininity that is maintained by colonial adventuring.³ Harold Transome uses the shawl as a way of placating his mother and silencing her complaints; he insists upon transforming her into an ornamental woman and the shawl helps to create an image of an indulged (and powerless) grandmother. When Harold Transome covers his mother in an Indian shawl, he symbolically displaces her authority and transforms her from an active (imperial) agent into a passive object of his own colonizing. Mr. Transome, Harold's imbecilic father, is described as sleeping with a "soft Oriental scarf which Harold had given him" (542), suggesting that he has long ago surrendered his authority to Mrs. Transome. Harold Transome's act of covering his mother with an Indian shawl encodes her as passive, as an eastern space under his domination. Mrs. Transome allows herself to be "disguised" by the shawl and the construction of upper-class femininity of which the shawl is a part, yet this mask adds to her imprisonment within that role.

Thus, the text characterizes Mrs. Transome as both the imperial empress of the Transome estate and later as the colonized subject of her son. This double move—the representation of Eliot's heroines as both colonizer and colonized—is discussed by Susan Meyer in her article on

Daniel Deronda. Meyer argues that Gwendolen is initially described as "imperialistic" in her dealings with her family and in her early courtship with Grandcourt; however, once she marries Grandcourt, "it is Gwendolen, not Grandcourt, who is subject to another's empire; it is Gwendolen, not Grandcourt, whom the narrator compares to a slave" (735). Both Gwendolen and Mrs. Transome lose their domestic empires and become resigned to powerless positions at the end of each novel, suggesting, perhaps, the futility of a female imperial energy. Meyer argues that Daniel Deronda offers a possibility of escape through his new racial identity, while in *Felix Holt* Esther Lyon escapes the fate of Mrs. Transome through her marriage to Felix.

Mrs. Transome's good blood and aristocratic bearing, the novel suggests, allow her to wear these vestiges of the colonial venture. However, while the Indian shawl marks the relationship between colonial trading and the feminine space, it also cloaks the Western woman in an aesthetics of the exotic. Mrs. Transome uses the shawl as a costume with which she disguises her unhappiness over her marginalized role in her son's life:

Denner was putting the finishing touches to Mrs. Transome's dress by throwing an Indian scarf over her shoulders, and so completing the contrast between the majestic lady in costume and the Hecuba-like woman whom she had found half an hour before. (489)

Mrs. Transome's bitter disappointment over her son's inability to feel affection for her foreshadows a series of other disillusionments that Harold Transome engenders in the novel. Harold Transome fails in each of his social roles—as prodigal son, Radical candidate, and suitor of Esther—and these failures culminate in the final revelation of his illegitimacy. Although the novel does not explicitly suggest a link between colonial entrepreneurship and illegitimacy, it seems to suggest that the Transome lineage, which was based on suspect legal maneuvering, fittingly concludes with the abdication of the foreign businessman. The novel's implicit condemnation of Harold—he is dismissive of the pre-existing form of (domestic) government, is concerned only with profit, and is finally proven to have no legitimate claim to the estate—implicates the colonial project.

Harold Transome: The Illegitimate Colonial Entrepreneur

Harold Transome claims to have "oriental" tastes concerning women, and his foreign style of administration will not acknowledge (Western) female authority: "'I hate English wives; they want to give their opinion about everything. They interfere with a man's life'" (94). The arrivals of both Felix Holt and Harold Transome disrupt their families and community, yet there is a marked difference in the "foreign"

values they import. Felix Holt's new class identity (or at least rejection of his parents' desires for social mobility) and nostalgic desire for an organic working-class culture is a result of his travels through England. Harold Transome maintained his identity as an English gentleman while abroad and assumes he can resume his old social position in England. However, his years living in the East and his foreign marriage mark him as "other" according to the novel's codes of masculinity and Harold Transome returns home a foreigner with a "dark" son.

The change in Harold Transome—from a youthful English gentleman to a middle-aged colonial businessman—manifests itself especially in his attitude toward women. Harold's professed aversion to English women—although his later interest in Esther challenges this—contrasts them to the "silent and affectionate" (i.e. submissive and dumb) stereotype of Eastern women. The narrative voice here is ambiguous; it is unclear if this "language of orientalist misogyny" (Perera 82) is attributable to Harold or to the narrator. Is the passage a critical representation of Harold's orientalism, or does the novel sacrifice the subjectivity of the Eastern woman in order to highlight the mistreatment of Western women?⁴ It is puzzling that the narrative does not attempt to explain the function of the woman "he had brought with him from the east" (455). Is the reader to assume that Harold Transome imported an Eastern slave to England, and would this woman necessarily be his mistress? This gap or "strategic absence" of the Eastern woman's narrative in a novel concerned with Western (British) women's subjectivity points to "the place where the colonial system of meaning breaks down" (Sharpe 23).

Later, when Harold Transome attempts to woo Esther Lyon, he admits that his son's mother "'had been a slave—was bought, in fact'" (541). It is unclear whether Harold married a former slave, or if he uses the term "wife" to describe his relationship with his former slave-mistress. Harold cannot conceive that this knowledge might affect Esther; the implication of this scene is that Harold (perhaps unknowingly) is operating within a foreign set of sexual codes.

It was impossible for Harold to preconceive the effect this had on Esther. His natural disqualification for judging of a girl's feelings was heightened by the blinding effect of an exclusive object—which was to assure her that her own place was peculiar and supreme. Hitherto Esther's acquaintance with Oriental love was derived chiefly from Byronic poems, and this had not sufficed to adjust her mind to a new story, where the Giaour concerned was giving her his arm. She was unable to speak." (541)

Esther's reaction is ambiguous. On one hand, the passage suggests that she is repulsed by Harold's relations with an eastern slave, yet the comparison to Byron's "Gaiour" denotes a romantic heroism.⁵ Again, the text does not clarify

the relationship between Harold and his foreign "wife." It seems notable that a novel that elaborately explains several characters' claims to inheritance and their family origins would leave murky this question of little Harry's lineage. His maternal lineage is obscured, yet a greater emphasis is placed on paternal lineage. Does the novel critique Harold's strategy of effacing the Eastern woman in order to allow Esther (the Western woman) a privileged, unique position? Yet the Eastern woman's story is never told.

Harold Transome's past involvement with female slaves is left unclear, yet the text explicitly encodes Harold as a despot who shows his tyrannical attitude in his relationships with both Mrs. Transome and Esther Lyon. The novel does not explicitly mark Harold Transome as a slave-owner, yet his relationships with women are described using the language of slavery and images of bondage. Despite Harold's politic civility and attempts to charm her, Esther perceives that "Harold had a padded yoke ready for the neck of every man, woman, and child that depended on him" (538). Marriage to Harold would be "a silken bondage that arrested all motive and was nothing better than a well-cushioned despair" (592).

While Harold is characterized as a subtle dictator, however, it is significant that his mastery is not overt:

Harold [had] practical cleverness—[a] masculine ease with which *he governed everybody and administered everything about him*, without the least harshness, and with a facile good nature which yet was not weak. (524, emphasis mine)

Harold's authority is described as an *administrative* power that seeks to efface itself in its very expression, much like the colonial authority of the mid-Victorian period, which sought to maintain an "informal empire" or "spheres of influence" rather than exhibit formal political authority (Porter 115).

Nevertheless, despite his covert style of control, Harold assumes total domestic authority. He uses his colonial wealth to improve the estate and establish himself as an English politician; yet his interest in England is presented as more dispassionate and acquisitive than affectionate:

"I often thought, when I was at Smyrna, that I would buy a park with a river through it as much like the Lapp as possible. Gad, *what fine oaks those are opposite! Some of them must come down though*. . . . All the country round here lies like a map in my brain. A deuced pretty country too; but the people were a stupid set of old Whigs and Tories." (95-96, emphasis mine)

Harold Transome intends to "improve" the estate by cutting down the oaks and restructuring the tenant system—plans which disregard and disrupt the management system his mother has employed all of the years he has been abroad. Harold does not recognize the validity of his mother's form

³In *Jane Eyre*, the Indian shawl appears on Blanche Ingram's mother, the Dowager Lady Ingram, and it is a manifestation of the wealth that separates Jane from Rochester. When describing the haughty Dowager, Jane remarks on the significance of her wearing an Indian shawl: "A crimson velvet robe, and a shawl turban of some gold-wrought Indian fabric, invested her (I sup-

pose she thought) with a truly imperial dignity" (161). In *The Semi-Detached House*, Captain Hopkinson, an employee of the East India Company, brings Indian shawls home to his wife and daughters, thereby facilitating their movement from middle- to upper-class social circles (153).

⁴See Spivak for a discussion of how the subjectivity of the Western heroine is grounded upon the dehumanization of the non-white, colonial woman.

⁵"The Giaour," a poem written by Byron in 1813, describes a Byronic hero

who falls in love with a female slave. She is killed by her Turkish lord, Hassan, and Giaour avenges her death and then banishes himself to a monastery.

of domestic government. Harold's disrespectful attitude toward his mother's management of the estate suggests that the authority of the returned colonial entrepreneur cannot coexist within the context of the feminine, domestic (national) authority.

Esther Lyon: The Feminine Bourgeois Principle

The possibility of Harold Transome's marrying Esther Lyon is the Transomes' last chance of legally maintaining the rights to their estate. Additionally, Esther is represented as the only way that Harold can cleanse himself of the contaminating attitude of orientalist misogyny. However, in order to become this feminine principle of salvation and moral agency, Esther Lyon must undergo a transformation brought on by Felix Holt's violent radicalism.

In her article "Why Political Novels Have Heroines," Ruth Yeazell argues that the love interest in political novels provides a cover, or a refuge from representations of violence:

these novels entertain the possibility of violence, even half-sympathize with it, only to take refuge at critical moments in the representation of female innocence, exchanging a politically dangerous man for a sexually unaggressive young woman, and a narrative that threatens drastic change for one that proves reassuringly static.

(127)

Yeazell discusses how, in order to become a vehicle of redemption for Felix Holt, Esther Lyon must forgo her own social ambitions and pretentious gentility. Esther Lyon gives up her ambition so that she might have a greater power: womanly influence. Alison Booth argues that *Felix Holt* represents Eliot's belief in "an ideology of influence" in which "woman's vocation for sympathy [becomes] a basis for social reform" (144). However, in her analysis of Esther's transformation—from a social climber to a self-effacing heroine who willingly gives up her inheritance—Yeazell ignores the importance of Mrs. Transome as a negative example of frustrated feminine ambition.

The novel proposes a carefully-constructed code of feminine influence, one that Esther learns through the course of the novel and that Mrs. Transome fails to achieve. The novel shows that Esther's choice to marry Felix Holt is based on her desire to escape the fate of Mrs. Transome, a woman whose ambitions and transgressions have made her entirely dependent upon two despotic men: Jermyn, her former lover, and Harold, her son. Mrs. Transome describes her relationships with men by using the language of slavery:

There was that possibility of fierce insolence in this man who was to pass with those nearest to her as her indebted servant, but whose brand she secretly bore. She was as powerless with him as she was with her son. (203, emphasis mine)

Mrs. Transome foresees that, if Esther marries Harold, she, too, will enter into a role of bondage:

"This girl has a fine spirit—plenty of fire and pride and wit. Men like such captives, as they like horses that champ the bit and paw the ground: they feel more triumph in their mastery. What is the use of a woman's will?" (488)

Esther, whose beauty and refinement have encouraged her aspirations to become a gentlewoman, rejects the role of Harold's wife, in part because she realizes that his illegitimacy marks him as beyond redeeming.

Esther represents a reformation of Mrs. Transome's upper-class femininity. Initially, she is vain, graceful, and haughty, and rules over her father's domestic space without the humble affection that Felix Holt later teaches her:

In this small dingy house of the minister of Malthouse Yard there was a light-footed, sweet-voiced Queen Esther . . . [who] rules . . . with an air of confidence. . . , [a] blind willfulness that sees no terrors, no many-linked consequences, no bruises and wounds of those whose cord it tightens There is a sort of subjection which is the peculiar heritage of largeness and love; and strength is often only another name for willing bondage to irremediable weakness. (160)

Esther unlearns this form of feminine authority, and, in fact, she renounces any superiority over her father precisely at the moment that she discovers her true parentage. Esther's renunciation—choosing Felix Holt over Harold Transome and giving up her claims to the Transome estate—involves a realization of the nature of appropriation; in order to claim her inheritance Esther must displace the Transomes:

now that her ladyhood was not simply Utopia, she found herself arrested and *painfully grasped by the means through which the ladyhood was to be obtained*. To her inexperience this strange story of an alienated inheritance, of such a last representative of pure-blooded lineage as old Thomas Transome the bill-sticker, above all of the dispossession hanging over those who actually held, and had expected always to hold, the wealth and position which were suddenly announced to be rightfully hers . . . compelled her to gaze on the degrading hard experience of other human beings, and on [their] humiliating loss.

(474, emphasis mine)

Esther rejects the role of lady once she realizes that it can be obtained only through the appropriation of someone else's property. Thus the novel suggests that ladyhood—the genteel femininity embodied in Mrs. Transome—involves the imperial violence of invasion and seizure of property.

Although Esther rejects this kind of implied violence, her choice to marry Felix Holt and share in his project of helping the working class places her in a corollary position: the role of the missionary helpmate. Felix Holt's description of his plans to educate the working class employs the rhetoric of the colonial missionary:

"I shall go away as soon as I can to some large town, . . .

some ugly, wicked, miserable place. I want to be a demagogue of a new sort; an honest one, if possible, will tell people they are blind and foolish." (366)

Esther's role as Felix's wife is to use her femininity to make his civilizing mission more comfortable. She accepts Felix Holt as her "law" and joins his project of "civilizing" the misguided poor.

Esther Lyon's rejection of Harold Transome and her decision to help Felix in his civilizing mission is a reversal of the romantic resolution of *Jane Eyre*, where the heroine refuses St. John Rivers' proposal and then marries the maimed Rochester. In contrast, Esther does not use her inheritance or her feminine civilizing power to rescue Harold Transome. Felix Holt's project of educating the poor is analogous to St. John Rivers' missionary work in Africa. Yet in Eliot's novel, the failed colonial adventurer (and second son) is not recuperated by marriage to the heroine, Esther Lyon. Thus Eliot's text constructs a complex critique of the possibility of integrating the colonial entrepreneur into the domestic, feminine space.

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