

Unimagined Communities

Literary Forms and Nationalism in 19th-Century America

by

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INTRODUCTION

In the chapters that follow, I argue that a driving force in the evolution of the nineteenth-century American novel's theoretical and formal concerns was a broadly shared uncertainty about the shape of the nation. The lack of certainty was not only a question of who would live in the U.S. and how, but also, fundamentally, what the limits of the land would be. While the formlessness, as I call it, of the United States has not gone unrecognized, the powerful role that it had on literature from the Jacksonian revolution to the Progressive era has not been fully appreciated.

This argument begins, as many in the study of American culture do, with the discipline's urtext, Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis." Turner's speech was delivered upon the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas and celebrated "the winning of the west" by the United States that had occurred in the intervening years. Reading the results of the 1890 census, Turner famously declared the frontier closed: there was a finitude to the extent of American expansion, the Western coast of North America, and the U.S. had reached the end of expansion's road. This was lamentable because, as Turner theorized, the frontier provided the occasion for the elaboration of a distinctly American identity. Arriving on the Atlantic shores of the continent, Turner contended, Europeans encountered the first frontier. Unlike a European frontier — "a fortified boundary line running through dense populations" — the American frontiers were like "the outer edge of a wave" and "[lay] at the hither edge of

free land" (Turner 3). Encountering this wild and savage frontier, the "wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought" and "strips off the garments of civilization." "Little by little," though, "[the settler] transforms the wilderness," Turner argues, transforming himself and his "European germs" into a "new product that is American" (Turner 4). Because there were multiple advancing frontiers, each subsequent confrontation of settler and savagery built upon that which preceded it, producing "a steady movement away from the influence of Europe" (Turner 4). Not simply a turning away from Europe, though, westward expansion enabled "a steady growth of independence on American lines"; according to Turner, "the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here...the frontier is productive of individualism" (30). In Turner's narration, then, continental expansion and the American identity it produces are both inevitable, like the evolution of species or the retreat of glaciers, and pre-determined from the moment of the European arrival, a germ, lying latent. Each generation in its "progress from savage conditions," enacts the evolutionary drama in miniature, with movement west translating into movement upwards on the developmental hierarchy, forwards into modernity, away from Europe and towards democratic individualism. The frontier produced, in other words, not simply a new variety, but an altogether new species.

In this dissertation, I take up Turner's claim that the frontier experience made a positive, exceptional, inevitable American national character legible and take up, too, the claims of scholars who have worked in his wake. While Turner claimed that the United States was "like a huge page in the history of society" whose cultural formations could be read "line by line" to "find the record of [this] social evolution" this new identity, I argue

that the frontier did not produce a distinct national identity so much as it posed a challenge to the very idea that the U.S. was a nation at all. For nineteenth century Americans, the inchoateness of the frontier lands and the demands of universal liberalism conjoined to create the sense that when it came to the United States there was no there there.

Embedded in Abraham Lincoln's claims in the Lincoln-Douglas debates was a liberal argument for an expansive American empire. Lincoln claimed that even those who could not "trace their connection with those days [of the nation's founding] by blood" nevertheless "feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men" and feel too "that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh, of the men who wrote that Declaration; and so they are." He went on to posit an "electric cord in that Declaration" which "linked the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men [throughout the world]" through which all men could make a claim upon the nation. For Lincoln, then, liberalism produced a transcendent kinship amongst men that made U.S. national citizenship universal. While Lincoln had written these remarks as an explanation of the U.S.'s powers to make "men who have come from Europe—German, Irish, French and Scandinavian" recognize their equality, the logic of Lincoln's statement also suggests that these men could just as easily have stayed in Europe yet become American; everywhere, in turn, can be America. In a confounding of Locke's formulation, all the world is not America to begin with, but only after liberalism.

The liberalism that defined some versions of American nationhood, with its paradoxical call for universal individualism, in other words, called for the creation of a

paradoxically national empire. In pursuing a policy of westward expansion, Americans were forced to confront this conundrum over and over again, to wrestle with what Benedict Anderson has called the "inner incompatibility of [liberal] empire and nation" (93). Throughout the nineteenth century, literary aesthetics were organized with respect to this central philosophical problem of how to manage the competing claims of a universalizing liberalism and nationalism, with its demands for exclusionary communal identifications, in a transnational context. Before the Civil War, imagining a liberal national form in an era of what Turner called "free land" proved enormously challenging: the sheer quantity of land to be surveyed and incorporated provoked anxieties about a boundary-less national geography; the possibility of slavery's extension, the appropriation of Native American lands, the inability or unwillingness to accept or produce the equality of non-white others called into question the claims of the nation to liberality.

I argue that while the Civil War settled the question of federalism the winning of the war and the ratification of the Reconstruction amendments did not resolve the United States' nation building problem but in fact, exacerbated it. Unbound by Constitutional directives carefully delineating the racial make-up of U.S. citizenship and facing a still open frontier, Americans had to imagine a national identity that was not traceable to ethnic or geographic foundations. Though we tend to think of expansion as a process of filling up a discretely delimited United States, this was by no means the self-evident case for many of those living through it, those possessed of a liberal imagination.

Confronted with this formlessness, nineteenth-century writers attempted to construct a coherent account of the nation by advancing a series of formal and thematic innovations. While some of these have survived, many are now unrecognizable except as

literary failures because their vision of nationality was soon displaced. Joseph Smith's *The Book of Mormon* (1830), the most printed, but least read work of nineteenth-century American fiction, is the perfect example of this phenomenon. Birthed from the fires of the New York frontier's religious revivalism, the *Book of Mormon* amalgamated and reanimated tropes from the Bible, contemporaneous discourses around Indian removal, Orientalist travel narratives, common sense politics and New York tall tales(*The Book of Mormon*). A document from one of many religious reform movements, *The Book of Mormon* did not invite invective simply because it was blasphemous. Instead, the book and those who believed its fictions, drew heated responses because of the ways both conceptualized and articulated the dimensions of their America. Advocating for communal forms of property sharing, envisioning a democratic Christian theocracy and arguing that God called upon believers to intertwine their salvation with that of Native Americans, to reshape the body politic, *The Book of Mormon* imagined a United States so out of bounds, both too liberal and not liberal enough, that Mormons had to create a separate nation.

Competition over which conception of the United States would prevail produced a vast swathe of anti-Mormon fiction, not to mention outright warfare. Just as current scholarship under appreciates the many ways that nineteenth-century Americans imagined the nation, as well as ambivalences about the nation-building project, the criticism is also insufficiently attuned to the problems the process of empire forging posed for imperial ideologies in their practical and literary expression. While, for example, sentiment and realism have been implicated as imperial forms, there is little in the scholarship addressing why the project of national expansion, if both were doing the

same cultural work, necessitated the production and proliferation of multiple modes. I argue, by contrast, that obstacles in the imperial path required the creation of different literary forms.

In making this argument, my project draws upon recent scholarship in the field that has positioned itself contra-Turner as well as against a number of Cold Warriors who championed his "myth of the American frontier" as a means of substantiating mid-twentieth century consensus in the fight against Communism. Scholarship since roughly the 1970s has argued that these Cold War histories such as Bernard DeVoto's *The Course of Empire* (1952), Perry Miller's *Errand into the Wilderness* (1957), Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1957), and Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) forward the claims of American exceptionalism. This myth-and-symbol school criticism, the argument goes, contend that the U.S. is different than European nations because it is a democracy (because of this unique frontier experience) and that these democratic ideals can and should be globally adopted; what makes American special is that it is not an empire, which in turn justifies the elaboration and extension of American empire.

My scholarship joins that of New Americanist critics insofar as it takes exception to this American exceptionalism.¹ This work has proceeded along three lines. First, through rigorous historicization and contextualization such criticism aims to, in effect, restore the banality of American literary and cultural production, articulating the ways that U.S. has been shaped by constant dialogue with the foreign, by the imperial ambitions that structure liberal nationalism. Second, by incorporating the perspectives of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and women, those whose stories

have been excluded from Turner-ian accounts of westward expansion, the scholarship has recast the emotional tenor of Turner's account. While there is much to lament in these histories, generally speaking it is not the closing of the frontier but the conquest, violence, and injustice that followed its opening.² My work benefits from the recalibration of perspective offered by these critiques, expanding my archive. In the moments when these narratives confront Turner's teleology with one of their own, the scholarship has encouraged me to avoid presupposing the national imperial form that the project of expansion was in the process of establishing. Such teleological thinking, I argue, obscures how little was preordained about the meaning of manifest destiny as the term regularly gets used.³ While a destiny was manifest (as they always are), what that destiny might be was the object of near constant speculation, rather than surety in the form of optimism or alternately despair. Third, scholarship has also attempted to revise the periodization of American literature in general and the implicit periodization developed from Turner's thesis in particular. Rather than reading the century along the axis of North and South, the scholarship reads the page of U.S. history, like Turner does, along a West-East axis. This reading has the effect of minimizing the importance of the Civil War to the American story. Taking up Turner's east-west trajectory, these scholars reject his periodization. Embedded within Turner's thesis is the argument that because the experience of the frontier produced American identity, the closure of the Western frontier necessitated the development of new frontiers: the acquisition of America's formal empire beginning with the Spanish-American War. Countering this argument, scholars "complicate the simple chronology that plots the U.S. empire emerging full blown at various stages of the twentieth century to step into the shoes of dying European empires"

by arguing that "United States nation-building and empire-building" are "historically coterminous and mutually defining" (Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture" 17). Translating this belief into periodization, scholars have attempted to read across the century, rather than up to and after the Civil War; if a new focal point for the century has been created, it is "America's 1848," when the U.S. won the Mexican-American War.⁴ While my project's periodization hews to these lines, it differs in the attention it pays to the ways that the Civil War and emancipation seemed to make possible the realization of liberal nationalism and in the attention it pays to the excitement and confusion generated by this possibility.

While my critique takes a global turn consistent with many working in the field of American studies, it also adds to our understanding of national/imperial formations through its attentiveness to the complex interplay between literary boundaries and geopolitical ones. The novel and the nation are the way that liberalism as an ideology realizes itself. The novel tells us about liberalism: liberalism in turn tells us about the national imagination. If we are only paying attention to the discourses invoked in novels, we're missing a critical piece of the historical puzzle. I argue, by contrast, that the experience of the novel's form is critical to understanding national/imperial formations. While the tale of American empire as we tell it is one of confidence and forward-looking, those living it were without lines, edges, and definition and this lack of form and direction manifested itself in these "problem" novels, new literary templates for the American character.

In my first chapter, I write about Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868). A favorite novel of scholars working on the British side of the Atlantic, it is very

infrequently read in the context of the United States, where it was also enormously popular. In my reading, I use the *Harper's Weekly* in which the novel was serialized, British reviews, and Collins's American reputation at the time to reconstitute the political, economic and cultural climate governing the novel's reception stateside. I read the novel and its U.S. popularity in the light of the United States' contentious relationship with Britain and its Empire both before, during, and after the Civil War. Building an expansionist continental empire of its own, the U.S. frequently pointed to Great Britain and its ongoing efforts to subdue and subjugate the people of the Indian sub-continent as a counterpoint to America's own nation-building efforts. During the Civil War, the real or perceived intervention of the British Empire on behalf of the Southern Confederacy, as well as the growing power and legitimacy of the Fenian movement or Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, only heightened the American sense of the illegitimacy and injustice of British Empire; the emancipation of the U.S.'s slaves, the birth of various 'democratic' national independencies, and the long-in-coming passage of England's 2nd Reform Act in 1867, meanwhile, confirmed the U.S. belief, trumpeted by Secretary of State Seward, that *American* Empire and liberty need not be antithetical to one another, that liberalism and nationalism could be co-extensive.

In both of *The Moonstones*, there is an implicit critique of British imperial nationalism, liberalism with limits. Utilizing theorizations of British manor-house novels elaborated by Edward Said and Raymond Williams, I argue that the novel phobically describes England as rotting from within because its liberal nation building depends upon an infinite series of instable and unjust hierarchies and separations: England/India, country/city, aristocratic/common, men/women. These inequalities come to life in the

form of Hindoo Brahmins, who venture from their Indian homes to threaten the safety and security enjoyed by those seated at the imperial center. Instrumentalizing D.A. Miller's Foucauldian analysis of the novel's "monological structure," I argue that in the British versions of the novel pretensions to the production of legal truth and realism disguise, equivocate and dissipate much of this critique. At the novel's end, the diamond is returned to its sacral origins in India, reconstituting a system of racial caste in both India and England, as well as reconstituting India and England as separate if symmetrical societies. Those characters who cannot or will not adhere to the class, gender, and racial norms of the English body, regardless of their personal virtue, the services they render unto the novel's manor-born main characters or their villainy, can be found dead in the dustbin of the plot.

By contrast, the version published in the U.S. amplifies a critique of limited liberalism. In its American incarnation, the foreclosing narrative structure of *The Moonstone* is attenuated and interrupted by serialization, illustration, recontextualization and juxtaposition. What produces panic in a British context, I argue, produces pleasure in an American one, as American readers could enjoy seeing a British aristocracy, one that supported a Confederate slavocracy, being upended by their dark-skinned colonial subjects. The illustrations and editorials that appear alongside the novel's serialization, moreover, suggest the impermanence of race and class as objective markers of human value and therefore their ineffectiveness as the defining criteria of national citizenship. This, I contend, represents a tentative step to support the Freedmen's efforts to "naturalize" themselves: racial difference need not make one a stranger to the constitution nor to the market. Such thinking, where everything and everyone can become American,

makes the United States endlessly expansive. The literally alienating English version of empire, that which the novel tentatively attempts to re-establish, by contrast, pales in comparison to the dynamism of nation and empire driven by liberalism.

In my next chapter, I take up Mark Twain's humorous picaresque *Roughing It* (1872), arguing that the book's form and content wrestle with what critic Irene Tucker has called the "triviality of diffuseness" entailed by "liberalism in its formalist universalism" (Tucker 14). This is the liberalism we see extolled in *The Moonstone*. *Roughing It* is a proto-novelistic account of Twain's journey accompanying his brother out west as both enlist in the bureaucratic service of Nevada's territorial government during the Civil War, as well as of his travels in the West and Pacific after the unraveling of this position. Twain's narration of his experiences is anything but seamless. The form of the book is unwieldy, moving from Twain's stories, to tall tales, to extensive borrowings from A.D. Richardson's *Beyond the Mississippi* (1867), the era's anti-Mormon fiction, anthropological accounts, and his brother's prose. Stuffed, too, with illustrations and not one, but three, appendices, the book seems to know no bounds. In his account of nation building, Benedict Anderson has argued that the rise of print culture allowed people to make sense of themselves as part of the nation. In Twain's narration, however, where every piece of prose is given equal weight and space and disparate pieces of prose are jarringly juxtaposed to one another, I argue that there seems to be no common language upon which to build national solidarities. *Roughing It* is a puzzling literary terrain, one that resists attempts to master or make totalizing sense of it. This becomes particularly evident in the book's picaresque anti-bildungsroman structure. According to Anderson's account of modern nationalism again, "pilgrimages" between bureaucratic agencies

produced "a consciousness of connectedness (Why are *we....here...together?*)...above all when all share[d] a single language of state" (55-56). Twain's book, I argue, refuses the Lockean and Emersonian epistemologies of possession necessary to make such pilgrimages, as well as westward expansion, meaningful; the book's structure, passing from one episode to the next without rhyme or reason, and language, the way that Twain detaches word from referent, willfully abjures the knowledge necessary to formulate mutual recognition.

In addition to looking at the form of Twain's *Roughing It*, I argue that the content of Twain's prose dramatizes (or rather satirizes) the difficulties of living liberal nationalism. In particular, I focus upon Twain's extended stay in Utah, the land of the Mormons. In *Roughing It*, Twain is caught between admiring the Mormons for the way that they have transformed the desert into a flowering oasis, a flowering that looks like all that is best about the addition of labor to land, and mocking the Mormons for their liberality. In Twain's rendering, I argue, we are able to see how the promiscuity of the Mormons' financial and racial economies, their non-ethnic and non-geographic nationalism, in many ways mirrors the aspirations to liberal nationalism the U.S. possessed; we are able to see, too, how Americans—in confronting that fantastic self—saw a cult. Strangely enough, then, the impermeability of the Mormons serves as liberalism's limit, providing a boundary over and against which other Americans can carve out a national identity.

After a couple of wars and a protracted legal battle over the meaning of the Constitution, the Mormons eventually surrendered their vision of nationalism in order that they might gain statehood within the United States. Without the locating sureties

provided by the boundaries of race, place or language, the nation could seem a place impossibly absurd and undifferentiatedly peopled, free. While Twain could enjoy this status as "free laborer" and vagabond throughout the continent and the Pacific rim, the demands of a expanding industrial economy, I argue, required the production of a to some extent un-free labor. In my final chapter, I argue that "realism" as both an aesthetic and an ideology accomplished this by limiting the diffusion of liberalism's economic and political power along racial class lines.⁵

Moving from Twain to late in the nineteenth century, I argue that Progressive-era realism relied upon certain representational conventions that included not only complexity of character, the explicability of social relationships and developmental causality, but also, I argue, minstrelized racial representations, to produce its realistic effects. These minstrelized representations made extension of citizenship and suffrage to African Americans as well as to the peoples of the territories acquired by U.S. after the Spanish-American War imaginatively off-limits, *unrealistic*, to white elites both North and South. Critics of Griggs' novel have tried to read *Imperium* as either a political polemic, a "real" account of how to foment a racial revolution or as aesthetic failure for not adhering to realistic standards of representation, the minstrel stereotyping of which our literary histories have largely ignored. I argue, by contrast, that it is precisely the "real" which *Imperium in Imperio* asks its readers to re-imagine, as the metonymic efforts of Howellsian realism only functioned to further expand and calcify existing inequities and the form of national empire. In its refusal of dialect and its explosion of causality, explicability, character development, sequential chronology, and factuality, the novel, I argue, renounces of the logic of contractual probability that had been reconstructed into

late century versions of liberal nationalism. In this way, the novel confronts the pragmatic, "realistic" racism of the Progressive-era that limited black educational opportunities and justified Jim Crow segregation at home and abroad.

¹ See *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism* (2000) edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald Paese, John Carlos Rowe's *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism* (2000), Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture* (2002) for important accounts of U.S. imperial ambitions and how they shaped literary discourse (*The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture*).

² Notable "new" histories of Westward expansion include Patricia Nelson Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest* (1987), Michael Rogin's *Fathers and Children: The Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975), Slotkin's frontier trilogy, *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), *The Fatal Environment* (1985), and *Gunfighter Nation* (1992) (*Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*). The ongoing revision of the mythology of the frontier is most starkly seen in Michael Rogin's *Fathers and Children*, for example, when he writes that "America was continually beginning again on the frontier, and as it expanded across the continent, it killed, removed, and drove into extinction one tribe after another" (3) and that the U.S. was from the outset a "society built on Indian graves" (5) and "acts of force and fraud" (*Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* 3).

³ One can see the logic of this trap working in Bernard DeVoto's study of the Lewis & Clark expedition. *The Course of Empire* (1952). Beginning the text, DeVoto writes "one of the facts which define the United States is that its national and its imperial boundaries are the same. Another is that it is a political unit which occupies a remarkably coherent geographical unit of continental extent" (DeVoto xiii). Later this is followed by the observation that "a dismaying amount of our history has been written without regard to the Indians, and of what has been written with regard to them much treats their diverse and always changing societies as uniform and static... But also, I believe there is some inherent tendency to write American history as if it were the function of white culture only" (xv). What this suggests to me is the ways that an contemporary experience of a geographically bounded nation produces a backwards narration of a national experience bounded by race and ethnicity, as always "white." The national form requires an exclusion; contemporary scholars who want to study the exclusions by necessity, then, need to analyze the national form alongside those exclusions, rather than using them as an analytic tool, the stable grounds against which identities are shaped.

⁴ See Michael Rogin's *Subversive Genealogy* (1983) and Shelley Streeby's *American Sensations* (2002) (*Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*).

⁵ To forward this argument, I utilize the insights of Etienne Balibar, who argues that racism is employed in nation-states for the "construction of 'the people' as a political community taking precedence over class divisions" (Balibar 165) and Richard Slotkin, who similarly contends that "the health of the new corporate order required the willing subordination of worker to manager, and of private ambition to corporate necessity. But this was an ideology logically at odds with the traditional values of self-government and freedom of opportunity and with the political ideology of "free labor" for whose vindication the Civil War

had been fought and which the newspapermen shared (or were afraid to openly contradict)" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* 19).

CHAPTER I

THE AMERICAN *MOONSTONE* AND THE RENEWED PROMISE OF LIBERAL
NATIONALISM

I. Introduction

In the following chapter, I consider two very different texts published in 1868, Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Elizabeth Keckley's *Behind the Scenes*, the first at length, the second only briefly. Though not immediately an obvious pairing — *The Moonstone*, a “detective” novel written by one of Victorian England's most popular authors, *Behind the Scenes*, an autobiography written by a former slave turned seamstress to the United States' political elite, most notably the Lincoln family — the two works have enough similarities to produce generative differences. Both texts are attempts to explicate a “mystery” (the theft of the moonstone diamond; the public sale of Mrs. Lincoln's intimate possessions), both are told from the perspectives of those working “behind the scenes” (Collins's novel, which narrates the story of the Verinder family's theft and subsequent loss of the diamond, is narrated in large part by Gabriel Betteredge, the Verinder's head servant), both are texts who produce their affects through appeals to the truth (the novel attempts to achieve the standards of legal truth and is made up of the epistolary testimony of those involved with the mystery; Keckley's “true” autobiography is possessed of novelistic sensibilities), both revolve around “dirty laundry” (in *The Moonstone*, the diamond's thief is revealed by a paint smudge on a worn nightgown, while Keckley's narrative revolves around her design of Mrs. Lincoln's clothes and her

eventual decision to help her dispose of these worn garments in the marketplace) and both texts were sensations in the post-Civil War United States (Collins's purposely titillating novel was a best-seller in England and the U.S.; Keckley's prose was deemed a work of sensational press and Lincoln's son successfully saw to it that the books circulation was practically nil).

While it was occurring, the Civil War was the subject of an unprecedented ongoing literary historicization. In the years since, the popularity of the Civil War has endured as an object of cultural fascination, becoming the "most studied event in United States history"; Drew Gilpin Faust, who has added a few of her own titles to the total, claims that over "60,000 books dealing in one way or another with that conflict have been published since it ended" (Foner). More study has not necessarily led to new study and these histories have been "dominated by a nationalistic perspective that focuses narrowly on the war as a confrontation of North and South...Americans appear loath to recognize the Civil War's international dimension" (Merli 1). One of the primary reasons that such insistently nationalistic readings hold sway is, paradoxically, the very importance of the international scene to the outcome of the Civil War. During what we now call the Civil War, the contest over what the conflict would be called was one of, if not the most important "battles" fought: the international status of the war, whether it was a war of rebellion waged within one nation, a civil war, or a war of independence, fought by two belligerents, determined if and how foreign powers, mostly England and France, would involve themselves in the ongoing hostilities. The largely nationalist renderings of the Civil War have bled into readings of the Reconstruction as historians, literary and otherwise, have argued that the era was one in which "politics was scarcely a serious

matter, and foreign politics not serious at all” (Nicholas 48). This nationalist (and apolitical) reading reproduces itself ad infinitum in an institutionalized body of literature that has, as work in the field critiquing this canonical structure demonstrates, defined American literature along these nationalist lines as the provenance of white, upper-middle class, American-born males. By bringing the works of Collins, Keckley and the literary world which gave birth to them into conversation, I hope to contribute to a body of scholarly work currently adding an “international dimension” to our study of the period’s literature and politics: the U.S.’s postbellum inward-lookingness was itself informed by complicated global relationships, particularly with Britain and its empire. Taken together, these works paint a picture of a U.S. at the end of the Civil War that was simultaneously trying to emulate and differentiate itself from Great Britain, particularly in regard to “imperial” policy that, of course, shaped Reconstruction’s racial politics.

While *The Moonstone* has been widely written about in its English context, less has been written about its popularity within the United States and transatlantically. The popularity of *The Moonstone* in America, though, begs a few questions: At this postbellum moment when the U.S., according to most historians, *becomes* the U.S., a fully realized nation, reveling in its own sense of moral superiority and economic might, why does the nation’s literary interest turn towards a tale of the theft from a British country house of diamond that had been previously looted from the shores of India? Why make an American bestseller out of an “English” story spun around an even farther away land? Here, I read the novel and its U.S. popularity in the light of the United States’ contentious relationship with Britain and its Empire both before, during, and after the Civil War. Building an expansionist continental empire of its own, the U.S. frequently

pointed to Great Britain and its ongoing efforts to subdue and subjugate the people of the Indian sub-continent as a counterpoint to America's own "benevolent" efforts. During the Civil War, the real or perceived intervention of the British Empire on behalf of the Southern Confederacy, as well as the growing power and legitimacy of the Fenian movement or Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, only heightened the American sense of the illegitimacy and injustice of British Empire; the emancipation of the U.S.'s slaves, the birth of various 'democratic' national independencies, and the long-in-coming passage of England's 2nd Reform Act in 1867, meanwhile, confirmed the U.S. belief, trumpeted by Secretary of State Seward, that *American* Empire and liberty need not be antithetical to one another.

In America's *Moonstone*, readers could revel in the redounding of British imperial violence upon the English manor and the delicate equilibrium of gender, class and caste lived therein (which was the object, too, of much American vitriol). The British are punished for their imperial stylings, their efforts to turn England into Great Britain through militaristic conquest. At the novel's end, however, the diamond is returned to its sacral origins in India — in effect, reconstituting the caste system therein — and the English aristocratic home is, as well, re-populated/rejuvenated: those characters who cannot or will not adhere to the class, gender, and racial norms of the English body, regardless of their personal virtue or the services they render unto the novel's manor-born main characters, can be found dead in the dustbin of the plot. The novel's resolution, then, affirms internal national orders predicated upon caste/cast/racial hierarchies. On the one hand, imperial violence seems to be condemned; on the other, the novel seems to sustain the categorizations that justify that violence.

By contrast, I argue, the illustrations and texts that surround the American serialization resist an easy reconstruction of those same hierarchies: the "pie-bald" Ezra Jennings is not obviously racially caricatured, the thieving hunchbacked maid is not disfigured, and other negative stereotypings seem to be largely forsworn. This treatment, I contend, represents a rare and tentative step to support the Freedmen's efforts to "naturalize" themselves, to, in other words, imagine citizenship as acquirable in advance of the passage of the 14th amendment; racial difference need not make one a stranger to the constitution. Importantly, too, racial difference need not make one a stranger to the constitution not because Americans dislike Empire, but because they envision their empire differently than do the English. While thieves are punished in the English version for hoping to cut the diamond into a million pieces, American empire of this era is a market empire, one where commodification, exchange and admixture are necessary conditions of expansion. According to such thinking, everything and everyone can become American. While England needs India to remain India in order for it to be England, the United States by contrast is endlessly expansive *as* the United States. The English version of empire, that which the novel tentatively attempts to re-establish, by contrast, pales in comparison to the dynamism of "empire" driven by the global market economy. The English attachment to caste, represented by the novel's "murder" of its "mixed" personages and its refusal to permit the transformation of the diamond into real estate and cultural capital, demonstrates its commitment to an older, more costly form of expansion; England is insufficiently liberal.

Keckley's *Behind the Scenes*, by contrast, suggests how un-natural becoming a citizen could be. Keckley models in her person the movement away from a largely cotton

driven slave economy towards an industrial one of free labor and, potentially, commercial empire. The epitome of the rags-to-riches story, Keckley celebrates her class mobility and a marketplace made safe from its exploitative excesses by emancipation, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Having purchased her freedom by virtue of her own skills as a seamstress, Keckley believes her talent and labor will permit her to ascend the economic ladder, one which she reads as a social ladder as well; her autobiography testifies to a self-possession that *should* qualify her, if not for citizenship, at least into entrance and acceptance into polite society on her own terms. Keckley's success at mastering the forms of polite postbellum society are marked by her consistent contrasts with the unladylike, ungenteel, improperly sentimental and profligate Mary Todd Lincoln. In defending her friend Mrs. Lincoln from accusations of impropriety, however, Keckley and her book offend the sensibilities of a readership who insist upon reading her both *as a servant* and *black*. As a result, Keckley is scorned and the autobiography of her ascent within the marketplace is banned from circulating within it. In Keckley's text and the response to it, American dreams of a peaceful, in some regards "assimilative," meritocratic, commercial "Empire for Liberty" brought forth by free markets are confronted with a reality marked by racial, gender, and class antipathies. The limitations of the market empire are made manifest.

II. Early American Isolationism?

In his 1871 preface to the book publication of *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins expressed the fear he had had of disappointing the "good readers in England and in America" who waited eagerly for "their regular weekly installments of the new story" (viii). This concern, much to his relief, turned out to be unwarranted as "the welcome

accorded to the story in England, in America, and on the Continent of Europe was universally favorable. Never have I had better reason that this work has given me to feel gratefully to novel readers of all nations. Everywhere my characters made friends, and my story roused interest” (viii-ix). Despite writing for members of the English-reading diaspora, Collins’s novel has almost exclusively been read in the context of its publication *in England*. Where critics have read the novel ahistorically, they have implicitly rendered it as part of the English novelistic tradition. Albert Hutter forwarded a Freudian, psychosexual reading of the jewel’s theft as the symbolic theft of Rachel Verinder’s virginity (Hutter 242); D.A. Miller pairs Collins with other Victorian, i.e., English, novelists (Dickens and Trollope) and argues, in a Foucauldian reading, that the novel’s “monological” structure disseminates the “professional offices of detection the better and more broadly to reinscribe them in everyday life” (D. A. Miller 56, 51); Tamar Heller has, meanwhile, argued that *The Moonstone* “represents an expose of Victorian culture that recognizes the links between types of domination—of the colonizers over the colonized, of men over women, and of the upper over the lower class,” an expose that the “the novel also papers over” (Heller 143) in order to protect Collins’s lucrative authorial position within the English literary marketplace; taking cues from Edward Said’s reading of *Mansfield Park*, critics such as Susan Lonoff, Ashish Roy, Ian Duncan and Krishna Manavalli have read the novel in the context of England’s relationship to its imperial dominions (Lonoff; Manavalli; Roy; Said).¹

Given the amount of attention the novel has received and how much of that recent attention has been focused on *The Moonstone*’s interest in the interpenetration of the domestic and the imperial, attending to the novel’s transatlantic circulation seems timely.

The novel was enormously popular in America: its serialization in *Harper's Weekly* from January 1868 through July of that same year sold so well that, despite the precautions of Collins and Harper, his U.S. publisher, "four separate pirated editions appeared simultaneously" to meet customer demand on the American side of the Atlantic (Lonoff 265). The novel's popularity outside of its domestic literary market as well as its own plotting of imperial exchange undertaken, if thwarted, calls for nuanced global readings.² This essay will reconstitute something of the political, diplomatic and literary climate that gave shape to the novel's American reception and meaning. Reading contemporaneous reviews of the novel, the articles and illustrations that surrounded the serialization, and the often fraught relationship between Great Britain and a United States already at war with itself produces, I argue, an international way to reorient (meant both as a redirection abstractly and more specifically, as a reconceptualization of the U.S. and its relations with the Orient through its transatlantic relationship to England) and rethink our understanding of the Reconstruction era and the United States' supposed postbellum "isolationism."

Beginning before, but most notable in de Tocqueville, historical accounts of the early national period have frequently claimed for America an exceptionalism, one that justifies U.S. expansions by, in essence, rejecting claims that the U.S. was interested in procuring or utilizing power on an international level. All relations become in such a schema *domestic*: the U.S. is not struggling or fighting against other peoples, powers or nations, but making a claim upon that which it already owns. This is liberalism's Manifest Destiny. Following the lead of literary scholars, diplomatic historians have finally begun to challenge the legitimacy of such narratives, seeking to locate the U.S.

within a network of international exchanges and relations, while other scholars have questioned the theories of liberal consensus that underlie such thinking. U.S. history becomes in ideal versions, as Godfrey Hodgson puts it, part and parcel of global “transformations that stretched far deeper and wider than the history and boundaries of the continental U.S.” (Hodgson xvi). In some versions, however, scholars attempting to think critically about the imperial expansion of U.S. territory, to contradict narratives that would equate “empire” with “liberty” have, in some ways, ended up replicating some of the logics of manifest destiny themselves in their critiques of an American imperial system. In the “revisionist,” anti-imperialist history *The Myth of American Diplomacy* (2008), for example, Walter Hixson (taking cues from William Appleman Williams) explains:

Like a massive avalanche, the Civil War thundered across the national landscape and left a mountain of debris in the path of the “empire of liberty.” It would take more than a generation to clear the way sufficiently for the nation to fully “heal” and reassert a revived imperialism extending well beyond the antebellum conception of a merely continental “destiny.” Even during this interregnum, however, the ongoing conquest of “merciless Indian savages” continued and, despite, the end of slavery, the exaltation of whiteness gained renewed momentum”

Hixson’s metaphor of the Civil War as an avalanche, the only thing powerful enough to derail the workings of the national-imperial project works in a way that would seem counter to the anti-imperial political agenda he espouses. The “healed” national imperial body becomes in his reading as inevitable and natural as such a disaster, but with more longevity, power and purpose. Hixson seems to have replaced one monolithic, master narrative of nineteenth century U.S. with another. In addition to flattening the multiple strategies, informal and formal, employed in the expansion of the United States, this one-dimensional portrait ends up marginalizing the work and significance of those who

worked to advance democratic agendas at home and abroad. Hixson's desire to unmoor the entrenched wisdom of diplomatic historians paradoxically works to secure the hegemony of the imperialist narrative that he hopes to transform.

Beyond a tendency to read empire in one-note, the new global understanding of the U.S., as Hixson's example also demonstrates, has only touched lightly upon the Civil War and Reconstruction period. The tendency to narrate these as periods of "American isolationism" remains: after the tumult of the Civil War, the newly United States directed its energy not towards international vistas, but towards its own domestic order. Rather than a U.S. exclusively focused upon its internal reconstruction, *The Moonstone* and its American reception demonstrate the ways in which this internal reconstruction was impacted by international concerns and had global impacts as well; one-noted histories of the period, regardless of their political imperatives, are insufficiently nuanced in their representations of the interpenetration of the local, national, international and global. While never inward looking, the U.S. was not a hegemonic world power committed to a monolithic imperial strategy emanating from a national, colonial center. Instead, in the refracted light of *The Moonstone*, we can see how Americans employed multiple scripts in their encounters with other peoples, as the imperatives of racial ideology, gender norms, financial capital, and party politics ran up against one another, and confronted as well limitations imposed by both geography and technology.

While much of the nineteenth century had been consumed with strife between the United States and European powers intent upon maintaining footholds in the Western hemisphere, the decade preceding the publication of *The Moonstone* had been particularly contentious for Great Britain and her former colony. As the U.S. transitioned from a

mercantilist colony into a lesser commercial power and concurrently began expanding its geographic and political domain throughout continental North America, there were frequent tensions with Great Britain. Politically independent from one another, the states (and I am careful here to use states, as the interest of Great Britain was often regional) and Great Britain were mutually dependent upon one another in other ways, an interdependence that served paradoxically to exacerbate grievances if generally keeping war in check as Scottish free market thinkers hoped it would. The annexation of the land west of the first colonies represents a prime example of this interdependence: Great Britain furnished most of the emigrants who settled that land, as well as the financial capital necessary to build the roads, railways and canals that connected them to the Eastern seaboard. In this light, the United States' exceptional "national" culture of manifest destiny is neither exceptional nor particularly national, as economically speaking, it largely remained part of Great Britain's "informal" empire. During and after the Civil War, the U.S.'s relationship with Great Britain and in turn, Great Britain's relationship with its imperial dominions, in particular India and Ireland, continued to shape the way that Americans conceptualized themselves and acquired and wielded power on a global scale.

III. The British *Moonstone*

In *The Moonstone*, Collins produces an important critique of the multiple hierarchies of domination that propel the British empire, hierarchies that hold England above India, the genteel above the common, men above women. The power of this critique has, I argue, been mitigated by the novel's movement towards, as Tamar Heller put it, "self-censorship" (156). Despite a plotting that makes clear how imperial lines of

power are drawn and how these seem both wrong and work to the detriment of many, the novel ultimately resolves its narrative in a way that supports the work of empire through phobic representations and the reincorporation of those whose bodies and plots break ranks. I contend then that the critique of imperialism one finds in the British version of *The Moonstone*, serialized without illustrations in Dickens' *All the Year Round*, ultimately hinges upon a phobic representation of admixture and exchange, two qualities and characteristics that also belong to the era's formulations of liberal democracy. In this sense, then, the renunciation of empire can also be read as a renunciation of equality and an embrace of rigid stratifications.

The Moonstone is centered around the provenance of the eponymous sacred Yellow Diamond, the Moonstone. The novel begins with a legal narration by an unnamed person of the theft of the diamond by John Herncastle, a British officer serving under General Baird in 1799. Herncastle steals the diamond during the siege of Seringapatam. This siege and the displacement of the Muslim Sultan Tippoo temporarily put the possession of the diamond into the possession of three Hindu Brahmins. These Brahmins are the functionary descendants of high priests sworn to restore the diamond, by hook or by crook, to its sacred origins at the shrine of Benares after Muslim invaders had stolen it “in the first years of the eighteenth Christian century”. Before the Brahmins can restore the diamond, however, Herncastle loots it. In stealing the diamond, Herncastle thwarts the Brahmins' efforts to fulfill the duties of their caste while violating the trust placed in him as an officer of the British army, i.e., his own caste; sent out “by the general's orders” as an officer “to prevent the plunder and confusion which followed our conquest,” Herncastle is deemed, according to a cousin and compatriot, “very unfit, in my opinion,

to perform the duty that had been entrusted to him” and fails to “enforce the laws of discipline on [his] own soldiers”. In failing in this duty, Herncastle loses the esteem of his family (the unnamed narrator has written his account of the storming of Seringapatam in order to justify his disowning of his cousin) and seemingly incurs “the curse” of the moonstone: “The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!” Immediately after this disavowal, the novel moves chronologically forward to its approximate present day of 1848. In 1848, her opium-enchanted cousin, Franklin Blake, steals the Moonstone, which has come into the possession of Rachel Verinder, the young niece of John Herncastle, once more. The unraveling of this latter mystery consumes the novel’s plotting thereafter. Despite the relatively short amount of textual attention that the scene in Seringapatam receives, the position of “the curse” prior to all that follows forcefully suggests the interpenetration of the *then and there* and the novel’s *here and now*.

Herncastle’s thievery of the moonstone at the behest of the East India Company brings home imperialism to the shores of England, implicating the domestic economies of the family with the national and international imperial economies. It serves as a metonymy of the British depredations of India, just as Franklin Blake’s obfuscation of this initial thievery by his own willfully forgotten theft of it represents the inability of the inheritors of English imperialism to reckon with their ill-gotten entitlements.

As Collins’s plot unwinds, a series of similar confusions arise as a result of the misappropriation of the diamond (the confusions and difficulties that ensue testifying to the fact that the appropriation of the diamond was, indeed, a mis-appropriation or criminal). The presence of the “ancient” diamond and the Brahmins who hope to reclaim it in England turn a number of hierarchies askew, or perhaps rather, throw a light upon how

these hierarchies were already, prior to the theft, not quite as steady as one might have supposed them to be. The Brahmin protectors, in particular, seem to upset and unsettle well-established hierarchies and orders, or at least to reveal the actual confusion beneath seeming stability. Members of the "Oriental races," races that were, according to the Scottish theories of racial development, pre-historical, the Brahmins mere presence in the novel's modern England disrupts progressive chronologies that would quarantine them safely in the past. The temporal upheaval is not all that accompanies the Brahmins on their journey. Because the concept of the "oriental" that attaches to the Brahmins, as Jaya Mehta notes, brings with it not simply ideas of the pre-historic or ancient, but also "the exotic, the occult, the dangerous, and the mysterious," the priests threaten the rational foundations of the empirical/imperial progressive order as well as the safety that is supposed to inhere for those within its metropolitan center.

The novel's characterization of Herncastle and his travels suggests how this rethinking of the existing English order will work. Herncastle is not Rachel Verinder's lone Uncle (or the only son of his father), but the second son of Lord Herncastle and as such, subject to English laws of primogeniture. Unable to acquire land and title within such a system (the novel conveniently supplies him a "fine fortune" bequeathed to him by another relative), Herncastle is drawn into military service, first with the Guards and after a dismissal, with the East India Company. His fighting in India, however, yields him little. Having looted the diamond, Herncastle is prevented from translating it into either land or money; the presence of the Brahmins prevents him from sending the diamond to Amsterdam to be pieced into "six perfect brilliants...which would be, collectively, worth more money than [the whole Moonstone] (37). Moreover, Herncastle "came back with a

character that closed the doors of all his family against him" (37). Herncastle, who is described in racially charged terms prior to looting the diamond as a "blackguard" with the "dash of the savage" about him, cedes whatever social and racial authority and power he is supposed to possess prior to his thievery; bad already, India provides the opportunity for Herncastle to become as bad as he can be. As the novel proceeds, the Brahmins, who travel to Britain to reacquire the moonstone (and thereby cede their own caste within India, a fact that, as the novel's "historian" of India, Murthwaite says, everyone in England knows), fill the void of dignity and power that Herncastle's behavior has created within the space of the novel. When her cousin, Franklin Blake, delivers the Moonstone to Rachel Verinder at her country estate the Brahmins follow it to the Verinder's country estate in the guise of jugglers (68).

It is here, at the country estate, that the mystery of the moonstone can rightly be said to begin, for just as quickly as Rachel Verinder takes possession of the diamond it is stolen. The unraveling of this whodunit simultaneously exposes the extent to which the foundations of English society are unsteady. Following the crime, Franklin Blake enlists the testimony of those present during the night of the robbery. Prior to going to bed the night the diamond is stolen, Rachel Verinder's mother asks to take the diamond into her safekeeping, as Rachel's Indian cabinet has no lock. "Good Heavens, mamma!" cried Miss Rachel, "is this an hotel? Are there thieves in the house?" In the act of collecting the testimonies of the present, Blake's novel entertains and elaborates the suspicion that any and all can be implicated in the crime (that there are thieves *in* the house). Importantly, the collection testifies that the English home is not a place of literal or metaphorical belonging; it is neither the center nor the periphery but a stopping point

along the way to somewhere else, a hotel. The country-house has become a place "where events prepared elsewhere, continued elsewhere, transiently and intricately occur" (R. Williams 249).³

While all are suspect in the structure of the book, some are much more likely to fall under the dragnet of suspicion in the novel's policing than others. The first persons to fall under suspicion are the juggling Hindoos/Brahmins. Originally thought to be Hindoo jugglers, the men who visit the Verinder estate are discovered by the observations of the English traveler Murthwaite, to be "high-caste Brahmins" whose caste, "clever as the Hindoo people are in concealing their feelings" "told on them" (68). Their caste is not all the Murthwaite reads on to the men, as he warns his fellow houseguests that. "In the country those men come from, they care just as much about killing a man, as you are about emptying the ashes out of your pipe. If a thousand lies stood between them and the getting back of their Diamond—and if they thought they could destroy those lives without discovery—they would take them all. The sacrifice of caste is a serious thing in India, if you like. The sacrifice of life is nothing at all" (70). In Murthwaite's comments, the Hindoos are seemingly condemned for their semi-inscrutability as well as their murderousness. Over the course of the novel, however, what appears to be a disapproval of the men comes into focus as admiration. The initial characterization of them as murderous is countered by its being prefaced with Herncastle's murderous theft of the diamond. Their interest in the diamond and their supposed bloodthirstiness to secure it is born, not out of greed, but out of religious devotion. As Murthwaite notes, "a Hindoo diamond is sometimes part of a Hindoo religion"; Herncastle murders senselessly, while the Hindoos "murderousness" is at play only insofar as it serves their attempts to re-

sacralize the gem. Immediately after the second theft of the diamonds, the Brahmins are accused by the Verinders and taken into custody by the local authorities. Though they have not stolen the diamond, the Indians, "innocent as the babe unborn" are imprisoned despite the fact that "there was not a even a case of suspicion against them" because "every human institution (Justice included) will stretch a little, if you only pull it the right way" (79). The Verinders use their family prestige and power to work the levers of the state and manipulate the law. Delayed, the Hindoos are not deterred, and their pursuit of the diamond — played out quietly outside the novel's main narrative — runs in parallel with Blake's efforts to reclaim it.

The contrast between the two groups of potential redeemers is telling. The Hindoos' steadfastness in pursuit of their goal begins to earn them the approbation, rather than censure, of polite society; the loss of the diamond, meanwhile, as Ian Duncan notes, adds up, for the Englishman Blake, to a "loss of character" (306). As Murthwaite suggested at the novel's beginning, the Hindoos cannot hide their good breeding; this good breeding, in turn, suggests that the logic behind British imperialism is faulty. As the novel proceeds, their readability as persons of high caste cannot help but show; their disavowal of their caste in the name of their caste demonstrates a level of self-abnegating attachment to social position that amazes their English counterparts, while their inhabitation of their role wins them fans among the novel's upper crust. Mr. Bruff, the attorney and trusted confidante of the Verinder family, testifies to his appreciation of the men after inadvertently meeting with one of them in his official capacity as a solicitor:

The moment my mysterious client was shown in, I felt an inner conviction that I was in the presence of one of the three Indians—probably of the chief. He was carefully dressed in European costume. But his swarthy complexion, his long lithe figure, and his grave and graceful politeness of

manner were enough to betray his Oriental origin to any intelligent eyes that looked at him. I pointed to a chair and begged to be informed of the nature of his business with me. After first apologizing—in an excellent selection of English words—for the liberty which he had taken in disturbing me...'I have come, sir,' he said, 'to ask you to lend me some money...'...Briefly answered, and thoroughly to the purpose! If the Moonstone had been in my possession, this Oriental gentleman would have murdered me, I am well aware....At the same time, and barring that slight drawback, I am bound to testify that he was the perfect model of a client. He might not have respected my life. But he did what none of my own countrymen have ever done, in all my experience of them—he respected my time. (262)

While racial characteristics, "swarthy complexion," tell Bruff that this man is "Oriental," the equally telling but more ineffable qualities of liteness, grave and graceful politeness, the mastery of English, allow Bruff to (self)-identify the man by *type*, as a gentleman—he feels an "inner conviction." So successful is his inhabitation of this gentility that the man is the "perfect model of a client," exceeding even the abilities of an Englishman to "act naturally" and inhabit a role ostensibly created by and for him. The gentlemanly so overwhelms Bruff's reading of the Brahmin that murderousness seems only a "slight drawback."

The novel further emphasizes the Brahmin's gentility by comparing him not to the English in general but to the one of the "new" English in particular, Mr. Septimus Luker. The comparison to Luker, the nouveau riche London moneylender who suggested solicitor Bruff to the Brahmin in the first place, works again to solidify critiques of the imperial order. During his interview with Luker, Bruff finds him to be "in every respect, such an inferior creature to the Indian—he was so vulgar, so ugly, so cringing, and so prosy—that he is quite unworthy of being reported, at any length, in these pages...(264). Luker is, according to Bruff, an "inferior" to the Indian, so much lower in rank or quality, in fact, that he is described as a "creature" rather than as a man. Though inferior in rank,

Luker, like the Indian, cannot hide what he truly is, even his name gives him away.

Luker's lack of gentility reads upon him: Septimus, read homophonically as septic suggests that the man is rotten, while its given meaning, the seventh, suggests that he is a late iteration rather than an original, a forgotten son who must earn his keep, as well as vulgar in the sense of multiple, common, excessive, and unrefined; the vulgarity and grossness of Septimus characterizes the patronymic Luker, or lucre, monetary gain, suggesting how ill-gotten the man's monetary gains, through money-lending and the pawning of stolen goods, are. Importantly, Bruff also associates Luker's inferiority with his prosiness. This has two implications. First, Luker's prosiness, his excessiveness verbiage, suggests how overextended Luker is; he makes his money on interest, rather than principal. Second, Luker's poor mastery of the English language suggests how vulgarity makes him non-native to his own tongue. The essence of Englishness is not born but bred. One does not speak like a native by being a native to England — it's something else that makes one properly belong.

In Bruff's positioning of Luker relative to the Hindoo, another rebuke is offered to those who, like the Verinder servant Gabriel Betteredge, would see the Hindoos only as "murderous thieves" — British imperialism steals rapaciously while the Hindoos steal and murder in service of their religious obligations. Simultaneously, Bruff offers up a critique of the newly moneyed cosmopolitan classes: Luker's grasping, climbing and conniving is fundamentally un-English. It is here, I argue, where anti-imperialism is coupled with an affinity for class stratification that can read as anti-democratic. While Mr. Bruff has distaste for Septimus Luker because he has the taint of dirty money about him, Mr. Bruff is himself a moneylender and it is his knowledge of this vulgar business

that enables the Indians to trust that the moonstone will be recirculating a year after its having been pawned by Godfrey Ablewhite. Mr. Bruff himself illustrates that the intimacies between India and England, the country and city cannot easily be disentangled. Just as the Indians presence in England compels the recognition that the wealth of England is born of the theft of Indian resources — India and England are not distinct from one another — the movement of the Indians in the city performs a similar, if not exactly the same function. The theft, in effect, confuses the categories of old/new, country/city, genteel/vulgar, aristocracy/capitalism, right/wrong that Bruff is in many ways attempting to maintain. The Indians track down the final whereabouts of the moonstone — from Herncastle to Blake to Verinder to Blake to Ablewhite to Luker, from India to England, from country-house to city — in their interview with Bruff. The thread of connection between the parties is strong enough that strangers to England can ably and easily follow it. The novel is more multivalent than Bruff, but Bruff's characterization takes on the veneer of truth as testimony. The novel's drawing of attention exclusively to Luker through Bruff's testimony is one means of confining the maneuverings of the new capitalist order within the city limits (Bruff is a go-between, but Luker is exclusively a man of London). By scapegoating Luker, the novel's enduring characters and the novel itself, therefore, work to "distinguish wholly separate industrial and land-owning classes in the developing capitalist system" (R. Williams 186).

This point, of course, is more strongly made in the plot line of the novel's ostensible villain, Godfrey Ablewhite. Ablewhite, unlike Blake, however, is not the son of a born gentleman, but of a banker. This "very rich and very respectable" banker "presumed to raise himself from a low station in the world," a desire "that was against

him" with his wife's respectable family and led them to deem the marriage a "misalliance" (52). According to the narration of Gabriel Betteredge, "time and the progress of modern enlightenment put things right" since "we are all getting liberal now: and (provided you can scratch me, if I scratch you) what do I care, in or out of Parliament, whether you are a dustman or a Duke?" (52). In the workings of the novel, however, the liberality of this new system is shown to be nothing less than a disaster. Ablewhite, Betteredge contends, should certainly win his cousin's heart, despite Franklin Blake's "brightness and cleverness and general good qualities" because Ablewhite "stood over six feet high; he had a beautiful red and white colour; a smooth round face, shaved as bare as your hand; and a head of lovely long flaxen hair, falling negligently over the poll of his neck" (52). Ablewhite, also with a telling name, is the very picture of Anglo-Saxon physical perfection. The novel's sympathies, however, are barely concealed in what remains of Betteredge's description of him as "the most accomplished philanthropist (on a small independence) that England ever produced. As a speaker at charitable meetings the like of him for drawing your tears and your money was not easy to find. He was quite a public character" (53). Betteredge also goes on to describe a recent trip to London during which he had two "treats," seeing a "dancing woman who was all the rage" and the opportunity to "hear Mr. Godfrey." Enchanted by the woman, her "legs" and the "music," Betteredge is equally titillated by Ablewhite's "tongue"; Ablewhite "loved everybody. And everybody loved *him*" (53). Betteredge's observations of Ablewhite mark the beginning of a critique of him as false, for sale (public), profligate, and feminine. The novel suggests that Ablewhite's philanthropy is little more than an entertainment wherein he both gives himself away and seduces the money out of the

pockets of his audience. The characterization of Ablewhite as something of a free lover/paid lover (prostitute) undermines the presupposition that begins Betteredge's praise — that as a second son of a banker, Ablewhite has only a "small independence" that he must manage quite well. The accounting of Ablewhite seems, from the outset, off the mark.

As the novel unfolds, its plotting settles the account of Ablewhite. The second son of a mere banker, the poor Ablewhite, it turns out, has for quite some time been committing fraud in order to fund his class-climbing ambitions. Ablewhite's philanthropy has been used to create for himself the life of a "man of pleasure, with a villa in the suburbs which was not taken in his own name" and was filled with "fine pictures and statues; furniture tastefully selected, and admirably made; and a conservatory of the rarest flowers." More scandalously, the villa was occupied by a "lady", "who was not taken in his own name, either" and lavished with "jewels" and "carriages and horses which have (deservedly) produced a sensation in the Park" (429). Attempting to sell the diamond in order to keep up these appearances, Ablewhite reveals himself to be, like Herncastle, a "black" character, literally and figuratively. Upon reclaiming this diamond from the pawnbroker Luker, Ablewhite disguises himself as a sailor, a "dark man" with a "swarthy face" and "black hair and beard" (423). The truth is, he is a liar—a betrayer of the bankrupt Anglo-Saxon patrimony that has been bestowed upon him.

And yet, if Ablewhite is not what he seems, his fellow Londoners are similarly false. The most scandalous part of Ablewhite's deception, according to Sergeant Cuff, the Scotland Yard detective assigned to the case, was the fact that Ablewhite's manor and furnishings had been "paid for": while London finery was normal, it was "not common

and not familiar" that "not a sixpence of debt was owing on any of them" (429). London society, it seems, is built on the nothing of credit. While Ablewhite does not *actually* have the money to pay for what his London manor life — neither do any of those who also inhabit that role. In this moment, Cuff detects the "detachment" of life determined by money rather than land, where "houses, parks, and furniture are explicitly objects of consumption and exchange. People bargain, exploit and use each other, with these houses as the shells of their ambition and intrigue...Detached capital, detached income, detached social intercourse inhabit and vacate, visit and leave, these incidentally surviving and converted houses. An internal capitalization, consumption, and indifference to real neighbours has become external and mobile, accentuating all its inherent vices" (Williams 529). Ablewhite's house, like Lady Verinder's, is a hotel. At novel's end, however, Ablewhite is murdered, presumably by the Hindoo priests who come to reclaim the stone from him in what Tamar Heller appropriately calls, "the novel's most horrifying image of what happens when white men go native" (163).

While those attempting to move themselves up the ladder are not depicted well, the light that the moonstone sheds on Rachel Verinder's other cousin suitor, the gentleman Franklin Blake, is also not very flattering. Just as with Ablewhite, the novel's plotting of Blake demonstrates how the English imperial system is intricately intertwined with a regime of gender and class hierarchy at home. Having been disappointed by the British legal system's decision about his possession of a Dukedom, Blake's father decided that the "only way of being even with his country for the manner in which it had treated him, was not to let his country have the honour of educating his son. 'How can I trust my native institutions,' was the form in which he put it, 'after the way in which my native

institutions have behaved to *me?*" (15). However absurd he is, native institutions nevertheless do fail Blake's father — the lines of inheritance and means of wealth accumulation within England are so confused that the nation sends its sons, best and worst, abroad. Of Blake's time abroad, Gabriel Betteredge writes:

We had had a transaction together, before he left, which consisted in his borrowing of me a ball of string, a four-bladed knife, and seven-and-sixpence in money—the colour of which last I have not seen, and never expect to see again. His letters to me chiefly related to borrowing more. I heard, however, from my lady, how he got on abroad, as he grew in years and stature. After he had learnt what the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal genius...he wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little—borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me. His mother's fortune (seven hundred a year) fell to him when he came of age, and ran through him, as it might be through a sieve. The more money he had, the more he wanted: there was a hole in Mr. Franklin's pocket that nothing would sew up...Twice and twice over, he made up his mind to come back to England to see us; [but] some unmentionable woman stood in the way and stopped him. (16)

The results of Blake's foreign education are, according to Betteredge, nothing to write home about. Blake's Englishness seems to exist only as a constant state of indebtedness, monetarily and intellectually. Having "borrowed" bits and pieces of other cultures, Blake, too, is easily influenced by the claims of women. He is, like Ablewhite, a ladies' man — meaning womanly and in some sense kept enthralled by his desire for women. Being and becoming properly English depends upon the ability to establish a proper relationship to the feminine and the foreign.⁴

Just as Blake has a double in Ablewhite, their love interest, Rachel Verinder, has a counterpart in her maid, Rosanna Spearman. Both women long for the affection of Franklin Blake; in his treatment of them, the novel outlines how the control of men over women is as essential to English identity as the imperial relation. Blake's refusal to return

to England because of the claims of a woman show him to have a dysfunctional relation to the opposite sex, a dysfunction he partially rehabilitates in his treatment of Rosanna. A reformed thief, with a humped back and one shoulder set higher than another, Rosanna Spearman worked in the Verinder household as a maid. Rosanna is love struck by Blake but unable to attract his notice; the novel insists on making Rosanna invisible to him (26, 44). Learning of Rosanna's love for Blake (a love that Betteredge calls "mad") and Blake's indifference to it, Sergeant Cuff says simply enough, "Hadh't you better say she's mad enough to be an ugly girl and only a servant?... You think Franklin Blake hasn't got a suspicion of the girl's fancy for him? Ah! He would have found it out fast enough if she had been nice-looking" (107-108). Though Betteredge tries to deny the reality of Blake's callousness, Cuff's statement is proven in Blake's treatment of Betteredge's own daughter: pages earlier, Blake begins his reunion by regaling Betteredge with a tale of his (Blake's) attempted seduction of the servant's daughter — "I saw Penelope at the house... Your daughter promised to be a pretty girl, Betteredge, and she has kept her promise... Not even my respect for you prevented me from—never mind; I knew her when she was a child, and she's none the worse for it" (27). Women of Penelope and Rosanna's class live to serve, sexually and otherwise; men of Betteredge's class, meanwhile, are supposed to find this acceptable. Rosanna's inappropriate desire for a man above her station is mapped onto her body as a disfigurement, her aspirations to move up in the world humping her back. Desire is only supposed to work in one direction and as a form of domination; Blake's suggestion that his sexual advances towards Penelope could not be "prevented" figures them as a violation — not something that Penelope necessarily desires but which she must accept.

Blake's interaction with "Limping Lucy," Rosanna Spearman's only friend I argue serves as a form of potential critique for this building block of empire. Limping Lucy holds for Blake the last letter of Rosanna Spearman, a communiqué that could potentially unravel the mystery of the moonstone's theft. Blake's recounting of the moment when he retrieves the letter is one of the most powerful in the book.

There was no mistaking the expression on her face. I inspired her with the strongest emotions of abhorrence and disgust. Let me not be vain enough to say that no woman had ever looked at me in this manner before. I will only venture on the more modest assertion that no woman had ever let me perceive it yet. There is a limit to the length of the inspection which a man can endure, under certain circumstances. I attempted to direct Limping Lucy's attention to some less revolting object than my face. ...

"No," said the girl, speaking to herself, but keeping her eyes still mercilessly fixed on me. "I can't find out what she saw in his face. I can't guess what she heard in his voice." She suddenly looked away from me, and rested her head wearily on the top of her crutch. "Oh, my poor dear!" she said, in the first soft tones which had fallen from her, in my hearing. "Oh, my lost darling! what could you see in this man?" She lifted her head again fiercely, and looked at me once more. "Can you eat and drink?" she asked.

I did my best to preserve my gravity, and answered, "Yes."

"Can you sleep?"

"Yes."

"When you see a poor girl in service, do you feel no remorse?"

"Certainly not. Why should I?"

... The one interpretation that I could put on her conduct has, no doubt, been anticipated by everybody. I could only suppose that she was mad.

Blake's inability to know himself as the thief of the diamond is reproduced in this moment when he refuses to recognize his power over Rosanna and other girls in service. Accustomed to women's attraction, or their feigned attraction, Blake is shocked to discover that Lucy finds him physically repellant. Her physical distaste for Blake as well as her love for Rosanna are marked by the novel as inappropriate through her disfigurement. Being outside of the circuits of heterosexual desire, however, also makes a Lucy capable of producing the novel's most pointed class critique, asking Blake if he

feels remorse for "girls in service," in general, not simply on Rosanna's behalf. Blake is, she says, responsible for the violence that the class system visits upon the working and women, not simply for his role in Rosanna's suicide. Blake, normally protected from such distaste — "no woman had let him detect it" — does not simply deny his responsibility but goes further, calling Lucy's claims madness and universalizing his interpretation "anticipated by everybody" as it is. While the novel lays this before the reader, Rosanna, who dies protecting Blake's good name, ultimately does not receive a fair reckoning at his hands, nor does her friend; female desires to move up or move out (to London with your lesbian lover) are ignored and ridiculed. The critiques of class and gender are possible but not imminent, buried, as Rosanna is buried at the bottom of the Shivering Sands.

Blake's return to England, then, marks the re-mapping of his boy-toy tendencies into a properly English model of class-based sexuality: women make good servants and poor masters. This dynamic holds true, too, for women within the same class. Blake's relationship with Rachel Verinder models the way in which the restoration of English order at novel's end depends upon limiting the sphere of women's independence through marriage. Rachel Verinder is set apart from other women because of her trust in herself — she keeps her own counsel, even shutting her mother out of her confidence when the moonstone has been stolen (155). Verinder's "absolute self-dependence," which is "a virtue in a man" prompts and sustains the novel's mystery. Her silence, enjoined because she hopes to protect Blake is not sign enough of her submitting to male authority; Rachel's unwillingness, as a woman, to fully speak to and trust in patriarchal authority means that the misunderstanding of Blake taking the diamond for safekeeping turns into a mystery of the diamond's theft (257). In order for the mystery to be solved, Verinder must

wholly accept her dependent status, as Franklin Blake says to her, "You have tried by yourself [to solve it]...You have not tried with me to help you" (327). The novel's plotting doubly ensures that Rachel must accept the counsel of the men in her life by killing off her mother and leaving her to rely upon her lone remaining female relative, Miss Clack. Clack is so abhorrent that a future of feminine solidarity, eschewed between Lucy and Rosanna but somewhat mourned, is openly made a mockery of in the text. The novel's eventual marriage of Blake and Rachel and their retreat to the country estate domesticates what Charles Dickens called the "wildness" of the story, as well as of the pair (19). Aiming to "protect" the dark Rachel, Blake, loots her diamond, paralleling the logic of diamond's original theft (the Indians cannot properly understand or appreciate their own resources, cultural or otherwise) (401). In the moment of marriage, what is a violation gets fully rewritten according to his supposed motive, the looter's logic or "white man's burden," and Blake reclaims the mantle of protector and patriarch.

It is my argument that this chastening of Rachel serves as the chastening of Blake as well. He must learn not only the proper relationship to women, but also to the foreign parts of himself (which are often characterized as feminizing). Having been educated abroad, the novel's characters insistently read Blake as a stranger to himself: Blake's "varnish from foreign parts" leaves him feckless and "bewildering" (66). Explaining Blake's humors, Betteredge testifies that, "these puzzling shifts and transformations...were due to...his foreign training. At the age when we are all of us most apt to take our colouring, in the form of a reflection from the colouring of other people, he had been sent abroad, and had been passed on from one nation to another, before there was time for any one colouring more than another to settle itself on him

firmly." Here, Betteredge links Blake's "colouring" or racial make-up with his foreign travels and education. Blake, whose name closely resembles "black," has coloring — to be white, or English, is to take on an invisible colouring — his character as well as complexion are tarnished by travel and admixture. This education, Betteredge continues, means that Blake has "so many different sides to his character, all more or less jarring with each other, that he seemed to pass his life in a state of perpetual contradiction with himself. He could be a busy man, and a lazy man; cloudy in the head, and clear in the head; a model of determination, and a spectacle of helplessness, all together. He had his French side, and his German side, and his Italian side—the original English foundation showing through, every now and then" (41). Not simply linked with "blackness," foreignness is linked with "democracy" and the breakdown of Britain's caste-based hierarchies. In one critical scene, Betteredge recounts a dinner table conversation between Blake and the local "county member." The county member, "growing hot, at cheese and salad time, about the spread of democracy in England, burst out as follows: "If we once lose our ancient safeguards, Mr. Blake, I beg to ask you, what have we got left?"—what do you say to Mr. Franklin answering, from the Italian point of view: "We have got three things left, sir—Love, Music, and Salad"?" The novel contends that Blake, the dissolute boy-toy, is so foreign that he does not know his own mind and that not knowing his mind, in turn, gives him democratic propensities. Doubling the irony, Blake is insistently blind to his own dispossession, defining "good breeding, not in England only, but everywhere else in the civilised world" as "*unsought self-possession*" (349).

Blake comes into his own, though, during the novel, as he is forced to recognize himself and his class privileges. Blake has been educated abroad as a result of his father's

rejection, through Blake, of the English patrimony. While travelling abroad after the theft of the moonstone (where "abroad" means, to the foreign Blake, going home), Blake receives word of his father's death. This death leaves Blake in possession of a great fortune and property in real estate. Both of these allow Blake to redeem himself: the fortune releases Blake from literal debts (he owes sums to many people) while the property invests him in the English countryside (209, 319, 275). With his debts erased and a country-house, Blake's blackening connections to un-English financial dealings that are synonymous with city capitalism and any attendant liberalization consequential with this advent are attenuated if not erased. Only after this moment of reclamation is Blake able to draw and discipline Rachel out of her silence. This process makes Rachel "hysterical" and "desperate" with "quickenened convulsive breathing" and helps Blake solidify the masculinity shaken by his confrontation with Limping Lucy and the Shivering Sands (334).

Blake's "coming into his own" as an Englishman, as we have seen, is not altogether straightforward or wholly valorized in the story — there is a critique of a system that then is buried beneath the machinations of the plot. The exculpatory moment when Blake is absolved of guilt in the theft of the moonstone, while still being guilty of theft, illustrates just this ambivalence yet again. Blake, who has been witnessed stealing the moonstone by Rachel Verinder, is aided in "clearing his character" by Ezra Jennings, a man slandered by a "cloud of a horrible accusation" and "and whose character is gone" too. Jennings is, too, a "remarkable-looking man," with a "complexion...of a gipsy darkness," a nose "found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West," with "strange eyes...[that] took your attention captive at

their will," a "face and figure which made him look old and young both together" and "a quantity of thick closely-curling hair, which, by some freak of Nature, had lost its colour in the most startlingly partial and capricious manner," black in some parts and "completely white" ... "without the slightest gradation of grey to break the force of the extraordinary contrast" in others with "no sort of regularity" (305, 347). Jennings confesses, too, to Blake that he "was born, and partly brought up, in one of our colonies. My father was an Englishman; but my mother—," and remarks shortly thereafter that he is one of those "men...born with female constitutions" (349, 352). Jennings's body bears the marks of the hierarchies that the novel ultimately has been investigating: half English, new, white, colonizer, and male, and the other half an unspecified Not English, old, black, colonized, and female. "The puzzling contradiction" of Jennings's appearance seems to Blake "more or less calculated to produce an unfavourable impression of him on a stranger's mind" but nevertheless Blake writes, "I looked at the man with a curiosity which, I am ashamed to say, I found it quite impossible to control" (305). Both repellant and seductive, Jennings represents that which the English living imperialism fear and desire from the colonial project. Neither one nor the other but both, Jennings lives in-between.

This liminal position finally becomes an asset when Jennings is befriended by Franklin Blake: Jennings's position enables him to translate the incoherent ramblings of Mr. Candy into common sense and to vindicate Blake's character. Jennings famously "clears" Blake's character not by proving that Blake is innocent of the crime, but rather by re-writing his motive. In an opium-induced re-enactment of the night of the theft, Blake speaks of his aforementioned desire to protect both Rachel and the moonstone from

Indian thieves. The simultaneity of Blake's use of opium and this narrative of protection, in one reading, indicts this fantasy of white man's burden imperialism as an opium-induced self-delusion, one that justifies the taking of both the opium and the diamond. That it is opium-induced, of course, tempers this critique, suggesting that the eastern opiate invasion of western rationality is *really* at the bottom of this theft and the imperial one. Imperialism reads then not as an act of Western violation, but of Eastern seduction. Jennings' absolution of Blake's guilt earns him the approval of even Betteredge, who, like others in the country-house community, has employed the logic that because Jennings has no friends, no one can like or befriend him to isolate and estrange the man. Jennings is the hero of the story, the man who enables the plot of marriage between Blake and Rachel to proceed, for the English family to be restored (after a honeymoon trip to England's "first colony," Scotland) to its countryside manor. For thanks, Jennings is supposed to enjoy a sojourn as an invited guest at this home, but he dies before he can do so, giving thanks for the "brief dream of happiness" that has been clearing Franklin Blake's name. Jennings, the piebald, possesses a quiet valor that few in the novel can equal but he cannot be permitted to outlive the limits of his usefulness to the plot. The quiet unraveling of the story highlights the injustice of a slandered man beyond the reach of vindication spending, albeit by choice, what remains of his time and life to clear the name of a man who has been rightly accused — Blake *has* done it.

The absolution of Blake does not make the end of the novel; the moonstone exceeds the ability of the English domestic novel to narrate its possession. The novel ends, in fact, with the re-sacralization of the moonstone in its Somnauth shrine by the Brahmins, rather than its "restor[ation]" to its patrimonial function within the symbolic

economy of Victorian country house" (301). The restoration of the diamond in the face of English imperialism has been read by Ian Duncan as a refutation of D.A. Miller's thesis that *The Moonstone's* "monological structure" contains all of the novel's subversive, anti-colonial energies: the brave Brahmins and Indian culture writ large possess a "positive alterity" relative to that of England, an alterity that, like the cyclical moon, will ebb and flow, but never go away entirely. While I would agree that the novel's narrative is not nearly as claustrophobic as Miller would have it, Duncan's account of the Brahmins as representations of radical alterity is also more ambivalent than he concedes. Though the Brahmins serve to some extent to scare the novel's English citizens out of their easy sense of imperial security, traveling from the "heart of darkness" into the very heart of the England's countryside and city (and thus constitutes something of a critique of imperialism), the novel also employs them to police the improprieties of the English. The Brahmins are genteel respecters of caste, more English than the English. The novel's construction of "the Brahmin" is part of a larger British interest in creating a self-serving social corollary out of Hindu caste. As Krishna Manvalli elucidates, the (supposed) presence of a rigid Hindu caste hierarchy both justified and guided the imposition of English imperial hierarchies throughout the nineteenth century (69-70). These Brahmins are good, in other words, because they represent not radical alterity, but a picture of how England is supposed to be — not necessarily imperial, but still fiercely hierarchical and semi-feudal. In this way, *The Moonstone's* representations of the Brahmins end up supporting the types of hierarchies it at moments also appears to abhor.

The Brahmins, then, end up being yet another example of the novel creating an ambivalence, confusion or critique only to resolve these largely on the side of established

hierarchies. Rachel Verinder, the dark, "very Indian," too "self-dependent" woman is married off to Blake. Her more willful "co-conspirator," Rosanna Spearman, follows her love for Franklin Blake to the bottoms of the shivering sands (eschewing the open sexual and class rebellion of a life with the other misfit, Lucy). Franklin Blake is invested with a property and an estate and a new patrilineage, "clearing" his blackened, foreign character. The Brahmins murder Ablewhite, the debtor and diamond's other thief, while he wears blackface, punished for daring to cross the lines of racial caste. Ezra Jennings, the "pie-bald" savior who favorably re-writes Franklin Blake into existence with a dose of opium dies alone in England, estranged from friends, family and the woman *he* loves. The English version of *The Moonstone*, in other words, discovers England to be a place where admixture occurs but nevertheless attempts to re-detach all of the processes, places and peoples that the novel has shown to be linked.

IV. The American Moonstone

Heretofore, critics taking on *The Moonstone* have largely considered the novel as a text written by a British author and for a British audience about British concerns. A vast majority of critics, for example, consider the novel published in 1868, but which begins with an account of the 1799 siege of Seringapatam and moves into the late 1840s, to be a rumination upon the Sepoy Rebellion that occurred in 1857 and which caused one of the major reconsiderations of imperial policy in the century. Susan Lonoff, meanwhile, reads the novel's imperial panic as a response to the Morant Bay Uprising of 1865 and its violent suppression, events closer to the novel's publication. Though it may be true that "the Mutiny, simultaneously absent and present, inhabits *The Moonstone* as a powerful yet invisible undertow, featureless like the quicksand in the novel, yet drawing all into

it,” such a reading, while making sense of *The Moonstone's* pull in Britain, does less to explain the novel's fascination for readers outside of England and in the United States in particular (Mehta). In this reading, I will consider *The Moonstone* in the context of the period's ongoing global liberalizations and in particular, with reference to the United States. Not necessarily written for an American audience, *The Moonstone* nevertheless resonated deeply with American readers who made its serialization in *Harper's* an enormous success. *The Moonstone*, read in its American context, works quite differently than its British counterpart. The American *Moonstone* was produced with illustrations, illustrations that guide the reading of the text in ways that attempt to open up some of the aforementioned foreclosures of the British version. Importantly, too, the American *Moonstone* was serialized in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* from January to July of 1868; the piecing up and placement of the novel's text among political tracts, essays, advertisements, and illustrations also shapes its meaning. Reading the text of the novel alongside the material surrounding it in its serialization, I argue that novel's depiction of imperial panic provided a model for how Americans might think of themselves and their nation in an international context. In the American *Moonstone*, Americans were learning how to appreciate, rather than fear, the ambivalences, admixtures and "blackenings" that occur as result of the nineteenth century transition from a largely agricultural, aristocratic economy towards a globalized economy of financial capitalism and free trade.

The Moonstone began its serialization in *Harper's* in January of 1868, a time of enormous tension between the U.S. and Britain largely because of what the U.S. considered Britain's non-neutrality during the Civil War. During the Civil War, Great Britain had hedged its diplomatic bets, neither rejecting nor accepting fully the

Confederacy's claims to statehood. The rebel states had hoped to force Great Britain, "for whom no segment of British commercial intercourse was more important than the cotton trade with the Southern United States" to recognize their nationhood and aid in their war effort (Ferris 4). In retrospect, this strategy seems rather shortsighted, but the Southern gamble was based on relatively recent experience. As Frank Owsley, a historian of King Cotton Diplomacy notes, "the dependence of the world upon the South for its cotton received irrefutable demonstration after 1840, for the British especially made a prolonged but futile series of attempts to get back to East Indian cotton" in order to "free England from American shackles" because American cotton was the product of slave labor but "after a great deal of futile efforts by the government and interested individuals, the *London Times* declared in disgust that it seemed utterly impossible to introduce an improved system of cotton culture among the Indian peasants" (Owsley 6). For quite some time, then, Americans had had to conceptualize their fate as one intimately related to that of India, as well as to the other jewels in England's imperial crown.

Convinced, as Charles Francis Adams put it, of its "practical world mastery... through its exclusive control of cotton," the South hoped to leverage existing class rivalries within England to its benefit. Envisioning itself as the preserver and propagator of a trans-Atlantic form of caste, the South aligned itself with England's landed aristocracy. The affection was not one-sided and members of English upper-class society openly expressed affinities for the Confederacy because of their own domestic concerns about the dissolution of traditional hierarchies testified to in *The Moonstone*. These Englishmen of rank were "oppressed with a fear of the growth of democracy mainly through the success of the American example" (Ferris 178). While the Confederacy's

orchestrated shortage of cotton produced high unemployment in England's manufacturing districts "reaching practically three-fourths in December 1862," as well as "the loss of wages which average more than half" (Owsley 145), this pain did not result in a policy of intervention. The Confederates fatally misread the dynamism of England's midcentury economy — misread it along the lines of the fantasy of a distinct country and city/two class society that we see in the British *Moonstone*. In essence, the Confederate states continued to believe they were participants in a feudal/local economy despite the fact that they were already deeply ensconced within a global one. The British working class, as the historian Dean Mahin has noted, by-and-large "opposed recognition of the slaveholding confederacy" and crucially, also "believed that their hopes for political reform in Britain were tied to victory of the Union in America" (Mahin 87). Britain's textile concerns, meanwhile, were able to supplement their cotton inventories with cotton that made it through the blockade and an "increase of supplies from India, China, Brazil and Egypt" (Owsley 137); within the cotton industry upon which Confederate hopes rested, neutrality was profitable as cotton traders "enjoyed the high prices of cotton" and mill owners "eliminate[d] surplus production and [sold] cotton products at high prices" (Mahin 87).

Rewarding to some industries, Britain's policy of non-intervention did not serve its shipbuilders particularly well. Accordingly, this industry pressed upon Lord Palmerston to look the other way so that it could produce warships for the Confederate Navy. "Reluctant to take business from British shipyards," the Palmerston government turned a blind eye to the building and sale of the Confederate ship, the *Alabama*; the transfer of this ship in July of 1862 left the U.S. merchant marine "at the mercy of rebel predators" (Taylor 215). Britain's hesitation to take the North's part by deeming the Civil

War a civil war, embodied by the sale of the *Alabama* (along with threats of intervention by other European powers in western affairs), provoked a fear in Northern circles that because the U.S. had become "a significant threat to the carefully constructed balance-of-power system whereby a select group of Europeans monopolized the resources, markets, and commerce of most of the world" "the Old World, in some way, was commencing a concerted invasion of the New World, taking advantage of the incipient rebellion of the American slave states" (Ferris 6). In October of 1862, after McClellan's defeat at Antietam, Gladstone even suggested that the British recognize the nationhood of the Confederacy, declaring that "the Confederates has created an army and a navy, and they have made what is more than either—they have made a nation" (Taylor 197).

While the Southern strategy of provoking British intervention on their behalf did fail in part because of the miscalculation of the economic motives of Britain's manufacturing sector, it also failed because of a U.S. diplomatic strategy that played upon the imperial panic we see in *The Moonstone*. Secretary of State William Henry Steward urged Adams to remind his diplomatic counterparts in London that:

The British Empire itself is an aggregation of diverse communities which cover a large portion of the earth, and embrace one fifth of its entire population. Some, at least, of these communities are held to their places in that system by bonds as fragile as the obligation of our own Federal Union... Would it be wise for her Majesty's government, on this occasion, to set a dangerous precedent, or provoke retaliation? If Scotland and Ireland are at last reduced to quiet contentment, has Great Britain no dependency, island, or province left exposed along the whole of her empire? (Seward qtd. in Taylor 177-178)

The Civil War, narrated in our current moment as an event that directed national energies and attention inward, is shown to be in Seward's letter actually an opportunity to think about interrelatedness and international nationalism. Rather than introspection, what we

see here is the U.S. contemplating itself vis-à-vis Britain and its dominions as it attempts to negotiate the differences between national union and colonial empire, between self-determination and open rebellion.⁵ It also suggested to Seward and his contemporaries the difficulties of maintaining an empire modeled after the British one: territorial empires had dependencies, islands and provinces, borders, in other words, that left them vulnerable to the possibility of disaggregation and dissension. This civil conflict, then, had the effect of forcing the U.S. to conceptualize itself globally and confirmed the belief of Seward and other prominent Northerners that "saw the American empire locked in inexorable competition with that of Britain for global supremacy" while also leading them to further "recognize the limitations of defining the American empire in terms of territory acquired" (Immerman 99).

That the U.S. was thinking of itself relative to Great Britain and as a result, thinking of itself in regards to the questions of empire and hierarchy we see contemplated in *The Moonstone* is evident in *Harper's* through the duration of the novel's publication. After the Civil War, Northerners were "more than ever convinced of the righteousness of [their] cause and the impropriety of a British neutrality which was viewed as philo-Confederate" (Nicholas 44-45). This anti-British sentiment manifests itself clearly in America's multiple *Moonstone*, composed of the novel and that which surrounds it. The American iteration of *The Moonstone*, in turn, resists an easy reconstruction of the same imperial hierarchies that seem to get resurrected at the novel's end and works to support Reconstruction efforts at home aimed at redefining citizenship for the recently emancipated.

In the first issue of the *Harper's Weekly* in which *The Moonstone* was serialized, the editors take care to point out how "imperial panics" of the sort depicted in *The Moonstone* were impacting Reconstruction in the United States:

While the papers that call themselves Conservative are striving by the most elaborate misrepresentation of the freedmen, and by the meanest appeal to prejudice, to perplex and postpone the reorganization of the Union, it is useful to see occasionally what the freemen are really doing. If any colored man says a foolish thing anywhere we are constantly reminded by "Conservatives" of the impending repetition of "the horrors of St. Domingo." But the same persons are very careful never to publish any of the significant facts of the rapid advances made by freedmen in every good direction. (*Harper's Weekly* 18)

Though the politics of Reconstruction may have consumed Americans after the Civil War, here we see how this politics is one that understands itself as intertwined with ongoing international conversations about imperialism, colonization and slavery. During the Civil War, Southern aristocrats had placed their trust in the English upper-rank. Similarly, these newly minted "Conservatives" trust in and align themselves with a trans-Atlantic upper crust, as evidenced by their appellation. Not content to simply take on the name, the editors claim, this emerging faction was equally insistent upon seeing the recently emancipated through the eyes of the English and European powers. This Conservative viewpoint turns the Haitian revolutionary independence movement into "the horrors of St. Domingo," and "foolish" statements made by any "colored man" "anywhere" into incendiary instances of colonial slave revolt everywhere.

Instead of reading the world's "colored" men, including the U.S.'s, through this conservative lens, the editors at *Harper's* place reconstruction within the context of "The Progress of Liberalism" occurring worldwide. Reorienting conservative critics of Reconstruction, they write, "Austria on December 21 promulgated her new constitution,

and on December 24 her parliament passed the bill emancipating Jews from many of their social and religious disabilities. The past year was remarkable for the general reorganization and reconstruction movements among nations of the world." Continuing, they write, "New constitutions of a very liberal character have been adopted by or granted to Prussia, Austria, and Hungary, and the Southern States have taken the first important steps in the same direction. Slavery has been abolished in Brazil and Cuba, and two more ports of Japan are soon to be thrown open to foreign trade" (*Harper's Weekly* 19).

The editors recognize that the "local" fears of the new Northern Conservatives are part and parcel of the attempts of an international aristocracy to stem the tide of popular government.

The affinity between these transatlantic Conservatives consumes a great deal of the editorial attention of the magazine throughout the year of *The Moonstone's* serialization. While Conservatives on this side of the Atlantic are interested in declaring "foolish statements" of the freemen to be racial rebellion, the editors argue that English conservatives (not necessarily denoted entirely by party), are eager to dampen the effects of the Union victory and other global victories for liberalism upon English life. In 1867, Parliament passed the Second Reform Act, increasing the middle-class vote in rural counties and enfranchising the urban middle-class. Though "the concessions of the 1832 Reform Bill toward popular participation in elections had gone far enough and were "final," (Merli 6), "the victory of popular republican government in America," according to British historians such as G.M. Trevelyan and H.C. Allen, "was major contributor to the long-delayed electoral reform in Britain" (Mahin 267). This enfranchisement did not come easily. In their characterizations of the Conservatives as nearly hysterical in their

response to foolish statements, the Harper's editors painting the aristocracy not as the preserver of some national essence, but as the preventer of an internationalist participatory democracy.

While the English finally enfranchised their middling classes, their "Irish Troubles" continued unabated. Alongside their reproach of Northern Conservatives, the editors at Harper's mock too the English for their dealings with "The Fenians." Notably, the articles about the ostensibly American politics of Reconstruction and the other about "The Progress of Liberalism" are sewn together by a short piece discussing ongoing dilemmas in British governance. Using similarly mocking tones, they write, "Our English friends laughed at us a good deal during the early years of the rebellion for our dread of masked batteries and gun-boats; they are now having a more ridiculous panic over the warlike demonstrating of the Fenians" (*Harper's Weekly* 18). Here, the contempt of the editors for "English friends" who have worked themselves into a "ridiculous panic" over the Fenians is barely concealed. American anger over the inability of "British" conservatives (whether they are American or not) to adequately assess threats, to discern a legitimate revolutionary movement from an unlawful secession is palpable.

At the beginning of the novel's serialization, we see anger at the British, stemming in part from its past allegiances to the Confederacy and present-day American Conservative alignments with transatlantic aristocracy, crystallizing into support for liberal reforms at home and abroad. In particular, strong imaginative ties are being forged between an anti-imperialist Fenian movement and the work of Reconstruction, both of which buttress one another. Even at this early stage, then, we can begin to see how *The Moonstone's* depiction of an empire in peril read, to those Americans for true

reconstruction, as an indictment of that empire and an affirmation of the work they were undertaking.

Throughout the serialization of *The Moonstone* in *Harper's*, this frustration at England, for past and present meddling and malfeasance, rises to the surface. The British sale of the *Alabama* was one area that persistently rankled the Americans. The anger that Great Britain had "[done] wrong in recognizing the rebel states as belligerents" through the sale generated, the editors at *Harper's* contended, "[as] we all know... a certain feeling in this country that would gladly hail a difficulty or a war. It is a conviction that the account can only be settled by a blow, and there is in some other sensible minds a kind of aching to give John Bull a shaking" (818). While the U.S. did not pursue this desire to shake John Bull directly, it used the anti-imperialist Fenian movement at home and abroad as a proxy for its anger at British overreach. In the U.S., the Fenian movement took the shape of the Fenian Brotherhood. Founded in 1858, the Fenian Brotherhood was an organization that sought the establishment of an independent democratic republic in Ireland. According to H.G. Nicholas, "between 1815 and 1860 approximately 2,877,000 immigrants in all entered the U.S.A. from Britain, substantially more than those entering from all other countries combined" and "of the British total something like two million came from Ireland, many as the result of the famine" (Nicholas 24). Famined to death or to flight out of Ireland, these Irish immigrants were by no means readily accepted within the U.S. upon arrival. The credible service of American Irish in the Union army during the Civil War and their numbers, however, increased their legitimacy within American politics, at least for a little while. The Fenian Brotherhood capitalized upon the military skills and the political clout of these ex-servicemen by forming a militia. This militia, in

turn, attempted a series of raids into Canada with the hope of causing a revolt there. During the publication of the *Moonstone*, the U.S. government did little in the way of preventing these raids along the U.S./Canada border, anti-colonial raids which Britain considered terrorism (Nicholas 44-45).

Ireland's Fenian movement, meanwhile, enjoyed the support of and became an imaginative proxy for the editors at *Harper's*, who declared early in *The Moonstone's* publication that, "there can be no permanent peace in Ireland unless it is treated as Hungary has lately been by Austria" (34). During 1868, when the Fenians orchestrated a number of violent attacks against the English, bringing concerns about the colonial periphery home to the metropolitan center this support did not flag, but, in fact, increased. In *Harper's*, these events are recorded nonchalantly: "London has been excited about a number of sensations" including the "Fenian attempt to fire Buckingham Palace, and...to assassinate Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh" (284). This response reads as tepid not simply because we are living in an age of mass-induced hysteria about the threat of terrorism; it reads as tepid when compared to the ways in which *Harper's* figures British control of Ireland. Taking on the upcoming elections in England, the editors write, "There is no greater blunder or crime in the history of England than its government of Ireland...Its Irish policy has been one of hate and exasperation." Looking at Ireland through the lens of U.S. slavery and abolition explicitly, the editors continues:

Frederick Douglass says, with profound truth, that all the colored man in this case wants is to be made fully equal before the law and then let alone; let alone by friend and foe, let alone by the government and by the KKK; but of course, not abandoned by the Government to the tormentor, let alone to take their chance under equal laws and with fair opportunity. And it is just as true of Ireland as it is of the negro. Make it wholly equal under the law, cease to discriminate in any manner. (723)

Not simply a wrong, England's Irish policy is *the* greatest error or crime in all of English history; the non-specificity of whether the English are evil or stupid is the editorial's one gentleness, the one punch it pulls. Even this tentative "out" for England, however, is removed in the next line, when the policy is described as "one of hate and exasperation" — the policy, in effect, has no basis in rational governance, nothing to substantiate it besides for villainy. Importantly, they also compare England's treatment of Ireland, the imperial relationship, as similar in kind to the injustices of slavery and racial inequality that the Americans reading *Harper's* were seeking to redress.

This dual condemnation must weigh heavily on our interpretations of *The Moonstone's* imperial plotting. The pleasure of the American *Moonstone* comes not at its end, when hierarchies are re-secured and stabilized as in the British version, but at its beginning when they are "threatened." Accordingly, the images that accompany the novel's early scenes work in two important ways to heighten the positive feelings one gets from thinking badly of the British: by presenting them as looters and paradoxically, painting their enemies as vicious. The novel's first chapters were accompanied by three small illustrations (Fig. 1). The page's first illustration establishes the sacred provenance of the moonstone, as it sits atop the head of the Hindoo deity. In the next illustration, the sacred religious object has been repurposed and sits atop the head of the Englishman Herncastle's dagger as he prepares to use it to murder the prone and supplicating Brahmin at his feet during the 1799 storming of Seringapatam. The Englishman is both presumptive to take up the space of the godhead and crass enough to turn an object of worship into a weapon of war. For the *Harper's* audience whose recent visual archive included images of radical acts of white brutality against one-time slaves, the newly

emancipated, and those who aided, them the want of mercy would have seemed all too familiar. Thomas Nast's illustration, "This Is a White Man's Government," where Nathan Bedford Forrest stands with a dagger above the prostrated figure of an African-American man, though it ran after this initial scene, is just one of many such images proliferating both before and after emancipation (Figure 2). In the third image at *The Moonstone's* beginning, three Indian men loom largely over a very small and very white English boy they mesmerize in the hopes of reclaiming the diamond. The images testify to the fact that the wrongful theft of the diamond has resulted in the uncomfortable reversal of the trajectories of power that typify English life. The Indians have come to fulfill the prophecy against the English; the English will get what they deserve. In their reading, Surridge and Leighton, characterize some of the illustrations of the Hindoos as dark and wraithlike, arguing, in turn, that because these representations invoke racist stereotypes they support racism, anti-reconstruction and empire. What I hope to suggest is that in an American context the images can simultaneously be invoking racist visual tropes and be anti-imperial and pro-Reconstruction.

These illustrations work to discharge rather than dispel the frustration of Americans towards English conservatives who refused to recognize their wrong in the case of the *Alabama*, as well as in the war and Reconstruction more generally. This frustration is particularly evident in a late year editorial, "The *London Pall Mall* speaks of the "fanatical hostility towards the South" which is shown by some politicians in this country. Mr. George H. Pendleton and other gentlemen there who were in favor of allowing the rebellion to destroy the Union were also very loud during the late canvas in demanding 'fraternal feeling' for the South." Refusing to entertain "this is very foolish

talk," they add, "We have had very little respect for what is called a policy of 'conciliation' because we have been conscious that we cherished no vindictive feeling, and that 'conciliation' is merely a mask for surrender" (*Harper's Weekly* 787). Here, the charge that Northerners have pursued a practice of "fanatical hostility towards the South" ends up producing an anger that, lest the charge be proven true, can never be fully expressed (hence the construction, "it is very foolish"). Hamstrung by the circumstance, *The Moonstone* fiction allows readers to articulate why they are not angry at the same time that it expresses their anger. The grievance of the Indians is traced back to its origins and the English are to blame; the Indians attempts to get it back are not "fanatical hostility" but justice. At the same time that justice is done, anger also emerges.

The friends of slavery lost and we are for holding them to their loss. Now the loss of slavery is not merely the technical emancipation of slaves, it is the readjustment, upon the Republican principle, of the States in which slavery existed. "Conciliation" which consists of leaving to mercy of the masters the slaves whom the defeat of the masters freed is inconceivable nonsense. Yet this is what is meant by "fraternity." The St. Louis Times undertakes to assert the mildness of slavery before the war. In doing so they imitate the folly of General Lee in saying that there is no ill feeling between the late slaves and the late masters. The black codes of the Johnson regime and the treatment of the colored voters of the late campaign, the massacres of New Orleans, Memphis, of Camilla, and elsewhere are the answer to that statement...the establishment of peace upon equal rights in the South is the policy of mere common sense. There is not a Southern man who does not know that he and all his neighbors have been treated with a forbearance totally unprecedented in history. (787)

The English, who become friends of slavery through their desire for "fraternity," do not acknowledge that a reorganization of society is necessary if emancipation is to be actualized. In *The Moonstone*, readers can see this "folly" properly rewarded. Here, the timeless Brahmin who, unlike those "who have cherished no vindictive feeling," does not value having behaved in a "totally unprecedented in history" way and the aggrieved racial

type — the former slave who, continuing to bear the brunt of the ill feeling of his former masters, presumably has little forbearance left — are imaginatively fused together. Making their way to England, the Indian/Irish/African-American/Northerner despoils the quietude of the countryside, going after the literal jewel in the British crown, the Moonstone, and the figurative one, the little white boy who will grow up to hold the reins of power.

In its American edition, then, the novel's focus on the multiple levels on which the British form of empire is working comes to the fore. The *Harper's* that surrounds the novel uses the figure of the British/conservative to draw parallels and affinities between the multiple parties fighting against it. The American *Moonstone* tells the story of "modern political history...the story of one contest under a thousand forms: the struggle between popular power and that of individuals and classes" (402). While the American *Moonstone* reveals the hand of "empire" in many places around the globe, it also reinforces the view that the empire is not a political entity established and maintained wholly by military might but one propped up by multiple, mutually constitutive hierarchies. In *Harper's* discussion of the upcoming English elections, the editors declare that the question of Irish sovereignty is "really the question...submitted to the English voters." Against this possibility, "Mr. Disraeli pleads...that it is the beginning of an overthrow of the whole British system; and undoubtedly it is so, so far as that system is essentially unjust. But it is a poor argument against the cure of one disease that it will infallibly lead to the cure of others. The British system is already condemned in the British conscience...if simple and palpable justice open upon one point in Ireland endangers the English Church and State, is it not plain that they rest upon injustice?"

(728). Here, the editors highlight the nested-doll nature of inequality, one form of it giving shape to the next and so on and so forth, that is also present within the novel's main text. This nested doll structure applies in the U.S., too, as "the attitude of the Tories in England is that of the Democratic Party in this country and hence the sympathy of the Democratic party there with the English Tories. They both insist that injustice and the public welfare are identical" (728). Importantly, this metaphor emphasizes the attenuation of empire — if one hierarchy depends upon another, there is a lot of power in breaking one link in the chain. The politics rooted in this type of dependency is therefore ultimately very frail. Read next to its paratextual content, the ambivalence of the British *Moonstone* recedes. In this American *Moonstone*, attention is focused more fully upon the fragility and temporariness of empire and suggests that what is restored at the end of the novel cannot actually endure.

The text and illustrations that surround the novel's serialization, accordingly, attempt to upend some of the established hierarchies around which traditional (British) empire has crystallized; the visual and textual representations of the British *Moonstone's* "outlaw" bodies are markedly different in the American text. Within the British *Moonstone*, those whose class aspirations exceed their rank are represented as disfigured or otherwise bodily deviant: in particular, Rosanna Spearman has a humped back that accentuates the inappropriateness of her desire for the gentleman Franklin Blake. In Figure 3, the visual representation of Rosanna's classed body contrasts with the textual one. In the figure's first image, the Hindoos are pictured in a small illustration sneaking around the walled Verinder estate in the dark. After the initial scene of pillage, this "wraith-like" image reads, as I argued earlier, between justice and vengeance; the Indians

have crossed an ocean and climbed a wall to reclaim their godhead's jewel. In the second image, a tense and tender Rosanna Spearman is pictured being observed by Penelope secretly removing a rose from Blake's dressing table. Wearing dark colors, covered in shadow, and caught in the act of "theft," Rosanna is visually paired with the Hindoo thieves. In this pairing, Rosanna, yes, is still dark and other, but the pairing also works to suggest that she has been robbed of something and that her theft, an act of love, is also a means of seeking justice for herself in this romantic class system. She is dark, but she is not wrong, a fact underlined by the novel's erasure of her humped back. In the figure's third illustration, the action moves from Rosanna's forbidden love to a portrayal of the novel's sanctioned affair between Blake and Rachel, an image that is literally and metaphorically on top and in the right. In this image, the jaunty and beslippered Franklin Blake leisurely leans back, instructing a seated and well-dressed Rachel Verinder, how to paint the "surface" with "patterns and devices." Unlike the two preceding images, this illustration has a lot of whiteness and lightness in it. The dark and light contrast between the images suggests how Blake and Rachel's attentiveness to the surface, their leisure, their luxury, their light, is function of what is below visually, the darkness of class and racial caste hierarchies.

Later in the novel's serialization, the illustrations work to further upend the characterization of the Hindoos as outlaw and awful. In Figure 4, the first small inset illustrations depicts Lawyer Bruff and Rachel Verinder strolling arm in arm in Brighton. Both Bruff and Verinder are well dressed, he in a suit and hat, she in a fine dress and hat, both carrying umbrellas. The text that accompanies the image tells us that during this stroll the lawyer informed Rachel that Gabriel Ablewhite had "betrayed the mercenary

nature of the motive on his side," his need and desire to raise a sum of money very quickly through a marriage with Rachel. In the image that follows, Bruff the lawyer is shown seated at his work desk, while a tall, dark, handsome man stands next to him. The Hindoo wears very nearly the same suit of clothes that the lawyer Bruff is seen to inhabit in the first image. Not simply an adept adapter to British cultural norms of dress, we learn in the accompanying text that the Hindoo, in fact, is more genteel than all of Bruff's other English clients. The American *Moonstone's* illustration powerfully asserts that the Brahmin is the equal of Bruff, the man of law.

In many of its non-novel related 1868 illustrations, *Harper's* asserts this equality of men, particularly of men of color. One of the most famous of these images is "Electioneering at the South" (Figure 5). In this image, the artist (largely) eschews the prevailing forms of racial stereotyping in favor a visual representation that is photo-realistic. A well-dressed black politician stands amidst a circle of African-American voters, also well attired, wearing suits, jackets, ties and shoes. The speaker leans over a table, hand outstretched, passionately intoning the words he is reading from the speech that sits on the table. His audience is attentive; the circle of men fixes its attention upon him and the mixed company of men, women and children in the foreground and background also lean in to follow his stump speech. A few people in the background are working, but they labor on horseback *on* beasts of burden, rather than *as* them. In the event that the image was insufficient to make their point, the editors underlined it with the following caption:

[The illustration] shows the newly enfranchised citizens of the United States engaged in the discussion of political questions upon which they are to vote; and however crude the arguments of the orator may be, they cannot be more so than these than those that may be heard every evening

in the clubs of the "superior race" in the city of New York. ... instead of scoffing loftily at them as incompetent, their white brethren will find it necessary to bestir themselves, or the "incompetent" class will be better educated and more successful. They cannot be pariahs; they cannot be peons; they must be slaves or citizens. The policy of enslaving them has produced such results as we have seen; and we are now to see that liberty is truly conservative; and that honesty is the best policy. (467)

Like the image of the Brahmin in Bruff's office, the author of the caption intimates that the African American speaker is an equal and also potentially a better. Importantly, the caption and the image also attempt to frame political equality as a conservative option, one that preserves the existing power structure against threats and revolutions, those things that stir "imperial panics."

The eschewal of stereotypical forms of racial and class representation, however, did not necessarily mean an aversion to expansion or empire. Rather, a different formulation for how empire might work emerges, laid out in two side-by-side illustrations in the center of the weekly (Figure 6). Turning the magazine's pages, the eye is, counterintuitively struck by the page on the right-hand side, its vertical position ensuring its immediate accessibility. This image, entitled "Washing and Shearing Sheep in the Country," consists of two panels, one on top of the other. In the first panel, four farm workers, three white and one black, wash sheep about to be shorn; in the bottom, three of the workers, one black and two white, have moved on to shearing the sheep. The top and bottom structure serves to highlight a lack of top-down hierarchy in the quality of the representations and amongst the workers. With the exception of one man in the second scene who observes because there is no task to be done, all those in the scenes are engaged in some form of labor. There is no person performing all of the work and no one "in charge." The African-American man, though, occupies the center foreground of both

images. This positioning emphasizes the centrality of his equitable treatment to the maintenance of the valley's peace, symbolized by the lamb. It is a peaceful American empire, held together by common beliefs and common undertakings. Turning the page, not backwards but sideways, the image of the peaceful American valley turns into an international meet-and-greet (Figure 7). In the Nast image, maiden Columbia holds the hand of a wizened China and approaches the caricatured faces of the nations. Doing so, she declares, "Brothers and Sisters, I am happy to present to you the Oldest member of the Family, who desires our better acquaintance." Moving from a small circle of workingmen, into a larger frame of nations, the emphasis on commonalities remains. The Chinese are the oldest member of an extended family, the United States, the youngest. The drawing, which cartoons the opening up of diplomatic and trade relations with China, the forging of a commercial empire, declares the nations kin at the same time that it differentiates them. Just as Americans reread *The Moonstone* through the prism of their own fraught relationship with the British Empire, so too do they re-envision the possible materials from which empires can be built. Not class, not race, but a bold — perhaps naive — vision of cooperation and commercial exchange.

¹ Lonoff writes that the novel may have been written in critical response to the harsh British suppression of the Morant Bay uprising in Jamaica of 1865 (Lonoff 178-179), while the other critics believe Collins to have been preoccupied with the English occupation and looting of India and the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, in particular.

² One such reading of the novel, "The Transatlantic Moonstone" by Mary Leighton and Lisa Surridge, takes a step in this direction. In their materialist history, the two authors compare the different illustrations in the English and American serializations of *The Moonstone*. A fascinating archival project, the reading nevertheless reproduces a nationalizing framework, arguing that the novel's U.S. illustrations are in dialogue with a discourse of Reconstruction-era racial miscegenation without recognizing how this national discourse is and was itself shaped by transatlantic racial discourses, in particular those developed by virtue of England's vexed imperial relationship to its colonized peoples in India, Ireland and Africa. While suggesting that Collins was part of a transatlantic literary economy, the reading does little to consider the ways in which the supposedly stable entities of England and America were themselves shaped by global forms of exchange.

³ In *The Novel and the Police*, D.A. Miller suggests that the inability of Cuff to solve the crime and the subsequent resolution of the crime through communal regulation is evidence of a shift to a more panoptical form of self-policing.

⁴ As Tamar Heller writes, what we are seeing here in Blake are the ways in which, "the hierarchies of gender and class that undergird British culture replicate the politics of colonialism" (Heller 144).

⁵ In his history of U.S. internationalism, Herring for example claims an avant la lettre "isolationism" for Americans of this period: "For the first time in its short history, the new nation did not face a major external threat. Its position in North America was firmly established. Europe was retreating from the Western Hemisphere. The relative stability on the Continent spared the danger of a general European war. America's headlong economic growth and consolidation of the Union absorbed the energies and attention of its people after the Civil War. Under these circumstances, world events naturally receded in the scale of national priorities. Americans did not think of themselves as isolationists—indeed, the term isolationism was just beginning to creep into the national political vocabulary by the end of the century" (Herring 272).

CHAPTER II

CRACKING UP: THE UNMAKING OF MANIFEST DESTINY IN TWAIN'S

ROUGHING IT

I. Introduction

In his 1872 review of Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, William Dean Howells wrote:

A thousand anecdotes, relevant and irrelevant, embroider the work; excursions and digressions of all kinds are the very woof of it, as it were; everything farfetched or near at hand is interwoven, and yet the complex is sort of "harmony and colors" which is not less than triumphant. The stage-drivers and desperadoes of the Plains; the Mormons and their city; the capital of Nevada, and its government and people; the mines and miners; the social, speculative, and financial life of Virginia City; the climate and characteristics of San Francisco; the amusing and startling traits of Sandwich Island civilization, —appear in kaleidoscopic succession. Probably an encyclopedia could not be constructed from the book. (754-755)

Howells' review speaks of and syntactically instantiates the difficulty of succinctly summarizing Twain's prose account of the "vagabond days" he spent traveling in the not-yet-American West during and after the United States' Civil War. Already episodic by virtue of Twain's itinerancy, a series of formal choices exaggerates and foregrounds the book's narrative and aesthetic discontinuities and inconsistencies. Written years after his western travels were over, Twain pieced together his second book from his journals, the recollections of his brother Orion, newspaper clippings, and extensive excerpts from contemporary fiction and non-fiction. In the process of piecing the work together, Twain tramps his way in through a number of contemporaneous discourses, genres and modes — anthropological treatises, travel narratives, dime westerns, the Southwestern tall tale,

New York *Tribune*-ese, Emersonian transcendentalism, and the sensational romance — and does so in a certain amount of style, writing 79 chapters packed with over 304 illustrations.

Twain's "kaleidoscopic" narration of the West's heterogeneous landscapes, languages, geographies, persons, professions, and populations constructs *Roughing It* as an analogously puzzling literary terrain, one within which critics have had difficulty getting their bearings. The relative unnavigability of *Roughing It* and the oft-noted correspondence between landscape and language that generates the text's version of impenetrability has led many critics to either ignore the work (except to note its interest for scholars of the late Twain) or to re-write it into legibility by reading either the "farfetched" or "near at hand" rather than the "complex." In the past twenty years, this has translated in renewed critical attention from scholars who read Twain's text as an *avante la lettre* post-structuralist rumination on the attenuated relationship of signifier to signified, or as the anti-imperialist Twain's unwitting work in the name of American imperialism and exceptionalism.¹

By contrast, I will argue that *Roughing Its* lingering, awkward and overdetermined prose, its moments of occasional poignancy, and abundance of comic absurdities disrupt any semblance of narrative continuity. The resultant aesthetic incoherence is ideological; it usefully, if not purposefully, articulates what was still unsettling and unsettled about not-yet-American landscapes, literary and otherwise. Focusing on Twain's portrayal of the land use of Mormons, Goshute Indians and miners, in particular their relations to and with an awesome "waste" land, this chapter will suggest that *Roughing It* refuses the Lockean proposition that the addition of labor to land

constitutes ownership, citizenship, and the social good. Simultaneously, *Roughing It* holds up for scrutiny and mockery the vast machinery that the proposition underwrote: the idealization of Jefferson's yeoman farmer; the ideologies of Manifest Destiny and Domesticity; the politics of homesteading and similarly racialized forms of American citizenship and national belonging; as well as the practices of continental and overseas imperial expansion. *Roughing It*, in other words, serves as a critique and counter to the expansive ideology of liberal individualism, which was produced by novelistic realism and underwrote the project of creating a contiguously operating inland empire, otherwise known as Manifest Destiny.

Working within a framework developed by recent historians of the novel, I am arguing essentially then that domestic and realistic novel is a liberal individualist form, one that seeks to institutionalize, reproduce and naturalize the contractually defined, propertied individual, the male-led household, and the nation-state.² *Roughing It*, however, refuses the developmental narration and deep character of the bildungsroman in favor of something closer to the picaresque — the "young and ignorant" Twain who journeys to the west to accompany his brother comes by its end to what he calls "no account" and is unable to produce a suitable "moral" to legitimize the travels and the tales that preceded it. In this refusal of the literary history of the novel, *Roughing It*, adopts something closer to what one might call a polygamous form, undermining the project of liberal individualism and its aforementioned entailments.

In making this argument, I hope to contribute to the ongoing creation of an extensive and subtle view of westward expansion, one that counters celebratory Cold War narratives of white "pioneers" and the democratizing, distinctly American mythos of

masculine frontier self-reliance, while simultaneously eschewing an overly simplistic model of a monolithic, hegemonic manifest destiny. I hope, as well, to contribute to a growing body of literature that analyzes the pragmatic turn in the postbellum United States and takes seriously the importance of religious belief and practice throughout the nineteenth century (and in so doing understands the continued relevance of the varieties of religious experience into our present). In part, I will be considering the way that certain forms of thinking the nation form anew were predicated on the adoption of the civic religion of pragmatic Protestantism, an adoption that in retrospect we term the separation of church and state. Instead, the "American" nineteenth century is characterized less by before and after the Civil War and more by the continuous and substantial social and geopolitical problem of producing a singular, contiguously landed nation and empire. In reading this way, I hope to as Amy Kaplan suggestively writes, articulate the way that imperial expansion brought "domestic and foreign spaces" into "jarring proximity" with one another, without taking for granted the stability of that which the anarchy of empire unsettles, the domestic, the foreign, and the nation state as such (*The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture* 1). In such a reading, a portrait of the United States looks less like a nation and more like regions, even multiple nations, defined by fractures, fault lines, and contradictions.³

II. The Problems of Liberalism

In a series of letters to his brother Orion, Mark Twain described their mutual inheritance, a parcel of about 160 acres of land in Tennessee left to the family after their father's death, with something less than filial piety, calling it, variously, "a folly," "worthless," "that infernal property," and "that doubly & trebly hated & accursed land"

(SLC). In the event that his brother misunderstood the nature of these declarations, Twain added the clarifying, "You cannot form even a faint idea of how malignantly I hate that vile subject." Despite refusing to have anything to do with the property in 1866 and renouncing his stake in such a sale in 1869, Twain nevertheless found it difficult to extricate himself from the quicksand-like proceedings of disposing of his father's willed chattel. The land, in fact, seems to possess Twain more than he it, as he writes, "the family have been bled for 40 years to keep that cursed land on their hands & perpetuate our father's well intended folly in buying it" (SLC). Come to life, the real estate takes on unreal qualities and sucks the blood and vitality out of the Clemens family. The curse of contract rewrites a past gesture of paternal good will, in a best-case scenario, as a "folly," and in a worse one, an Old Testament-styled plot for present and future familial ruination. Twain frames having to labor on the land in order to produce sustenance as a revised form of "Adam's curse" in two interesting ways: first, as a patriarch's curse (one he perpetrates, rather than permits — not one caused by Eve, which Adam must suffer) and second, *as a curse*, something negative, rather than the lifeblood of the family and the state.

This series of exasperated letters about finally ridding the family of its "curse" of a paternal homestead were written as Twain undertook the work of proposing and producing *Roughing It* from 1869 to 1871. This is, I think, a suggestive coincidence; one that I will use to unravel a main thread knitting together the loosely bound and contemporaneously composed *Roughing It*. Twain's epistolary disavowal of the positive promise of patriarchal property, as well as of the logic of contract undergirding both it and U.S. liberalism's post-Civil War civil state, reverberates throughout *Roughing It*. As

such, *Roughing It* constitutes something of a refusal, or at least a re-characterization, of the political and economic ideology of "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Free Men" that had gained ascendancy in the decades leading up to its publication (Frederick 20). Vying for legitimacy and supremacy earlier in the century, this Lockean contoured ideology that conceptualized the civil state as a series of households headed up by propertied, land-owning, reason-possessing, male individuals and which sutured together land, labor, the intimacies of domestic life and the health of the state, in many ways possessed the air of orthodoxy by 1872.⁴ Having full run of the Congress in the wake of the Confederate secession, Republicans had made the dream of such a polity a policy reality, successfully implementing key pieces of their party's agenda.

One of the most significant pieces of this agenda was the Homestead Act in 1862, which legislated the transfer of a quarter-section to any adult who resided on any unoccupied public land for a nominal fee after five years and for \$1.25 an acre after six months of residence. Breaking up inherited estates, allowing each man to produce himself as propertied citizen seemingly *ex nihilo*, and disturbing the precarious population/representation balance that enabled the existence of the slavocracy, homesteading served as the Republican rebuke to Southern slavery's feudal patriarchal order. In both *Roughing It* and Twain's correspondence, however, homesteading is itself revisited as something of a peculiar institution, indebted to residual forms of creating citizens and individuals. Rather than locating citizenship and value in property, the emergent system that Twain participates in through his writing, finds value in speculation and representation, depicting a confrontation between how citizenship was staged and produced in the earlier part of the century and its emergent forms. *Roughing It* produces

not only, as historian Joyce Appleby would have it, the "shifting of loyalties from home and habit to self and progress" coincident with the opening up of antebellum societies — the turn from patrilineal succession to individuality — but suggests ways that emergent forms of representations — literary, monetary, and others — were moving beyond the Lockean-informed visions of the individual, the civil state, and literary culture.

The logic of "free soil" had a long and storied past in the Americas, the assumptions of which I will trace backwards from Twain to the Scottish Enlightenment tradition, in general, and the work of John Locke, in particular. In the *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1692), John Locke argued that the addition of industry and labor to uncultivated land produces more than sustenance. The labor of tilling, planting, improving and cultivating turns the natural abundance of the commons into the exclusive property of he who has done this work, such that to cultivate land makes that land one's own (*Two Treatises of Government* 5.32.6-7). In formulating his theory of property, Locke idealized the American landscape writing that "in the beginning all the World was America," a plentiful and fertile, "wild" and "uncultivated," pre-historic and unpeopled land. Locke's America lies waiting for industry to turn land into property and identity, nature into culture, peoples into individuals. The labor necessary for this shift forward in the developmental narrative of progress and civilization, however, presupposes the fully human beings who are supposed to be the consequence of this labor. This logical supposition is never fully resolved (which leads to tensions I will soon be exploring) but Locke attempts to reconcile the inconsistency somewhat by positing reason and autonomy as the natural and inherent possessions of men that subsequently enable natural rights to one's life (what Locke calls "Property in his own person") and the "Labour of his

Body" (*Two Treatises of Government* 5.27.1-5). One of the problems in such a formulation, however, is that it is more difficult to determine inherent rationality, a quality of mind, than it is to determine what moveables are in whose possession. This difficulty produces a paradox worthy of practitioners of Calvinist hermeneutics, one that was and is often resolved by a reversal of the typical order of association: Because God has given the use of land to the "Industrious and Rational" with "Labour...his title to it," laboring and taking possession of land come to serve, in turn, as signs of one's reason, autonomy, and self-possession (*Two Treatises of Government* 5.34.5-8). Within the paradigm of Lockean liberalism, landed property came to demonstrate one's "natural" self-ownership, while to not own your own person — to be landless, a slave, non-white, a child, a woman, or a prisoner — reads as a failure to become individuated, sovereign and modern. Self-possession, meanwhile, suggests that one is not only capable of governing one's self, but also, by proxy, others.

In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke made a parallel move, suggesting that the mind, like the *tabula rasa* that was the American landscape, was an "empty cabinet" or a "blank sheet, void of all characters" (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding: In Two Volumes* 58). Instead, Locke argued that, contrary to both prevailing Christian and Cartesian conceptions, humans are born without innate ideas. The empty cabinet of the mind, he theorized, could only be furnished with ideas through sensation, the human experience of the external senses, and the labor of reflection, i.e., the operation of the "internal senses" of thinking, perceiving, doubting, and reasoning upon the "ideas got by sensation" (121-122, 141). Just as the labor of cultivation creates landed property, the labor of reflection creates property in one's self.

Because it did not explicitly posit any grounds for moral or communal action, Francis Hutcheson supplemented Locke's theory, proposing that all human beings are endowed with a "moral sense." Provided by the "Author of nature" to all human beings, an individual's moral sense recognized virtuous actions as pleasurable and "lovely forms." In this way, the doing and observing of "right," ethics, became intertwined with both aesthetic judgment and the cultivation of proper feeling. Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* published in 1759 expounded upon this connection between ethics, aesthetics and affect. Smith suggested that morality was derived neither from an innate "moral sense" nor from a generalized notion of benevolence or utility, but from individualized, imaginative sympathy in action. According to Smith, moral action is guided "by the imagination," which enables us when observing another to "[conceive] what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (11). If we imagine that we would respond similarly to the situation, then we are in sympathetic harmony with one another; such sympathetic correspondence was a prerequisite for any form of social life. If we imagine how a fictional third party, an "impartial spectator," would behave in a particular circumstance, we know what is morally good and can therefore seek to behave so that our own actions will be recognizable to others as proper to any situation. Moral action and right feeling *look* a certain way and our own actions and feelings can be performed so as to bring them into accord with this ideal.

Given the importance of imagination to self-regulating sympathetic subjectivity, the era of sentimental philosophy not surprisingly also witnessed the birth of the novel and sentimental fiction and their rise to cultural legitimacy. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith proposes one reason for this convergence. Here, Smith argues that

stories have a peculiar power over those who read them, writing that “Our joy for the deliverance of those heroes of tragedy or romance who interest us, is as sincere as our grief for their distress, and our fellow-feeling with their misery is not more real than that with their happiness. We enter into their gratitude and we heartily go along with their resentment” (13). Because the trials and tribulations of fiction were just as “real” as reality, novel reading cultivated conscience and self-regulating individuality.

While the American colonies, where land was plentiful, served as a testing ground for Locke's ideas about land and citizenship, literature served as a key arena in which the sentimental faculties were exercised and the limits, possibilities and dangers of sympathetic reflection, identification, and individuation were imagined. Novels, in particular, were a space wherein bodies became individuals — acquiring the sensations, social experiences, self-restraint necessary demonstrate to others their interiority and self-possession (Armstrong 4). Working in mutually reinforcing ways, novelistic literature and liberalism produced, disseminated and enacted a set of expectations about what proper personhood looked like and how one could achieve it. Locke's dual contentions — that labor creates both property at large and the property of "mind" and personhood — establishes has significant consequences for our understanding of the American literary landscape

In *Roughing It*, Twain undermines the assumptions grounding such Lockean-inspired free soil liberalism — that land is unchanging, stable, enduring, not to mention plentiful and fruitful, and therefore, a proper anchor for individual identity. In one anecdotal chapter, Twain tells the story of practical joke played upon Gen. Buncombe, the Nevada territory's recently arrived U.S. attorney, as well as a lawyer for hire. Eager to

pull one over on the upstart newcomer, and knowing Buncombe's desire to earn some extra money, Dick Hyde comes to Buncombe with a "joke" case concerning his property rights; Hyde's Nevada ranch has been covered by a landslide that brings Tom Morgan's homestead, "fences, cabins, cattle, barns and everything down on top of *his* ranch and exactly covered up every single vestige of his property, to a depth of about thirty-eight feet" (222). With his plot directly on top of Hyde's, Morgan claims to be in possession and "refuse[s] to vacate the premises—said he was occupying his own cabin and not interfering with anybody else's—and said the cabin was standing on the same dirt and same ranch it had always stood on, and he would like to see anybody make him vacate" (222). Buncombe brings the case before "the law," calling as witnesses "legislators, high government officials, ranchmen, miners, Indians, Chinamen, negroes" (224). Invariably, though, each ends up testifying on behalf of Morgan rather than Hyde, "add[ing] new testimony to the absurdity of a man's claiming to own another man's property because his farm had slid down on top of it" (224). The witnesses having failed him, Buncombe fiercely advocates for Hyde; "he pounded the table, he banged the law-books, he shouted, and roared, and howled, he quoted from everything and everybody, poetry, sarcasm, statistics, history, pathos, bathos, blasphemy, and wound up with a grand war-whoop for free speech, freedom of the press, free schools, the Glorious Bird of America and the principles of eternal justice! [Applause.]" (225). Buncombe's speech falls on deaf ears as the case's judge looks to a higher power and declares that, "Heaven created the ranches and it is Heaven's prerogative to rearrange them...Gentlemen, it is the verdict of the court that the plaintiff, Richard Hyde, has been deprived of his ranch by the visitation of God! And from this decision there is no appeal." (226).

Within this sequence, Twain via interlocutor Morgan pushes the homesteading position, where holding possession of land secures ownership, to its literalist extreme, going so far as to wonder why if Hyde had really wanted his ranch, "didn't [he] *stay and hold possession!*" as "the whole world was a ripping and a tearing down that mountain side" (223). This "absurd" claim is backed not only by Morgan, but also by the testimony of the entire community — from the legislative top to the legal non-entities, Chinamen and Negroes. The joke's exaggerated insistence that everyone within the community testify to the truth of Morgan's land claim suggests that Morgan's claim is absurd; otherwise there would be no need to so thoroughly prop it up. The action of the joke moves in an alternate direction as well, however, suggesting how reasonable and so thoroughly woven into all layers of society the rubrics of Lockean-inspired land claims were in less extreme forms. The homesteading logic of possession is so powerful and pervasive that the entire territory colludes with Hyde to ensure this operative fiction — that to be on the land means one owns it and gives one the rights entailed with such ownership, including recourse to the law. These property rights, to employ a silly pun, are the very bedrock of the American legal system. Morgan and Hyde are, after all, arguing according to the same logic — the dispute is not whether or not possession constitutes ownership, but who is in possession.

Buncombe's hortatory retort to this testimony clarifies and amplifies the fact of homesteading's ubiquity and importance in this moment. Moving from the legal specifics of the case — throwing the book at them — Buncombe quickly moves into the over-inflated, ready-made banalities of a "grand war-whoop for free speech, freedom of the press, free schools, the Glorious Bird of America and the principles of eternal justice!

[Applause.]" Confronted with one chain of automatic thinking, Buncombe counters it with an equally strong chain of rote association, bringing forth the rabble-rousing cries of the new political order complete with canned applause. The belief in this new political order, it becomes apparent, is a quasi-religious faith. Buncombe's counterargument, moreover, could easily have been made in defense of his opponent's land claim, calling the power of the law to differentiate and declare the right and the wrong in public disputes into question. Twain brings this into view in the judicial reply to Buncombe, where the judge rules, not upon the basis of any substantive legal order, but upon calls to Heaven's higher powers. This call to faith, as well as the wholesale submission of the community to either the "deluded" power of the joke and its maker or the belief, indeed, in Morgan's land claim, points us towards the ways that the national form and the New Republic, rising to preeminence in this age of incorporation and Reconstruction, were built upon articles of faith, not simply federation.

III. One Nation, Under God

Throughout his book, Twain points his readers towards these moments when the religious element of political beliefs, as well as the political implications of some forms of religious belief, make themselves visible. In this context, as well when one considers the relative unnavigability of *Roughing It* in toto, Twain's portrayal of Utah and the Mormons is worthy of special note. If, as many critics have remarked, the book structures its pleasures in much the same way that the fantasy of placer mining it often describes is structured — the book's nuggets of interest aren't unearthed by the labor of deep reading, but chanced upon while one's attention skips about and around — then *Roughing It* relatively sustained attention to the "lives of the saints," which London's *Examiner*

claimed "occupy about one-half of *Roughing It*" is suggestive (qtd. in Budd 102). Twain has, like one of the speculators he describes in his book, "seeded the dig" or placed these nuggets here as a means, formally and thematically, for profiting from the confusion and disorientation of the reading experience as a whole. Moreover, he's created an aesthetic that cannot be unearthed by labor, one opposed to the process by which Lockean ownership manifests.

So why Mormons? And what cultural work do these Mormon moments do? The narrator's first encounter with Mormons occurs a few days into his overland journey from Missouri to the Nevada, where he and his brother will begin working in the territorial government of Nevada. Riding across the desert, the speedy carriage of the brothers approaches and eclipses the Mormon emigrant train (76). Twain's narration of this encounter suggests something not only about what "roughing it" really means, but also about the cultural role that Mormons served in the middle part of the nineteenth century in the United States. He writes:

Just beyond the breakfast-station we overtook a Mormon emigrant train of thirty-three wagons; and tramping wearily along and driving their herd of loose cows, were dozens of coarse-clad and sad-looking men, women and children, who had walked as they were walking now, day after day for eight lingering weeks, and in that time had compassed the distance our stage had come in *eight days and three hours*—seven hundred and ninety-eight miles! They were dusty and uncombed, hatless, bonnetless and ragged, and they did look so tired! (76)

In this passage, singular Mormon persons become "The Mormons" and exist in Twain's construction as a "they," in numeracy and plurality, not to mention despondency. The train consists of "*thirty three* wagons," "*dozens* of coarse-clad and sad-looking *men*, *women*, and *children*," taking eight weeks to travel 798 miles. The multiplicity described and enacted by Twain's sentence, which itself piles clause upon clause, however, does not

suggest plenitude but overdetermined scarcity. The Mormons do not have more, but less, as the "rugged scenery" leaves them "coarse," "hatless, bonnetless and ragged, and they did look so tired." The Mormon need for clothing to keep them from overexposure to the elements seems to be just one of the persistent needs that goes unmet.

The unarable desert landscape makes Lockean forms of property and possession impossible such that to be in the desert is to be deserted of the self and social ties that make one both a one *and* a person. To be a Mormon is to have nothing, and in some sense, to be nothing as a consequence; the poverty of these Mormons is so dire that they lack individuation, they, in other words, don't even seem to own their own persons. Within the framework of Lockean liberalism, to not own your own person reads as a failure to become modern. In the passage above, for example, the Mormons are insistently belated. Making slow progress through the desert, the Mormons are a people out of time; they belong to a past, more primitive time in contrast to the narrator who speeds along into an accelerated futurity where the far is readily brought near. Twain's Mormons are a step behind in the progressive teleology of human development, a fact made more explicit in the group's relationship to animal life. The Mormons don't so much rule over what is a herd of their own cattle as resemble that herd. Lacking the agency and autonomy necessary for dominion and ownership, the Mormons float alongside the loose band of bovines; Mormons do not qualify as 'human,' the most modern form of being evolutionarily speaking.

When moments after they encounter the Mormons, the stage group comes upon a mass graveyard the full implications of this animalized analogy become apparent. On the side of the road, the travelers see "long ranks of white skeletons of mules and oxen—

monuments of the huge emigration of other days." These "scattered skeletons" are mixed "here and there" with "up-ended boards or small piles of stones" that represent what are supposedly the "more precious remains" of previous emigrants (83). Here, the admission that the human remains are "more precious," is both inadequate and an afterthought. Rather than strongly insisting on the difference between animal and human life, the passage's weak protest seems instead to concede their kinship in the more pressing fact of their mutual and indiscriminate scattering amidst the landscape. Stripped of flesh, animal and emigrant bones admit little differentiation. In the "vague desert" that has been "given over to the raven and the coyote," distinctions between forms of life blur and the process of their decay into indistinction emits a "soft, hideous glow." The promiscuous mixture of the emigrants and their cattle counterparts' bones does not happen only in death but is, I would argue, a sign of their relatedness in and as bare life because of the desert. The Mormons and the cattle (chattel) are already in some sense remains, that which is left over after the useful and good has been removed, living in the afterlife of their own social deaths.⁵ In these encounters, the exiled, emigrating Mormons become the difference between humanity in a contractual state and humanity as a population, the difference between being an autonomous subject and an object of classification. Mormons in this moment are the abject objects against which civil society defines itself.⁶

Although the tenor of Twain's prose about the Mormons is, in and of itself, strange, such a turn into the gothic or supernatural register when faced with the Mormons was rather typical for the period. From almost the moment that they became a formalized religious entity and prior even to the public announcement of their policy of plural marriage in 1852, the Saints were a sect apart. Their existence provoked a series of

feverish responses sizable enough such that they also could become a subject of Twainian satire. The first anti-Mormon tract was written by Alexander Campbell and published in 1834. Designed to halt the "spreading and contaminating influence" of Mormonism, the tract's title, *Delusions*, from the Latin *deludere*, "to mock, to deceive," suggests both the way that Mormonism was a mockery of properly Christian religious forms, as well as the deception that brought adherents to the religion. Campbell's accusation of willful fraudulence, either in the form of self-deceit or in the form of a conspiratorial, contagion-like, falsehood propounded by Joseph Smith to filch the savings of "defenceless females," was a mild beginning. Also published in 1834, E.D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834), the first full length anti-Mormon book, Howe characterizes Joseph Smith, as "very expert in the arts of necromancy, juggling, the use of the divining rod, and looking into what they termed a 'peep-stone,'" while "his address is easy, rather fascinating and winning" (12-13). As Mormonism grew in numbers and in corporate property and power, denunciations of the religion operated in an increasingly paranoid and phobic register. In the years from 1860, when the Republican party declared slavery and polygamy to be "twin relics of barbarism" (which rhymes with Twain's portrayal of the Mormons as a tribe out of time) to 1890 when the LDS Church published the "Mormon Manifesto" renouncing polygamy, a whole genre of "anti-polygamy, anti-Mormon" literature that imagined Mormonism through the lens (usually Orientalist) of supernatural coercion, bondage and witchcraft proliferated and were quite popular. Maria Ward's *Female Life Among the Mormons* (1855), Catherine Waite's *The Mormon Prophet and His Harem* (1867), Ann Eliza Young's *Wife No. 19* (1876), and even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1890) to name but a few were all best-sellers and all cast Mormons in

these aggressively negative terms as threats to the autonomous, consenting, individual of the contractual form.⁷

As Twain and his traveling companions finally arrive in the capital of the "great patriarchs," Salt Lake City, *Roughing It* ostensibly remains in the primitivist, gothic register it takes on in its description of the Mormons and the emigrant graveyard continue to develop. Here, the travelers are greeted with a "fine supper, of the freshest meats and fowls and vegetables—a great variety and as great abundance" (88). After an overland journey where scarcity was the rule and a meal of rotten army bacon and slumgullion was considered a feast, one would expect that such generosity would elicit the warmth, if not the allegiance, of Twain and his fellow travelers. Indeed, earlier in the century, this scene would have read as an ideal sentimental opportunity. Rather than mutual affection or recognition of Mormon generosity, however, the meal produces "fascination," the feeling that something unseen and inexplicable is acting upon one's person, and the travelers subsequently take to the streets "surreptitiously staring at every creature we took to be Mormon." So bewitched are the travelers, in fact, that Utah seems to them a "fairyland...to all intents and purposes, a land of enchantment, and goblins, and awful mystery" (Twain 88).

Though seemingly typical, Twain's treatment of this moment of Mormon disaffiliation, the ritual relegation of one group to the outside of the inside/out of a binary of difference, is not played entirely straight. Walking through the streets post-feast, longing to "have a good look at a Mormon family, in all its comprehensive amplenness, disposed in the customary concentric rings of the home circle" Twain finds doors "opened and shut as we passed" and his party forcibly introduced by the Acting Governor

of the Territory to "other 'Gentiles'"; "Gentiles," we learn, "are people who are not Mormons" (88). During the next day, Twain and his party:

strolled through the broad, straight, level streets [of Salt Lake City] and enjoyed the pleasant strangeness of a city of fifteen thousand inhabitants with no loafers perceptible in it; and no visible drunkards or noisy people; a limpid stream rippling and dancing through every street in place of a filthy gutter; block after block of trim dwellings, built of "frame" and sunburned brick—a great thriving orchard and garden behind every one of them, apparently—branches from the stream winding and sparkling among the garden beds and fruit trees—and a grand general air of neatness, repair, thrift and comfort, around and above and over the whole. And everywhere were workshops, factories, and all manner of industries; and intent faces and busy hands were to be seen wherever one looked; and in one's ears was the ceaseless clink of hammers, the buzz of trade and the contented hum of drums and fly-wheels. (90)

Over the course of this extraordinarily long single sentence, a magical transformation of the Mormons occurs. The Mormons of bare life and multiplicity, clause by clause, make steady progress into the temporality of civilization and modernity such that at sentence's end, they seem to be living the Lockean ideal. These Saints have, as Brigham Young prophesized, made "the desert...blossom as the rose," transforming the wild uncultivated land of the Americas into a rationalized space for both industrial and agricultural production (Isaiah 35:1). Moreover, they seem to have mastered the arts of "home economy" and liberal proprietorship, enjoying, perfecting, and protecting the comforts of hearth and heart. As Lori Merish argued in *Sentimental Materialism*, theories of liberal proprietorship imagined that taking good care of things demonstrated that one was not a thing, but rather capable of self-rule, regulation and full personhood. Such a reformulation emerged in opposition to the patriarchal proprietary relations of gothic or feudal ownership, such as that of the harem household of Bernard Yale in Alfreda Bell's *Boadicea* (1855) and other aforementioned anti-Mormon fiction. Imagined around the

fireplace, having eliminated idleness and drunkenness, the very picture of neatness, repair, thrift and comfort and industry, the Mormons are the idyllic *and* ironic double of the sentimental, domestic, contractual family that they have been defined as "other to." These Mormons are better at being genteel "gentiles" than the real thing.

This has the effect of a simple reversal — the Mormons behave according to liberal norms and therefore, achieving some form of political and social harmony may be possible. Twain's exaggeration of Mormon perfection, however, also adds another layer to this representation. Writing half a page later, we see this variation fully animated. Describing how Utah's crest bears the imprint of a busily working, well-ordered beehive, Twain's narrator contrasts it with that of his own state, which, he says, consists of "two dissolute bears holding up the head of a dead and gone cask between them and making the pertinent remarks, "UNITED, We STAND—[HIC]—DIVIDED WE FALL" (90). Employing his own re-characterization of Mormons as hardworking and industrious with the pre-existing antipathy against the sect, Twain pokes fun at the Mormons, but in an unexpected way. Rather than making fun of the Mormons for failing to live up to the standards, he mocks them for their literal and figurative uprightness; the Mormons are, sadly, not drunken bears. Twain's mockery comes at the expense of the liberal values — sobriety, devotion to kith and kin, industriousness — that the continued existence of the Mormons within the newly reconstituted republic and its territories supposedly threatened.⁸ The moment where twain indulges his comic curiosity about the exotic Mormons, hoping to peek into their homes, works in a similar manner, allowing Twain to employ the tropes of anti-Mormon literature to interrogate domestic disciplinary regimes. Occupying this doubled domestic space, the objectified Mormons establish their own set

of exclusions, creating and enforcing the category of "gentile," which registers both as an affront and a curiosity to the travelers who are accustomed to being comfortably situated within a structure of power, looking out. Far from simple anti-Mormonism, Twain employs these tropes to make explicit how the logic of the Mormon's ritualized exile from U.S. civil society worked, how the positive, inclusive embrace of the sympathetic community of the domestic novel relies on a latent logic of exclusion. From this perspective, the Mormons occupy a unique social position that Giorgio Agamben identifies as "inclusive exclusion" — cast out of the community but nonetheless at its heart because their exclusion makes the community coherent (Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* 8).

In *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878), the Supreme Court case that declared polygamy illegal, the moment of the separation of church and state which this case enunciates, is, then, also a moment of the institution of a civil/civic religion — the "invisible" liberal individualism of the contractual form. This moment and the concurrent closeting away of residual forms of sociality that were essential forms of Mormon religious practice make the incorporation and Reconstruction of "America" possible. In *Roughing It*, this contest, between status, where "rights and limitations" are assigned to "those in a defined group or class" and "fixed by a public authority" and contract, where individuals determine rights and limitations consensually and "by private agreement," is still ongoing (Cott 33). Eschewing identities based either on kinship and bloodline or rationality, autonomy, and ownership, *Roughing It*, I will argue, instead posits an alternative form of American subjectivity and belonging, one based on collectivity and mobility that refuses the centripetal narrative of national coalescence

IV. "This Daniel Boone business is about played out": Horace Greeley and Homesteading

In one fascinating episode of *Roughing It*, Twain describes, with no apparent referent and a straight face, an encounter he has with a "demented" former minister named Erickson who he meets on a sugar plantation during the Sandwich Islands portion of his journey. The man, prompted only by the casual utterance of the word "circumstance" proceeds to tell Twain of "the Greeley correspondence with Erickson," which "all the world has heard of," prompted the "saddest and bitterest controversy on both sides of the ocean," "caused that bloody and distressful war over there in Italy," was "responsible for the battle of Sadowa" and elicited the sympathies of none other than Queen Victoria (482). Making light of both the man's *and* by association, Greeley's, inflated sense of self-importance, Twain then proceeds to detail the essentials of the famed correspondence. Years ago, while living in Kansas territory with a widow and her beloved son William, a youth "religious, amiable, and sincerely attached to agriculture," the man had occasion to write to Greeley. This agriculturally inspired youth, it seemed, was "patiently enriching his mind with information concerning turnips...could not think of the turnip without emotion; he could not speak of it calmly; he could not contemplate it without exaltation. He could not eat it without shedding tears. All the poetry in his sensitive nature was in sympathy with this gracious vegetable" (483). Rather than bringing him health, wealth, and happiness, as Greeley's advice to turn to and till the land would have had one believe, the boy's agricultural mindedness makes him both turnip-mad and magnificently absurd. When the young man cannot make the venerable turnip a "climbing vine," this "canker gnawing at his heart" brings him to death's door. At a loss

for what to do, the demented man thinks to contact Greeley, writing, "I was a stranger to Mr. Greeley but what of that? The matter was urgent. I wrote and begged him to solve the difficult problem if possible and save the student's life" (484).

Greeley's handwritten response to the man is difficult to decipher and "'seemed to refer in part to the boy's case, but chiefly to other and irrelevant matters — such as paving stones, electricity, oysters, and something which I took to be 'absolution' or 'agrarianism,' I could not be certain which'" (483). The pairing of "absolution" and "agrarianism" in the letter, terms that are rationally connected in Greeley's "free men, free labor, free soil" epistemological paradigm become, in the demented logic of Twain's telling, bizarrely conjoined, rubbing elbows with "irrelevancies." The twisting of words and meanings, however, does not stop. Upon a re-reading of the letter, the man believes Greeley has penned, "Polygamy dissembles majesty; extracts redeem polarity; causes hitherto exist. Ovarious pursue wisdom, or warts inherit and condemn. Boston, botany, cakes, felony undertakes, but who shall allay? We fear not" (484). This is the first in a series of nonsensical translations, each of which only minutely, if at all, adds to the comprehensibility of the letter's meaning. Though the letter is legible *as* a letter, its words are "lacking the connection and coherence necessary to make them useful" because they are seemingly dynamic (484). While on the first day, the letter read one way, a day later, "the letter now took this form" and "three days passed by, and [the former minister] read the note again. Again its tenor had changed" (484). Four times, Erickson tries to render the letters rightly and four times he fails, with Twain writing masterful "translations" of Greeley's homespun advice. With each subsequent failure to communicate, the youth falls into increasingly poor health; by the time Greeley's penmanship is pinned/penned down,

the boy is dead, buried with a turnip in each hand, bittersweet tokens of his failed agrarian fantasy. After the reportage of the boys' death, the chapter does not so much end as wander off, with the Twain narrator declaring that after hearing the tale to its bizarre end, "the company broke up and left [the demented storyteller]...but they did not say what drove him crazy" (488).

This is not the first, nor the last mention of Greeley in *Roughing It*. Like the Mormons, Horace Greeley keeps reappearing like a bad penny. Indeed, I would go so far as to argue that the form of *Roughing It* mimics this joke — providing a wealth of ways that the writing of the ever prolific Greeley can be "translated," letting us know, indeed, that this man of the people, man of his word and of words, could and should be thought of differently. Twain's repeated attentions to Greeley act like the "translations" in the story of the turnip; *Roughing It* takes Greeley's book about his trip across the continent from New York to San Francisco, *An Overland Journey* (1859) and re-writes it. In the turnip story, and within other Greeley-focused passages, Twain persistently draws attention away from facts and towards the act of his narration. Twain, moreover, delays and delays the delivery of punch lines well past the point of maximum impact; the joking tales wind up like the reverend Erickson, who ends his narration "lapsed again into nodding, mumbling, and abstraction". The tallness of the Greeley tales — their exaggeration and dislocation, their repetition, translation and transformation of one thing absurdly and unexpectedly into another, and their carefully cultivated and robust relationship with incoherence and nonsense — has important dual effects, defamiliarizing Greeley and diffusing the singular force of his Westward imperative.

The Greeley that appears in this turnip episode, and indeed that appears throughout *Roughing It*, is notable insofar as he does not "appear." In drawing Greeley, Twain insists upon illustrating that Greeley is drawn. Here, Greeley comes to be known through a series of letters, the illegibility of which makes us all too aware of their distance from verbal or first-hand communication, a distance all the more pronounced by Twain's own tendency to write colloquially and to call the reader into his confidence with tossed off asides. These narrative interjections, while serving a "friendly" purpose, also draw attention to Twain's own fictiveness; Mark Twain is likable, but a likable persona.⁹ The distinction is an important one. The absurdist language of Greeley's letter and the attenuated pay-off of the turnip jokes create a measure of alienation while simultaneously abstracting Greeley's persona from the "simple" realism of the journalistic rhetorical mode. Greeley was enormously successful in both the deployment and dissemination of this voice. Beginning in 1831, when he became the editor of the *New Yorker*, Greeley was a constant presence on the editorial pages for the next forty years.¹⁰ The man, who helped to shape contemporary notions of authorship and literary celebrity through his invention of the byline, not surprisingly used his editorial soapbox to present himself as the owner of his words and as a consequence, produce himself as that paradoxical entity, the public individual. Greeley was, according to another biographer, his own "fullest biographer," one who narrated upon the editorial page "day by day and week after week a public story of his personal opinions, encounters, discoveries and political adventures" (Hale 355).

It was not simply what Greeley said that mattered, but also how he went about saying it and where his words traveled. Greeley was exceptionally skillful at getting his

papers, and therefore the version of himself that they represented, out into the world. Taking advantage of the antebellum advents of new transportation and communications technologies — canals, telegraphs, railroads, the "lightning" steam press — Greeley's *Tribune* had a press run of over 300,000 by 1860 and reached an estimated readership of over a million people throughout the U.S. and its territories (Hale 226-227). By contrast, the *Herald* sold 70,000 copies on weekdays and 80,000 on Sundays, the New York *Sun* sold 60,000 daily, the *Times* 35,000, and the *Evening Post* 20,000 (Mott *American Journalism*). Similarly, Greeley used national transportation technologies to distribute the over 15 books and pamphlets he authored, as well as to carry himself on yearly lecture tours. Greeley was so successful at cultivating both his own persona and mass publics that one could call him America's first "national" celebrity, with the nature of his celebrity being non-celebrity, or one might say, familiarity; Greeley was so famous, indeed, that one could jest about his bad penmanship, a personal quirk which was also a public fact (Williams 289).¹¹ A welcomed presence in homes throughout the continent (with the important exception of the South, where *The Tribune* was significantly less popular), Greeley came to be colloquially known as "Uncle Horace." This calling to kinship did not vanish even after Greeley bailed out Jefferson Davis and ran for President (against his own Republican party) on the Democratic ticket. When Greeley died his funeral procession in 1872 drew over fifty thousand mourners from all walks of life, more even than Lincoln's had years before (R. C. Williams xiv).¹²

In his telling of the turnip tale, Twain takes the straightforward familiarity out of Greeley's first-person narration.¹³ The ease and speed with which the Erickson overcomes his reservations about writing to a "stranger" demonstrates what a stranger Greeley was

not; he was, instead, someone so well known, so publically available that he was trusted as both an expert *and* a family member — by many thousands of people. Twain's joke pokes fun at those families who would so quickly and foolishly invite Greeley into their fold; as Groucho Marx famously said, who would want to belong to any club that would have Greeley (or Erickson and the Turnip-boy either) as a member? More importantly, though, Twain's comic recognition of the massive scale of this kinship network, no matter how gentle, unsettles the invisibility of Greeley's "Uncle Horace" pose: it is impossible to be everyone's uncle. Twain, in other words, makes clear the ways that Greeley comes to be known always and only as a *character*, a put-on of family. Making a mockery of the family feeling that people share with Uncle Horace undermines Greeley, who works in the register of authenticity, as well as the expertise voiced through the mouthpiece of this pose. In both the form and content, then, of the turnip joke, Twain undoes Uncle Greeley, who published *What I Know About Farming* in 1871, and the pretensions to agricultural "expertise" he'd only cultivated at the end of his life, and as a gentleman farmer with a number of hands on a small plot in suburban Chappaqua, NY. These pretensions, and the public's trust in the Greeley persona, had sent thousands of white easterners sprawling across the continent, hoping to make their own homesteads.¹⁴ In this context, the urge to write to Greeley reads as a homeopathic remedy. If the youth suffers from Greeley-itis, the sickness of seeking to farm inspired by the *Tribune* editor, perhaps a milder dose of what ails him will cure the fatal fantasy.

The unveiling of Greeley as a character is not simply a sad fact, nor is Erickson's response to the failure of family feeling — stuttering, muttering, abstraction, and incoherence. These are also words, after all, one can use to describe Twain's prose in

Roughing It, the stylistic flourishes that make reading the book both bizarre and amusing. Instead, these are the substance and signs of a "shattered" self, which Twain celebrates and which, I would argue, serve to diffuse the propulsive force, narrative and otherwise, of the famous Greeley imperative, "Go West, young men, and grow up with the country!" For all his nineteenth century fame, Horace Greeley is, for better or worse, best remembered today as the writer who advised young men to "Go West...and grow up with the country." The irony of this, of course, is that the words for which Greeley is best remembered may or may not, in fact, have been written by him. The way that Greeley is insistently credited with this saying, despite his own protestations, provides us an interesting way to read the content of the saying itself. The story of Greeley's authorship takes on a life of its own in much the same way that Manifest Destiny, for which Greeley's comment was the advertising slogan, becomes "manifest." The insistent attribution of authorship to Greeley suggests instead the ways that uncertain realities are transformed into powerful imperatives which emerge unauthored, unlocatable, and fully formed not from any individual but from "the culture" at large and replicate themselves *ad infinitum*. The designation of Greeley as the author of this particular narrative is itself a story without a singular source, a mythology of a supposed fact. The production, replication and dissemination of such mythologies, in particular the mythology of Manifest Destiny purportedly propagated by Greeley, is taken up, peripherally in the turnip joke, but centrally in an episode early-on in *Roughing It*. In this chapter long episode focusing on Greeley, an implicit contrast is drawn between Ericksonian/Twainian discourse and that of Greeley, and this contrast, in turn, uses exposes the narrative of

imperial expansion the *Tribune* editor prophesied and expounded as farce, fantasy and myth.

Early on in *Roughing It*, Twain and his brother Orion journey by stagecoach from their home in Missouri via stagecoach to Nevada. Midway through their journey, their coach driver tells them a "most laughable thing" about Horace Greeley, the route of whose own overland journey of 1859 they were following. The story about how Greeley was roughly handled by his stage driver is amusing enough, at first. As the coach travels, though, a series of four fellow travelers pass into and out of the coach cabin — each insistent upon relating the same story, in practically identical terms. As one wandering, sickly stranger begins to relate the story again, Twain and his brother beseech him to stop, declaring, "that tiresome old anecdote has sapped my strength, undermined my constitution, withered my life. Pity my helplessness. Spare me only just this once, and tell me about young George Washington and his little hatchet for a change" (135). Twain's attempt to exchange one founding clichéd myth of the nation for another, to move, if only incrementally, from one forefather to another, meets with grief, not relief. The words of Greeley's story are so automatic and so powerful that the invalid "in trying to retain the anecdote in his system.... strained himself and died in our arms" (135). Twain then proceeds to enumerate in exhaustive detail his experience with the tale, writing:

after seven years' residence on the Pacific coast, I know that no passenger or driver on the Overland ever corked that anecdote in, when a stranger was by, and survived. Within a period of six years I crossed and recrossed the Sierras between Nevada and California thirteen times by stage and listened to that deathless incident four hundred and eight-one or eighty-two times. I have the list somewhere. Drivers always told it, conductors told it, chance passengers told it, the very Chinamen and vagrant Indians recounted it. I have had the same driver tell it to me two or three times in the same afternoon. It has come to me in all the multitude of tongues that Babel bequeathed to earth, and flavored with whisky, brandy, beer,

cologne, sozodont, tobacco, garlic, onions, grasshoppers—everything that has a fragrance to it through all the long list of things that are gorged or guzzled by the sons of men. I never have smelt any anecdote as often as I have smelt that one; never have smelt an anecdote that smelt so variegated as that one... Bayard Taylor has written about this hoary anecdote, Richardson has published it; so have Jones, Smith, Johnson, Ross Browne and every other correspondence-inditing being that ever set his foot upon the great overland road anywhere between Julesburg and San Francisco; and I have heard that it is in the Talmud. I have seen it in print in nine different foreign languages; I have been told that it is employed in the inquisition in Rome; and I now learn with regret that it is going to be set to music. I do not think such things are right. (135)

As if to emphasize the overdetermination of the Greeley anecdote, Twain's prose catches its pacing, going on and on and on. The Greeley anecdote, like the words attributed to Greeley, is "deathless," moving through the world and the mouths of its peoples but by no means full of life. It is zombie language, spoken and written by thoughtless compulsion. Importantly, Twain links the zombified articulations of the Greeley anecdote to the geography of the west and the occupying movements into and across it. When he follows this boredom barrage with the somewhat nostalgic lament that "stage-coaching on the Overland is no more, and stage-drivers are a race defunct," both having been superseded by the railroad and its workers, a connection between this language, which takes over the bodies and minds, and how the land comes to be possessed is drawn. The Greeley anecdote, much like the Greeley imperative, lays the track for an increasingly corporatized, standardized, and political occupation of the west.

Roughing It's rhetorical strategies, what Lee Clark Mitchell its "heterogeneous quality," "playful self-consciousness" and celebration of "wit and invention" and "contempt for historical truth" must be considered in light of this "tiresome anecdote of Horace Greeley's adventure" and its geopolitical implications (88). While Clark recognizes that *Roughing It* took "narrative delight...in the constant deferral of

expectation, not simply for a recognizable West but for an ostensible narrative pattern," I am arguing that we should draw a firmer argumentative line (88). The linguistic play of *Roughing It* does not simply delight in the deferral of expectation, but uses that deferral to disrupt Greeleyfied expectations not only of what the West should look like, but also what the nation should be as a result — a contiguous landed nation occupying the North American continent. While Mitchell notes Greeley's standardizing impulse to make the west like the east in linguistic terms, he underestimates the on-the-ground implications of this literary impulse. To disrupt language in liberalism, where the ties between landscape and language are so strong, is to reshape how one conceives of the self, the political apparatus and one's surroundings; the language of Greeley and Twain has geopolitical import. Twain is constructing a land ethic in contrast to that of liberalism's Lockean ideal.

Greeley was "the best known exponent of the idea" that the West was a safety valve for New York City's urban poor (Coy 234). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, he was also an advocate for and early employer for a number of standardizing, nationalizing technologies — employing the railroad, steamships, lightning presses to print more papers and to see these papers widely distributed throughout the continent. In this sense, everything Greeley touched turned to anecdote, cliché, and sameness. Greeley even extended his standardizing plan to the shape of cities. Beginning in 1868 and up until his death, Greeley financially backed, planned, and birthed alongside Henry Meeker, the *Tribune's* agricultural editor, a flagship colony for other settlers in Colorado. In his *Recollections of a Busy Life* (1869), Greeley laid out the principles for making a homesteading success of such a colony: he believed first and foremost that "Without a basis of religious sympathy and religious aspiration" any scheme would fail; second, he

envisaged a community built around and in an "edifice which shall yet lodge commodiously and agreeably two thousand persons, giving each the requisite privacy and independence," and third, "agricultural and other labor" would be done "by large bands, rendered picturesque by uniforms, and inspired by music" (158-159). Significantly, Greeley anchored his plans in the progressive belief that because "the combined efforts of many workers make Labor efficient and ennobling, as well as attractive" and "in modern society, all things tend unconsciously toward grand, comprehensive, pervading reforms," such as "the steamboat, the rail- car, the omnibus" (158-159). Greeley's "Union Colony" was organized, in other words, around principles — agricultural industry, piety, association, standardization, and reproducibility — that Greeley encountered and admired in lived form while visiting the Mormons during his overland journey. Mormon cities, both Salt Lake City and Provo, were for Greeley models of "abundance and comfort" by virtue of the way their water was managed through extensive irrigation, how the land was centrally settled and parceled out in "lot[s] of an acre and a quarter" with only "one family to a dwelling" upon these lots, while its people were the most "uniformly industrious and (after their fashion) pious" (*Recollections* 373, *Overland* 235-236). That Greeley would admire these principles and the particular shape they took in Mormon settlement was not surprising. The Mormons, America's first and most efficiently corporate religion, had standardized and were building on a large scale the villages of their and Greeley's reform-minded New England homes. The Mormon success stories that Greeley admired and which his Union Colony emulated were strove for the, as Mormon historian sums up Joseph Smith's plan for the city of Zion, "proliferation of satellite cities in indefinite numbers" that would "fill up the inland stretches of the North

American continent from the Missouri to the Pacific" (Arrington 5). Importantly, though, they were also attempting to imprint an eastern urban planning schema upon a much bigger, much dryer western landscape (Arrington 5).¹⁵ To live otherwise in the west, according to Greeley, to "live in the huts and hovels of isolated society, feebly, ineffectively delving and grubbing through life on the few acres immediately surrounding" made it "impossible...to attain the full stature of perfect manhood" (159). Greeley even declared "I fear this cattle-ranching, with long intervals between the ranches, is destined to half-barbarize many thousands of the next generation, whom schools can scarcely reach, and to whom the sound of the church-going bell' will be a stranger"; while one generation would be able to sustain "mental and moral improvement" because they'd brought their "New England mother[s]" with them, children without this influence would become less "civilized" without "common schools" (298).

If Greeley's language works in lockstep with his designs on the land, so too does Twain's. While Greeley makes and implements designs for a "civilized," eastern-western landscape that is co-terminus with the North American continent, Twain's language works quite differently. Even in his imaginary musings, Twain has trouble placing the disparate parts of the continent in a piece. Early in his journey, for example, Twain describes reaching a spring on top of a mountain summit, "which spent its water through two outlets and sent it in opposite directions," one stream "starting on a journey westward to the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean, through hundreds and even thousands of miles of solitudes," while the other made a "similar journey eastward...between the banks of the Yellowstone...join[ing] the broad Missouri...enter[ing] the Mississippi, touch[ing] the wharves of St. Louis" onto New Orleans and then into the Gulf, "never to

look upon its snow-peaks again or regret them" (81). Looking at the stream Twain writes that he "freighted a leaf with a mental message for friends at home, and dropped it in the stream. But I put no stamp on it and it was held for postage somewhere" (82). Poised between east and west, Twain is unable *and* unwilling to write and disseminate the words that would bring the two together through any traditionally understood notion of geography. Twain, instead, I am arguing, uses his language to disrupt these types of continuities, constructing the "United States" not as one piece of land connected by highways, byways and transportation routes but by confusion and chaos. When Twain reaches the Nevada territory, he is met with "the daily 'Washoe Zephyr,' which is "a soaring dust-drift about the size of the United States" that makes "the capital of the Nevada Territory disappear from view" (139). The zephyr dust, Twain claims, is filled with "things living and dead, that flitted hither and thither...— hats, chickens and parasols sailing in the remote heavens; blankets, tin signs, sage brush and shingles a shade lower; door-mats and buffalo robes lower still; shovels and coal scuttles on the next grade; glass doors, cats and little children on the next; disrupted lumber yards, light buggies and wheelbarrows on the next, and down only thirty or forty feet above ground was a scurrying storm of emigrating roofs and vacant lots" (139). Reading the metaphor in reverse (if the dust cloud looks like the United States, the United States conversely looks like the dust cloud), Mark Twain's America is ambiguously shaped, a bunch of dust and dirt holding within it but not held together by a seemingly random accumulation of capitalizing machines, everyday commodities and detritus. This national configuration, like the dust it resembles, obscures the lines of sight, making people blind to the lived realities within their own capital cities and regional political and economic arenas.

In *Roughing It* rhetorical movement, Twain enacts his own dust storm, producing a disruption of Greeley's nationalizing project, a project that is simultaneously a narrative project. Twain displaces built narrative, linearity and logic with random association, distraction, and humor. Telling the story of the gunslinger Slade earlier in the book, arguably the most dramatic tall tale therein, Twain trails off into dead air, as he writes, "I heard this story from several different people, and they evidently believed what they were saying. It may be true, it may not, 'give a dog a bad name,' etc. " (66). Later on, in one of in a series of somewhat long and tedious chapters about day-to-day mining toils and drudgeries, Twain cuts his story off midstream, declaring, "There were two men— however, this chapter is long enough" (200). Similarly, when speaking of some "murder and jury statistics," Twain begins to speak of an unrelated "very extraordinary trial and execution twenty years ago" (331). Of this rhetorical move, Twain writes, "I would apologize for this digression but....since I digress constantly anyhow, perhaps it is as well to eschew apologies altogether and thus prevent their growing irksome" (331). At another point, Twain narrates his narration, writing:

Somehow, now that it is there, the quotation does not seem to fit—but no matter, let it stay, anyhow. I think it is a graceful and attractive thing, and therefore have tried time and time again to work it in where it would fit, but could not succeed. These efforts have kept my mind distracted and ill at ease, and make my narrative seem broken and disjointed, in places. Under these circumstances it seems to me best to leave it in, as above, since this will afford at least temporary respite from the wear and tear of trying to 'lead up' to this really apt and beautiful quotation. (125)

Like Erickson who simply *must* say what he has to say regardless of relevancy, Twain squashes the quotation he ironically describes as "apt and beautiful" into his story though it does not fit in logically with what precedes and follows it. Importantly, Twain also links narrative continuity, the lack of which the aforementioned examples testify to, with

the possession of a continuous sense of self; the shape of the story is the result of his "distraction," which comes from the Latin *distrāhere*, meaning to draw or pull apart. Twain's turnip joke, then, disrupts the claim that you can know Greeley by suggesting the absurdity of such a familiarity. More than that, though, it makes a charm out of being anti-Greeley, which in this reading is broken, pulled in different directions, both more and less than entirely knowable, distinct, and individual. Contrasting distraction with monotony, Twain revels in the production of a persona, as well as narrative and national structures, that are exceptionally discontinuous, unlike those produced of and by Horace Greeley.¹⁶ And just as his portrait of Erickson's splintered self disrupts the family structure that would produce and shelter him (the boy dies, Erickson ends up a strange(r) exiled to the edges of American empire), so, too, I would contend does Twain's prose emulation of the minister's speaking style. Twain's stylistic stuttering produces the discontinuous self necessary for him to begin to negotiate his way out of the stifling inheritances of not only his own family, but of the liberal family and nation-state envisaged and produced by the Anglo-Scots Enlightenment tradition.

Recognizing that identity is less a matter of essence than of cultural positioning, Twain refuses his first order of filiations in order to ally himself with an ever-changing array of characters, occupations, and places. Over the course of the book Twain is moved, literally and figuratively, to reconstruct his identity and to take on different roles until finding a fitting one. Loaded up with a full trunk, a job as a secretary to his brother, a foundational sibling relationship, and visions of both financial splendor and the shape of the western landscape, Twain jettisons these inheritances in much the same way that he tosses his "swallow-tail coats and white kid gloves ... stove-pipe hats...patent-leather

boots" and the other niceties that "make life calm and peaceful" on to the plains in order to lighten the stage coach and make his journey possible. Instead of a "pleasure trip" to the silver mines of Nevada which had originally been intended to occupy only three months," Twain returns home after "seven years of vicissitudes," not only having traveled across the North American continent, but also over the Pacific Ocean, to the Sandwich Islands and around the isthmus back to New York (541). Beginning his travels as a secretary to his brother in the Nevada territory, Twain abandons this occupation and the association that enjoins it for careers as a silver miner, a silver mill worker, a stock trader, a forester, a newspaperman, and a lecturer. Originally an "emigrant" in a "white shirt" and unable to "swear in the presence of ladies without looking the other way," Twain ends up in "variegated vagabondizing" with the "pioneers...Mormons, half-breeds, teamsters, stage-drivers, Mountain Meadow assassins," and "representative adventurers" from "all the people of the earth" that he once considered unfit company (119). Twain's every expectation for himself and his journey works out differently than originally envisaged.

While some have suggested that this deflation of expectation marks the "transition from innocence to experience" where Mark Twain "the seasoned Westerner...guide[s] Mark Twain the greenhorn through the obstacle course of the most enduring and compelling American myth in which the city slicker is outsmarted by the country bumpkin," *Roughing It*, which cycles through several cycles of boom and bust, seems far too suspicious of the lasting possibility and value of accumulation to be a book about becoming sage (Frank xiii). Indeed, Twain prefaces the book with an advisory to readers looking to soak up insight that, "The more I caulk up the sources, and the tighter I get, the

more I leak wisdom" (xxxix). Meanwhile at *Roughing It*'s end, Twain counsels those "of account" to "stay at home and make your way by faithful diligence; but if you are 'no account' go away from home, and then you will *have* to work, whether you want or not" (541). Though this "moral" seems tie up the loose ends of the narrative, to make staying as palatable as leaving, Twain's announcement that "if the reader thinks he is done, now, and that this book has no moral to it, he is in error" suggests the unexpectedness of any pithy words being able to succinctly sum together or account for what has previously happened — the reader knows better than to expect a moral from such a story. Instead, the failure of expectation does not cede to experience but to the end of the logic of expectation, the logic of reproductive kinship and family, the logic of contract, the logic of a contiguously landed United States. While the journey from youth to experience, the *bildung*, is the "the subject of some of the greatest novels in the language," *Roughing It*, while playing with these terms, is distinctly not a novel. The self-produced in *Roughing It* is so exceptionally discontinuous that contractual life becomes impossible. If one cannot predict what will make a future self happy or unhappy, how can one make a binding commitment on behalf of that older self? While on some level, this is true of all contracts — that's why contracts can be affected by the changed circumstances of the parties involved — the failure of the central contract, that of the homestead and the family to maintain its integrity is particularly pointed in *Roughing It*. Returning to Missouri after his travels, Twain writes, "I found home a dreary place after my long absence; for half the children I had known were now wearing whiskers or waterfalls, and few of the grown people I had been acquainted with remained at their hearthstones prosperous and happy— some of them had wandered to other scenes, some were in jail, and the rest had been

hanged" (541). The promise of home is ruined not by Twain's prejudicially jaundiced view, his experience — indeed, he forgoes a "pleasure journey to Japan" because of a strong and innocent "desire to see [his] home again" — but by home itself. While others had depicted Mormons as "the viper on the hearth" violating the proprieties of prosperous liberal homesteads and disrupting the quietude of the domestic scene, in Twain's telling, there was little work left for them to do in what appears to already be a post-lapsarian world.

¹ In his wonderful essay on *Roughing It* entitled "Verbally Roughing It: The West of Words," Lee Clark Mitchell argues the former, while Amy Kaplan's chapter on Twain's account of the Hawaiian islands and its relationship to its earlier journalistic source material argues the latter (*The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture*).

² Scholars such as Nancy Armstrong, for example, have countered Ian Watt's claim that the economies of liberal individualism produced the novel, arguing instead for the pre-eminence of the novel form in producing modern subjectivity, such that "wherever [novelistic] words are written and read they are, in all likelihood, reproducing the modern individuals in both fiction and fact" (Armstrong 9).

³ Such a reading builds upon recent studies of local color and regional writing (Foote 2001, Lutz 2004). This scholarship has countered and complicated claims that regional and local color writing nostalgically package life "elsewhere" for the consumption of urban literary voyeurs (bringing the periphery into nationalizing lock step with the cosmopolitan centers of the East) and that such writing participates unabashedly in realism's imperialist project (Brodhead 1992, Ammons 1994, Kaplan 1991 & 1998).

⁴ Versions of the Homestead Act had been percolating for decades as ever increasing populations made movements into the west. George Henry Evans, leading a group of western emigrants, successfully advocated for the passage of the Preemption Act of 1841, which allowed squatters on public land "the preference of buying that land at the established minimum price to the exclusion of all other persons" (Robbins 18-41). In the two decades that followed, political factions -- western emigrants, subsistence farmers, the urban working poor, and eastern labor interests, who were organizing against the consolidated power of manufacturers, would coalesce their interests around the issue of land reform. By 1848, Martin Van Buren, running for President as a Free Soiler, earned enough votes (291,263 total) -- from former members of the Liberty Party, as well as from anti-Slavery Democrats -- to "spoil" the contest between the major party candidates, Zachary Taylor and Lewis Cass.

⁵ In *The Open*, Agamben writes of the remains that "It is not impossible . . . that in attributing an animal head to the remnant of Israel [i.e., those who are remaining, the righteous who remain alive during the time of the Messiah's coming], the artist of the manuscript in the Ambrosian intended to suggest that on the last day, the relations between animals and men will take on a new form, and that man himself will be reconciled with his animal nature" (*The Open: Man and Animal* 3). Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (1982).

⁶ See Agamben *The Open*, for a discussion of the "anthropological machine" and the separation of the zoe and the bios, the distinction between human and animal that determines what it means to be human.

⁷ For work examining this body of popular literature, see Terryl Givens *The Viper on the Hearth* (1997), Nancy Bentley "Marriage as Treason" (2002), Sarah Gordon *The Mormon Question* (2002) and Bruce Burgett "On the Mormon Question" (2005).

⁸ In this, Twain echoes the Mormons who, as reported in Richard F. Burton's 1862 expose, *The City of the Saints*, "point triumphantly to the austere morals of their community, their superior freedom from maladive influences, and the absence of that uncleanness and licentiousness which distinguish the cities of the civilized world" (428).

⁹ The similarities between Greeley and Twain are illuminating. Greeley, a local newspaperman turned national star through the trade in his familiar persona, seems, in many ways, a model for the way Samuel Clemens chose to deploy the machinery of national publicity to become Mark Twain.

¹⁰ More than simply a presence on the editorial page, Greeley was also famous for reading and approving every word of content that was published in his papers.

¹¹ Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) remains a useful resource for thinking about how expansive print cultures enable the imagination of political communities.

¹² Greeley took the trip across the continent that he would document in *An Overland Journey* in part to advocate for the construction of a government-financed transcontinental railroad.

¹³ In April of 1871, Greeley sent Twain a copy of *What I Know of Farming*, a compilation of the columns he'd written throughout 1870. Twain responded, "If you will really betake yourself to farming, or even to telling what you know about it rather than what you *don't* know about mine, I will not only refrain from disparaging criticism, but will give you my blessing" (Twain to Greeley, May 7, 1871, Mark Twain Papers, UCB qtd. in Williams 289).

¹⁴ The strength of the public's belief in Greeley is evident in this anecdote of the editor's travels in Colorado. While visiting Gregory's Diggings, Greeley saw gold. When the *Rocky Mountain News* printed Greeley's report, thousands of eastbound immigrants, returning home after failing to find gold, headed back to the Colorado gold fields (Cross 29).

¹⁵ See Joseph Smith's "An Explanation of the Plat of the City of Zion" (1833) for a description of the shape Mormon cities were to take ("An Explanation of the Plat of the City of Zion").

¹⁶ While describing the climate of California, Twain theorizes about distraction and monotony, writing that "no land with an unvarying climate can be very beautiful. The tropics are not, for all the sentiment wasted on them. They seem beautiful at first, but sameness impairs the charm by and by. *Change* is the handmaiden Nature requires to do her miracles with. The land that has four well-defined season, cannot lack beauty or pall with monotony" (392).

CHAPTER III

FACING THE FACTS: RACIAL REALISMS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMPIRE IN GRIGGS'S *IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO*

I. Introduction: Problem Novels, Novel Problems

Sutton E. Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) follows the lives and fortunes of two young black men: one dark-skinned and poor, the other, lighter-skinned and wealthy, both born during slavery, raised as freemen, living out their adulthoods during Reconstruction and its aftermaths in the American South, and tentatively forging an independent African American nation outside of the United States. Like all summaries, this is a simplification. The intricacy, oddity and occasional absurdity of *Imperium*'s plot, however, requires a series of unusually strong-handed elisions in order to make it cohere narratively in short form. Griggs puts his characters (and his readers) through their paces, orchestrating a series of seemingly random, neck-spinning plot twists and stitching together a number of discordant genres. Recently retrieved from the canonical dustbin, the novel has generated a number of competing critical interpretations.¹

While there is much contention amongst critics about the novel's meanings, there are two truths that seemingly all observe: *Imperium in Imperio* is political and, critics are sorry to say, not very good. The novel is so "bad," in fact, that critics have repeatedly attempted to read it not simply as atypically novelistic but as if it were non-fictional entirely.² This reading of *Imperium in Imperio* as the near-factual work of a political

polemicist emerges from two critical traditions—what I term the school of "critical realism" founded by William Dean Howells and an anti-sentimentalist strain of African American political and literary thought. Both strains of criticism, for different reasons, define politics *as* a mastery of a realistic aesthetic. Both, too, define realism as antithetical to sentimental aesthetics. These culturally dominant definitions have, I argue, caused critics to misread the novel, whose plotting revolves around "actual" politics (one of its main characters becomes a U.S. Senator), and its anti-sentimental representational strategies as and according to the norms of Howellsian realism.¹ Either critics elide the portions of the text that are strange and fantastical — what Fannie Coleman calls its “melodramatic tendencies,” “the absence of any real interiority or psychological complexity” in its characters, and the "implausible coincidences" of its plotting — to redeem the novel according to the standards of Howellsian realism and render it political and useful, or they suggest that it is such an aesthetic failure that it is not a novel at all, but instead something realer than realism, a "record of a Negro's extreme vulnerability during that time" and "worthy as history" (35; Verdelle xi-xii).

In this essay, I argue, by contrast, that Griggs's novel is political in proportion to the extent to which it is *not* realistic. While the scholarship has been right to recognize *Imperium's* ambivalent, sometimes even antagonistic, relationship with the culture of sentiment, the novel, I contend, is more thoroughly engaged in problematizing Howellsian realism, which was increasingly being defined as the aesthetic mode for

serious politics.² Howellsian realism, I argue, did constitute a serious politics, but it is not entirely the politics of a democratic "critical realism" espoused by Howells and his successors.³ Instead, Howellsian realism elaborated, through an investment in the logic of progressive, scientific development and its claims that only a racially tiered representational schema could be true-to-life, an agenda of segregation at home and abroad. Critically seen as merely a record of suffering, I argue instead that *Imperium in Imperio* confuses the aesthetic conventions of mainstreamed Howellsian realism and the political agenda of Jim Crow it helped to authorize. In addition to disrupting Howellsian realism and the narratives that underwrote Southern-neo-nationalist attempts to retool Reconstruction strategies for overseas colonization, the novel suggests the ways that education can function as a form of indoctrination into the real, and radically re-narrates the technologies that made overseas expansion realistically plausible.

II. Racial Realisms and Reconstruction

As Sutton Griggs was writing, publishing and selling *Imperium in Imperio*, two mutually imbricated forms of realism were becoming culturally hegemonic within the United States: Howellsian realism and the Spencerian racial realism that had "re-won the South," a.k.a. Jim Crow. First, let us consider Jim Crow's racial realism, which was not simply becoming hegemonic at home, but also threatened to become a national policy of the United States: having "liberated" the peoples of the former Spanish colonies during the Spanish-American War in 1898, the U.S. was faced, and represented itself as faced, with the question of "what to do with the emancipated" that it had grappled with at the end of the Civil War. In this moment, theories of Spencerian racial development and progress, which both created conceptual parallels between African Americans and the

non-white peoples of the lands momentarily held in political limbo *and* re-narrated Reconstruction (and Native American "assimilation") as fool's errand, created a very narrow range of imaginative possibilities for the treatment of the new territories and those living within them. On one side, people argued that the U.S. should remain a republic, within its contiguous land mass, while on the other, people maintained that the U.S. should become an empire, creating a permanent militarized, colonial government, ruled by racial caste. In both cases, the re-narrated experience of Reconstruction made the incorporation of the new territories into the U.S. through the extension of citizenship and suffrage to the peoples there imaginatively off-limits, *unrealistic*, to white elites both North and South.

The Spanish-American War, in other words, made visible and more viable theories of Spencerian racial development and Progressive systems of racial policing that had been promulgated for years. These forms of racial realism had effectively killed Reconstruction-era reforms aimed at securing African American claims to citizenship. The twisted logic of racial realism's undoing of Reconstruction is fairly involved and here I will take some time to clarify it. The key features of the scientific racial realism that was becoming dominant in the postbellum era were: 1) a belief in the inherent/inherited inferiority of non-white peoples 2) a belief in a Darwinist universe that positioned non-white peoples as primitive and white peoples as more advanced on the evolutionary continuum of civilization 3) a belief, in turn, that non-white peoples can *eventually* progress into full civilization and humanity, but that this process is largely out of the hands of human beings, i.e., attempts to "prepare" non-whites for full participation in a multi-racial democracy are unrealistic and 4) finally, non-white peoples, akin to animals

and children, should be disciplined and educated not for universal suffrage, but to fulfill their role in a *realistic* hierarchy of races.

The bedrock upon which the racial realism of Jim Crow was built was an emerging consensus that the world was scientifically ruled by an evolutionary order. This had two primary effects, the first of which was that social and political phenomena were increasingly read as facts of this loosely biological order. In the writing of Goldwin Smith, we can see how this disciplinary cross-pollination worked. In 1879, the Canadian historian took up the question, "Is Universal Suffrage a Failure?" In answer, Smith replied, "That universal suffrage, in the strict and literal sense of the term, has failed in some respects and produced serious evils assuredly is not to be denied" (74).

Furthermore, Smith declared universal suffrage a failure because some, such as those "who cannot read," are "manifestly disqualified for political life" (74). Because an illiterate man "cannot possibly inform [himself] about the questions about which [he has] to vote...he not only has no right to the suffrage, he has a sacred right to be exempted from it, as a blind man has to be exempted from a public duty requiring eyesight" (74). Therefore, Smith continued, "An education test or a security for education of some kind is an indispensable safeguard of universal suffrage" (74). Smith conflates reading and thinking; just because you have not been taught to read does not mean you are incapable of making a democratic decision. Smith goes beyond the boilerplate assertion that linked being able to read with having the self-possession to vote by suggesting that the inability to read is akin to being a blind man. In his metaphor, Smith treats the acquired (or here, unacquired) characteristic, as an inherent disability. Employing a circular logic, Smith uses this metaphoric connection as a confirmation of his first conclusion that some are

innately irredeemable to the suffrage. His paradoxical, paternalistic conclusion is that the key to preserving universal suffrage is making it non-universal, or rather, making some people not part of the universal human. Such nimble thinking allowed Smith to advocate for universal suffrage while ensuring that its possibilities went unrealized until such a time as the blind could see.

In his essay, "Is the Reformer any more needed?" (1878), George W. Julian, Indiana's Radical Republican Congressman, demonstrated his frustration at just this practice of evolution-inflected thinking being used to legitimate a politics of infinite regress, what became by century's end the signature of a progressive politics. Arguing against Spencer's theories of social evolution, Julian wrote:

Spencer proves from the highest critical and historical authority ...the principle that social development, while it may be hindered or deranged, cannot be artificially bettered. Mr. Spencer says this doctrine is calculated to have a steadying effect on thought and action. It cannot fail to produce a paralyzing effect. He ... asks, If large advances in human welfare can come only in the slow process of things, which will inevitably bring them, why should we trouble ourselves? This staggering question he answers by saying that on visionary hopes, rational criticisms have a depressing influence...According to this doctrine the reformer is not simply a fanatic, but a social nuisance. (Julian 241-242)

Spencerian logics, according to Julian, simultaneously suggest that progress and development occur, but that any attempts to speed them along actually *hinder* the workings of what is essentially a natural machine, whose mechanisms we only vaguely understand. Importantly, in constructing his counter-argument, Julian provides a primer for understanding the shifting language with which people were reshaping postbellum discourses about the power and limitations of politics *and* aesthetics. Those opposed to Julian's Radical Reconstruction have successfully change the charge of "radical" from positive to negative by rejecting quotidian politics as utopian; theirs is an evolutionary,

not revolutionary, time frame for human events. Time, they argued, not human action, would take care of the "problem of Negro suffrage." This Spencerian recasting, in turn, grants the imprimatur of reason and realism—"it is true"—to a politics of aggravated complacency and allowed those who practiced them to claim such politics as scientific, i.e., non-political. While citizenship had since Jackson been demonstrated by public participation in the political process, this negative representation of participatory democracy insisted that citizenship was defined by one's behavior in a "newly depoliticized civil society—the family, the church, the workplace, the school, the press" (Cohen 57).

While Julian speaks abstractly about how "realism" moves politics out of the realm of communal action, on a practical level, Spencerian scientific realism became a way of blaming the intransigence and violence of whites on black people and of justifying the reassertion of white supremacy as U.S. governmental policy at home and abroad. Since slavery's end, Southern whites had been seeking a way to wrest control of Southern legislatures out of the hands of the newly enfranchised freedmen, but were largely impeded by Reconstructionist intervention of the Federal government. In 1875, Southern legislatures and the Democratic party found the means to limit the power of the new voters without repealing universal suffrage and provoking a prolonged Northern military presence in their states: The Mississippi Plan. The Mississippi Plan enacted the reconceptualized "universal," using violence, poll tests, and property requirements to drastically curtail the democratic participation of black voters.⁴ When the Federal government refused to intervene on behalf of the Freedmen, Southern state governments

employed the strategy set forth in Mississippi to disfranchise their black populations and to legally re-institute a two-tiered racial state, their own self-ruled *Imperium*.

Read through the prism of our moment's politics, the destruction of Reconstruction is often considered to be nostalgic and backwards. In Daniel H. Chamberlain's 1901 essay, "Reconstruction in South Carolina," by contrast, the apartheid state is characterized as rational, forward thinking and modern. Writing of the racial resentment of white Confederates in the state and how they hindered Reconstruction, he contends that:

Such abnegation of lifelong sentiments and prejudices, such absolute reversal of themselves, as such a line of conduct required, was possible; but decent statesmanship does not build on possibilities, the question should have been, not, Is such conduct on the part of whites possible? but Is it to be expected? No man can say less than that it was to the last degree improbable... it is now plain to all that Reconstruction under the acts of 1867 was, at any rate, a frightful experiment, which never could have given a real statesman who knew or learned the facts, the smallest hope of success. (474-475)

Chamberlain was not a political outlier but a Republican governor of South Carolina who was forced out of office by electoral malfeasance and the withdrawal of Federal troops in 1877. In his prose, Chamberlain performs an extraordinary (yet typical) exculpatory argument on behalf of his former adversaries, confusing a refusal to change with a "natural" inability to do so. This imaginative maneuver, in turn, transforms sentiments of the past, those things that linger, into present day facts. In recognizing these facts (facts, albeit, of their own creation), the ex-Confederates become pragmatic problem solvers and statesmen, the ones not experimenting with the future, but planning for it.

In his retelling of Reconstruction, Woodrow Wilson amplified this assertion about the avant-gardeness of Southern efforts to govern by racial caste. In his 1901 essay in *The*

Atlantic Monthly, Wilson argued that Reconstruction had failed because "[Federal] officials...had [put] away from the outset all ideas of accommodation, and preferr[ed] the interest of their wards to that of peaceable, wholesome, and healing progress" (6). Here, Wilson links political progress to an ability to recognize the facts of Spencerian racial progress or lack thereof. The Freedmen's Bureau is retrograde because it acts as if its "wards" can become "freedmen," can, in other words, progress beyond the scope of their racial status through political intervention. The freedmen were, Wilson continues:

a vast 'laboring, landless, homeless class,' ... unpracticed in liberty, unschooled in self-control; never sobered by the discipline of self-support, never established in any habit of prudence; excited by a freedom they did not understand, exalted by false hopes; bewildered and without leaders, and yet insolent and aggressive; sick of work, covetous of pleasure, — a host of dusky children, untimely let out of school...they were a danger to themselves as well as to those whom they had once served. (6)

During Reconstruction, these children, "were exalted; the states were misgoverned and looted in their name, and a few men, not of their number, not really of their interest, went away with their gains...when at last the whites who were real citizens got control again. But that dark chapter of history is no part of our present story" (11). In Wilson's description, "real citizen"-ship is defined by the adult recognition that democracy requires the reduction of the "demos" through white control. The Mississippi Plans enacted throughout the south after 1875 become in Wilson's history, forms of benevolent paternalism, while all other efforts taken up on behalf of the Freedmen are rewritten as the workings of demagogues and swindlers. The Mississippi plan, in addition to being marked as real, mature, and pragmatically necessary is characterized by Wilson as progress; the past was anarchy, while modernity, the present tense, means the establishment of a firmly entrenched racial hierarchy, one supported by a progressive,

professional bureaucracy. Furthermore, Wilson suggests that the white race is ahead of its time, while the "untimely" freedmen developmentally lag behind: they are mere children in the maturation process of civilization.

Wilson's characterization of the Freedmen as "dusky children, untimely let out of school" points us towards one of the major sites where realistic racial hierarchies were re-entrenched and a modern democratic citizenry was built after Reconstruction: the schoolhouse. As soon as they were emancipated, Freedmen and women, who had illicitly educated themselves during slavery, began establishing schools and campaigning to secure free, universal, public education—centered upon a New England common school curriculum—throughout the South. Given the difficulty of securing property, literacy and education were enormously valuable ways that the Freedmen could demonstrate their self-possession and rational self-governance, as well as minimally protect themselves in the negotiation of their mandatory free labor contracts.⁵ Their efforts were so successful that "by 1870, every southern state had specific provisions in its constitution to assure a public school system financed by a state fund" (J. D. Anderson 19). The success of this schooling campaign ensured that even the loss of political control of Southern legislatures to white rule could not entirely undo this work. Just as Southern whites could not Constitutionally abandon "universal suffrage" but were forced to redefine its terms, efforts to end black schooling were met with the threat of political upheaval and the withdrawal of labor and it became necessary to redefine education. While Southern blacks continued the struggle for the New England common school curriculum, a loose conglomeration of Southern planters, and Northern and Southern industrialists worked to

restructure the black educational model in a way that advanced their economic, social, and political interests and consolidated white hegemony.⁶

The model they chose was an industrialist educational model that had at its core the same progressive developmental logic that undergirded the Mississippi Plan and worked in parallel with it to ensure the political, social and economic subjugation of non-white peoples. This Hampton educational model posited that under the benevolent tutelage of white civilization, black laborers might, at some future, undetermined time, be ready for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In his inaugural address, James Garfield perfectly enunciated how this developmental lag was supposed to work, stating, "It is the high privilege and sacred duty of those now living to educate their successors [the Freedmen] and fit them by intelligence and virtue for the inheritance that awaits them" (Garfield). Here, Garfield suggests that African Americans must be educated for a future citizenship, an inheritance that *may* be given to them by those already in the know; the Freedmen are never quite ready *for the rights they already possess* by virtue of the Fifteenth Amendment. By articulating the situation thusly, Garfield delegitimizes political action taken up by the Freedmen as an unlicensed liberty and a mark of immaturity, postponing an achieved black citizenship. Similarly, Southern politicians, educational philanthropists and white industrialists restructured Southern schooling in such a way that Southern blacks were taught simultaneously the virtues of democracy *and* their unfitness for participation in it. These "reformers" deemed an education in the liberal arts or New England common school tradition, the education that a generation earlier sufficiently prepared free men for the duties of political participation, wasted upon

this race of perpetual children. Instead, they argued, Southern blacks should be given an industrial education, where freedom would be carefully meted out in low doses.⁷

The industrial educational model attempted to produce a realistic understanding of racial citizenship, where "free labor" translated into freedom within limits and labor constituted the whole of one's political practice. This form of racial citizenship also entailed with it the production of racial geographies. On a micro-level, a Hampton education intended to produce a managerial class wed to their own position relative to the white race and the masses; both groups were to route their political aspirations and patriotic feelings towards the postponed promises of liberty and an internalization of white supremacy. On a macro-level, the realist imperative to "stay in one's place" espoused by this educational apparatus worked to make the categories black and southern co-extensive. In his essay, "On the Negro," published in *The Atlantic*, Booker T. Washington, Hampton acolyte and founder of the Tuskegee Institute, emphasized just this:

In the future, we want to impress upon the Negro, more than we have done in the past, the importance of identifying himself more closely with the interests of the South; of making himself part of the South, and at home in it. Heretofore, for reasons which were natural, and for which no one is especially to blame, the colored people have been too much like a foreign nation residing in the midst of another nation. (580)

Washington hoped to tether the affections and allegiances of blacks to the South, while little remedying injustice. Legal proscriptions were insufficient to keep black workers in the South: an intellectual and emotional apparatus had to be constructed. Taken to its logical end, this identification of African Americans with the South would translate into a naturalized "realistic" autochthony, wherein African Americans belonged in and to the soil of the South.⁸

When confronted with a choice about how to proceed with the territories annexed during the Spanish-American War, some Americans used Reconstruction era theories of racial realism as a guide to and justification of the colonial experiment. Declaring the peoples of the formerly Spanish territories unfit for self-government and inassimilable to American democracy, they avowed it the duty of a fully matured U.S. to assume responsibility for governance of the ostensibly juvenile. Richard Olney, for example, wrote, "The international policy suited to our infancy and our weakness was unworthy of our maturity and our strength" (Olney 290). Taking up the white man's burden would mark an advance in the developmental process of the white race in America. This "step" in the name of civilization was also duly characterized as necessary and realistic; to think otherwise was painted as fanciful and foolish. In his lengthy speech to the U.S. Senate, Henry Cabot Lodge made the case for empire thusly:

The policy we offer...is simple and straightforward. We believe in the frank acceptance of existing facts, and in dealing with them as they are and not on a theory of what they might or ought to be. We accept the fact that the Philippine Islands are ours to-day and that we are responsible for them before the world. The next fact is that there is a war in those islands...Our immediate duty...is to suppress this disorder, put an end to fighting, and restore peace and order... ("The Retention of the Philippine Islands: Speech of Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge in the Senate of the United States" 6-7)

Declaring that a "frank acceptance" of the situation demands a "simple" solution, Lodge argued that pragmatism demanded an empire in order that "peace and order" and rational governance be "restored," via another colonial ruler, to a Philippines implicitly "degenerated" by virtue of its war for independence. Importantly, Lodge also justifies the creation of an *imperium in imperio* by virtue of the Supreme Court ruling in the Cherokee case, stating that, "Personally I have no doubt that our Constitution gives full right and

authority to hold and govern the Philippines without making them either economically or politically part of our system...When...John Marshall...declared in the Cherokee case that the United States could have under its control... 'a domestic and dependent nation,' I think he solved the question of our constitutional relations to the Philippines." Regional race relations, developed in the South and West, were to be transformed into international policy.

The Spanish-American War did not merely threaten to extend existing regional racial policies internationally, though, but helped to solidify and sustain them *within* national borders; the possibility of their foreign use, in effect, marked the success of Spencerian scientific racism and legitimated practices of racial citizenship in the U.S.⁹ In the arguments both for and against imperialism, Southern segregationists recognized an underlying logic of black inassimilability and used it in arguments for the perpetuation of Southern "self-rule." In his chapter of *Republic or Empire?*, for example, Senator John McLaurin of South Carolina wrote, "It is indeed comforting to hear some of those who in the past criticized us, now that the question is brought home, completely justify our methods in providing a scheme of colonial government (Maurin qtd. in Bryan 579). The treatment of "races so nearly akin to the negro" abroad clearly did not go unnoticed by Southern whites, who saw in it the vindication of their implementation of the Mississippi plan and other modes of white supremacy. Far from being a regional smear on the national reputation, Jim Crow was enshrined as U.S. foreign policy.

III. The Aesthetic Turn

Not simply functioning in the political realm, this progressive realism was also asserting its dominance in the realm of the aesthetic, where its great champion was

William Dean Howells. As an editor at *The Atlantic* and *Harper's*, Howells "curated" the postbellum publication of many of the essays that would explicitly give shape to the nation's political policies, placing them alongside similarly agenda-laden pieces of "realistic" fiction. Transmuting and reproducing the values of his political moment, William Dean Howells and his *Atlantic* school undertook in earnest the project of creating an authentically "American" literature. Rather than a project of creating a literature from whole cloth, theirs was one of generic distinction; in order for the "new" American literature to emerge, the claims to power and prestige made by the "old" American literature, sentimentalism, had to be rejected. Writing from his "Editor's Study," Howells crystallized a critique of the "sentimental" that had been taking shape for decades and which permeates the political and literary writing of the period. Effeminate, silly, utopian, idealistic, and politically ineffectual, sentimentalism was positioned as the constitutive other of the new American literature. The new American literature, by contrast, was masculine, serious, discerning, pragmatic, truthful, and politically powerful; the new American literature was *realism*.

Amplifying and clarifying this generic distinction between realism and sentimentalism, Howells focused his attention upon the political dimension of realistic representation. Throughout his writings, Howells insisted that the representation of social life "as it is," what he called "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material," was a more powerful form of political critique than that offered by sentimental portraits of life "as it should be." Writing from his "Editor's Study," Howells delineated the character of the realist:

he finds nothing insignificant; all tells for destiny and character...He cannot look upon human life and declare this thing or that thing unworthy

of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry. He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men.... In criticism it is his business to break the images of false gods and misshapen heroes, to take away the poor silly, toys. (973)

The fact that the realistic novelist "finds nothing insignificant," that he represents or claims to represent with verisimilitude all the classes and kinds that compose American social life, in other words that their representation is "democratic," is likened to an *actualized* democratic representation; this, in turn, enables one to *maturely* "feel" the "equality of things and the unity of men," and smashes the images of "false gods and misshapen heroes." Realists are men far advanced within the teleology of progressive, racial civilizations.

Elsewhere, Howells underscores the connections between realism, democratic representation/democratic politics, and progressive racialism arguing that "Democracy in literature...wishes to know and to tell the truth...it does not care to paint the marvelous and impossible for the vulgar many, or to sentimentalize and falsify the actual for the vulgar few. Men are more like than unlike one another: let us make them know one another better, that they may be all humbled and strengthened with a sense of their fraternity" (*Criticism and Fiction* 187-188). Again, knowing and telling the truth serves *as* democracy in action; the knowledge that a man is a member of the human community humbles and strengthens. The representation of differences serves to highlight the larger commonality of men. It does not, however, seek to remedy how men are unlike one another: there is not inequality of rights, responsibilities, or opportunities, but only differences. Moreover, realistic representation calls for the endless repetition of

“unequal” representations; to imagine a world in another way within this aesthetic epistemology is both “marvelous” and more damningly, “impossible.”

For African American writers, this realistic injunction was particularly troubling. In his review of Paul Laurence Dunbar’s *Majors and Minors*, a collection of poems written in standard American English (the Majors) and in dialect (the Minors), Howells makes it clear what exactly the truth of racial representation might be:

When Mr. Dunbar writes literary English he is least himself...it is when we come to Mr. Dunbar’s minors that we feel ourselves in the presence of a man with the direct and fresh authority to do the kind of thing he is doing...he is, so far as I know, the first man of his race to study his race objectively, to analyze it to himself, and to represent it in art as he felt it and found it to be; to represent it humorously, yet tenderly, and above all, so faithfully that we know the portrait to be undeniably like. A race which has reached this effect in any of its members can no longer be held wholly uncivilized...I have sometimes fancied that perhaps the negroes *thought* black and *felt* black...here, in the artistic effect, at least is white thinking and white feeling in a black man (“Life and Letters” 630).

Howells, who spends the first part of his review fetishizing the “strongly accented” “race traits” of Dunbar’s face, places a premium upon those elements of Dunbar’s poetry that supposedly replicate his racial character. The dialect poetry is produced with “direct and fresh authority,” when Dunbar is “most himself,” i.e. defined according to Howells’s understanding of race. By virtue of his blackness, Dunbar is able to go straight to the source, or as Howells would claim in a later introduction to the volume, “several people might have written [the Majors] I but I do not know any one else at present who could quite have written the dialect pieces. These are divinations and reports of what passes in the hearts and minds of a lowly people” (“Introduction” xix). Dunbar’s race alone provides him with insider access that permits him to “divine” the secret language of “the lowly.”

To be realistic and authentic, then, depends upon a pseudo-scientific/quasi-religious representation of what are purportedly essential racial truths; one must “analyze” and represent “objectively” the truth — the humor and tenderness — of life under the color line. Howells’s insistence upon realism depicting the tender humor of African American life, rather than the contentiousness of contemporary racial co-existence, suggests the way that progressive realism depends upon a fixed view of racial relations.¹⁰ Realism according to Howells’s standard requires a representational adherence not necessarily to reality but to a racial reality produced by plantation romances (and minstrelsy) and populated by funny, ignorant, kindly, forgiving, former slaves nostalgic for life on the antebellum plantation: the “dusky children” of Wilson’s imagination.¹¹ In achieving this truth and presumably accepting the racial scientism of uneven racial development, of black “lowliness,” Dunbar demonstrates his “white thinking” and “white feeling”; Dunbar’s channeled “blackness” paradoxically makes him “white,” meaning modern and civilized. In his introduction to the volume, Howells suggests how this acceptance is inextricably linked to its perpetuation. Here, he writes: “there is a precious difference of temperament between the races which it would be a great pity ever to lose, and that this is best preserved and most charmingly suggested by Mr. Dunbar in those pieces of his where he studies the moods and traits of his race in its own accent of our English” (“Introduction” xvii-xviii)(“Introduction” xvii-xviii). Howells suggests that the creation of realistic dialect pieces that are “undeniably like” (where we can read “undeniably like” as undeniably like the real, or more pointedly, as “undeniably like,” undeniably likeness itself, as representation, really fake) “preserves” existing differences. These differences are not simply differences but a racial hierarchy.

Howellsian realism insists that the distinction between “our English” and “theirs” is not value-neutral: dialect is, according to Howells, nothing but “delightful personal attempts and failures for the written and spoken language” (“Introduction” xviii). Some people own the right language, while the language of others is only a failed attempt to emulate the standard.

Realism, then, is not simply a look at the world as it is, but a prescription for how the world should be. Aesthetic realism attempts to make a world of racial caste and class inequality *seem* real, rational, and self-evident, justifies the racist progressive teleology as modern and democratic while substituting feelings of human unity and fraternity in difference for the redress of political grievance, deeming efforts otherwise to be, paradoxically, all too sentimental, misguided and of the past.¹² The realistic aesthetic was, then, both valued and attempted to produce an affect of politicized resignation, what has subsequently been called “critical realism” and championed as such.

IV. Re-inventing Realism and Constructing a Not-So-Same-Old New South

Working from within this perspective, critics have all too often cast-off or re-narrated a number of obvious inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies to produce a reading of the Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* as striving towards a standardized realism. While Griggs's text is interested in authentication, history, and forms of verisimilitude, its interest should not be misread as an *investment in*; what we see when we look at the thickly plotted novel is a patent *lack* of interest in or ability to write in the realistic mode of either racial caricature (dialect or racial caricature) or “white” psychological realism. *Imperium* is not “bad” fiction because of an overreliance upon representations of the world “as is,” a happily functioning two-tiered system of racial hierarchy. Rather, the

cohesion of *Imperium's* fictiveness is done in by none other than the claims it makes upon fictiveness. The novel's literariness demands the performance of imaginative leaps and exaggerated suspensions of disbelief from its readers in order for it to assume the shape of something resembling "sense." *Imperium in Imperio's* representational mode is far from that produced in Richard Chase's definition of standard realism in its Howellsian, culturally hegemonic form: according to Chase, realism renders "characters in their real complexity of temperament and motive; they are in explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past." The novel, importantly, also resists a realistic mode of "scientific fact."¹³

Rather than reading Griggs's aesthetic efforts as failed realism, I read them as a challenging the very aesthetic terms of realism and as a consequence, the political agenda built upon such premises. First and foremost, *Imperium in Imperio* refuses an imperative of Howellsian progressive realism in its use of black dialect. As previously discussed, Howellsian inflected realism employed dialect as the means with which to render fiction "true-to-life." The "failure" of people of color to speak "proper English" reinforced characterizations of black childishness and buffoonery that were central to the minstrel stereotype that ensured representational authenticity. *Imperium* begins with a speech from the mother of Belton Piedmont, one of two young men whose anti-*bildung* shapes the novel. Mrs. Hannah Piedmont is a former slave, eager to have her son go to school, and the novel starts with her cajoling her son, "'Cum er long hunny an' let yer mammy fix yer 'spectabul, so yer ken go to skule. Yer mammy is 'tarmined ter gib yer all de book larning dar is ter be had eben ef she has ter lib on red an' herrin's, an' die en de a'ms

house” (7). Griggs follows up this speech with a passage of melodramatic didactic exposition:

These words came from the lips of a poor, ignorant negro woman, and yet determined the course of action which they reveal vitally affected the destiny of a nation and saved the sun of the Nineteenth Century, proud and glorious, from passing through, near its setting, the blackest and thickest and ugliest of clouds of all its journey; saved it from ending the most brilliant of brilliant careers by setting, with a shudder of horror, in a sea of blood. Those who doubt that such power could emanate from such weakness; or, to change the figure, that such a tiny start could have dimensions greater than those of the earth, may have every vestige of doubt removed by a perusal of this simple narrative” (7).

Griggs’s third-person omniscient narration (an omniscience that his narration foregoes elsewhere in the novel) serves a couple of purposes. First and foremost, both the style and content of the speech serve to contain the dangerous dialect to a distinct time and person: it is the speech of a particular, “Negro woman,” that works in this way not because it represents authentic, eternal blackness, but because she is “ignorant.” That this ignorance can and will be remedied by education is made clear in the content of the book’s opening—she’s cajoling her son into heading to school—and the “standardized” speech of the narrator which her son will, as the book proceeds, also speak. Facility with standard English is something one acquires or can acquire. Importantly, the speech of Mrs. Piedmont demonstrates that, “despite” her dialect, she is possessed of intelligence and foresight; she is eager to have her son go to school, countering narratives about the willed ignorance of the recently emancipated. Because of this, the line between “standard” and Mrs. Piedmont seems to be a function of “book larning” rather than intelligence. Indeed, Mrs. Piedmont’s succinct and imaginatively functional speech compares well with the bloated but “correct” constructions of the narrative that deems her “ignorant” (it is interesting to note that when the first chapter shifts from this style, Mrs.

Piedmont is addressed as a “colored woman,” indicating the ways that her ignorance might be a function of this type of narration, rather than intrinsic to her)(8). Shortly after Belton Piedmont’s mother urges him to school, the novel shows her getting him dressed for his first day of class. Belton's mother constructs his attire out of remnants she is able to scrounge up. Belton's pants have one leg each from two distinct pairs of pants discarded by the son of his mother's white employer, while:

his coat was literally a conglomeration of patches of varying sizes and colors. If you attempted to describe the coat by calling it by the name of the color that you thought predominated, at least a half dozen aspirants could present equal claims to the honor. One of Belton's feet was encased in a wornout slipper from the dainty foot of some young woman, while the other wore a turned over boot left in town by some farmer lad who had gotten himself a new pair. (9)

Heading off to school, Belton’s outfit is a testament to the ingenuity of his mother and her desire to see him succeed: working with the discarded scraps of others, she constructs an outfit for her son that will allow him to be educated, further disrupting the Mammy stereotype produced in plantation romances—her allegiance is, after all, to her own son rather than to the child of a white employer. Importantly, Belton’s outfit “pickaninny” outfit, whose color one cannot pinpoint, suggests the way that such emblems of authenticity are actually patchwork constructions: made up of clothes from man, woman, old, young, farmer, city-dweller, white, black. The “blackness” of Belton comes from across the social, racial, economic, and sexual spectrum.

Belton’s outfit also serves as a warning/challenge about the education that his clothes prepare him for—given the poverty and relative powerlessness of the Piedmonts, how can they repurpose and “amend” that with which they have been left? The appropriation of materials that has to happen even prior to heading to school suggests that

“book larning” can work for the Piedmonts, but it also suggests that there are forces aligned that might be interested in making education work against the emancipated. Griggs’s portrait of the school that Belton and his mother prepare themselves for only reinforces such a reading. Formerly a church for the “white Baptists of Winchester” that had been “condemned as unsafe...and abandoned...for a more beautiful structure” it is gifted to the town for a “public school for the colored children,” its “roof was patched and iron rods were used to hold together the twisting walls” (11). Unsafe for weekly use by white churchgoers, the former church, still twisted and near collapse, is reimagined as the site of a school for black children. It is a gift, but one that might kill those to whom it is given and it demonstrates the bad faith with which Southern whites began to fulfill their promises of public education for all. Not surprisingly, an abhorrent and cruel teacher, Mr. Leonard, governs the schoolhouse.¹⁴ Given these fundamentals, the novel establishes early on the radical possibility that education might *not* necessarily be an entirely good thing. In readings of *Imperium*, this early plotting of Griggs’s novel often gets pushed to the wayside by interest in its violent conclusion. By contrast, I am arguing that Griggs’s early focus on schooling is central to any proper understanding of the novel. *Imperium in Imperio* refashions the *bildungsroman*, the novel of how and why one becomes educated. In scenes such as this one, for all critiques of it as overly didactic and telling, the novel engenders more questions than it answers: it is, paradoxically, a novel that, in form and content, *teaches* skepticism.

As the novel continues, Griggs builds a critique of education and its institutions that suggests that they might actually serve not simply to stunt the ambitions of the educated but to propagate inequities beyond their existing regional and national

boundaries. Importantly, Griggs does *not* do this through direct discourse; the novel builds such a critique working both thematically and formally. While Griggs's characters are fond of giving speeches, his narration is less forthright; Griggs's novel "educates" by presenting multiple perspectives and leaving multiple avenues of interpretation open. The novel produces multiple realities, forcing readers to make their own intuitive conclusions and critical interventions, just as Mrs. Piedmont must choose between leaving her son in the hands of a schoolteacher who introduces himself with the exclamation, "Another black nigger brat for me to teach" or leaving him uneducated (12). This moment is a teaching one, one that questions certain aspects of the black educational apparatus rather than necessarily reinforcing a hagiographic portrait of Griggs as the scion of black education. Uncertain, Mrs. Piedmont solicits the advice of her pastor who argues for educating the boy because during slavery "old marse Sampson knocked me down wid a single-tree trying' to make me stop larnin, and God is so fixed it dat white folks is knocking es down ef we don't larn" (21). Ultimately, Mrs. Piedmont decides to send her son to school. The Pastor's advice, however, amplifies earlier ambivalence about schooling. Rather than, as Gabriel Briggs would have it, simply a declaration of positive belief in education akin to "they beat you in slavery, now one is being beaten in freedom, so this is great" this advice can be read in another register (160). While Griggs clearly takes on the Mammy stereotype, his depiction of the pastor as bumbling, chicken-loving, dialect-speaking pastor can either contradict minstrel representations or confirm them as the narration of the story has for the moment abdicated its omniscience (or in some cases, left us suspicious of this pretension to all-knowingness). Similarly, the pastor's opinion can be read with a grain of salt as a suggestion that there are similarities between the old

condition of slavery and the new schooling of emancipation: the masters are still beating us, so therefore the role of education is to enforce the submission of African Americans to white power. The schoolchildren in Belton's class clearly understand this to be the school's lesson. Mimicking his 'fessor,' a young student named Abe Lincoln puts a pin in Mr. Leonard's chair and scolds a fellow student, "Henry Jones, yer sassed a white boy ter day. Pull off yer jacket. I'll giv yer a lessun dat yer'll not furgit soon. Neber buck up to yer s'periors" (12). The young "son" of The Great Emancipator, it seems, is well aware of the desires of others to educate him and his classmates into their places; with a pinprick to the pants, however, Lincoln makes a mockery of Leonard and the educative efforts put forth by the same-old New South.

Ultimately, Mrs. Piedmont decides to send her son to school. It is a decision, though, not a certainty and the ambivalence built into the novel during these initial scenes lingers on as we follow Griggs's plotting. "Watch out," the novel all but screams. In case there was any doubt about the poisonous possibilities of the education Belton is to receive, Griggs's tacks on a nefarious "motive," above and beyond racism, to the teacher's character: having been embarrassed by Abe Lincoln's pin-pricking, the teacher takes an "internal oath to get his revenge out of Mrs. Piedmont and her son" (15).

Leonard's overwrought reaction to a child's prank and Griggs's sensational representation of it is not the stuff that the complex, psychological realism of Howells is made of, his seemingly random motive—a pinprick—coming closer to something one would find in gothic romance. Heightening the effect of inexplicability, Griggs has Leonard glow with an unexplained affection for a light-skinned child, Bernard Belgrave, who begins school on the same day as Belton. Leonard "purchase[s] flowers" for Bernard

“to bear home to his mother” and “take[s] pains to give Belton fresh bruises to take home to his mother” (24), he has “bitter hatred” for Belton and an “ardent love” for Bernard. This is not a man in the grips of a moral dilemma; Leonard is more symbol and cipher than lifelike picture and his is the first of many “flat” characterizations that Griggs will, paradoxically, build over the course of the novel. Such characterizations are “realistic” but only insofar as the animus Leonard feels, his racism, cannot be said in anyway to make sense. Why torture one little boy and love another? The characterization refuses to rationally justify and sustain Leonard’s hatred or love.

In this way, the novel demonstrates just some of the obstacles facing the newly emancipated in trying to secure a reasonable education for themselves and their children. The white people in the town are at material and political advantages and they leverage these to prevent the proper education of their fellow citizens. The two boys do, though, end up acquiring a quality education or rather, a “mis-education.” This mis-education, however, arises not because of one, but two, “deus ex machina” plot intrigues, showing the improbability of just such an education happening in a rigged, i.e., realistic world. Both boys get well-educated in part because the emotionally volatile Leonard, seeking the success of one boy and the failure of the other, pits the two against one another in sort of schoolroom Cold War, “introducing the two boys into every needed field of knowledge....hoping always to find some branch in which Bernard might display unquestioned superiority” (25). The man’s randomized, unpredictable affections create an “ideal” educational atmosphere but this, clearly, is not a replicable model. Leonard’s affections are so inexplicable and inorganic that their origin and growth is narrated much later, in a separate chapter entitled, “Many Mysteries Cleared Up,” the novel drawing

reader attention away from seamless realistic narrativity and towards its own clumsiness. Within this chapter, we learn that Mr. Tiberius Gracchus Leonard has been blackmailed/paid by Bernard Belgrave's long-lost father into teaching at the school. The two men had served side by side in the Confederate army, it turns out. When Leonard shot and killed his own commander for some slight to his honor, Bernard's unnamed father "by skillful detective work, secured incontestable evidence of [Leonard's] guilt" (65). Adding another twist to the story, Leonard then counter-blackmailed Bernard's father—saying he would expose the father's marriage to his "nigger wife," Bernard's mother. Though both are at each other's mercy, Bernard's father still, apparently, holds power over Leonard and uses it to secure Leonard's "colossal intellect" in the teaching of his son; Griggs's narrative is so overdone that the clearing up of a mystery only produces another mystery. Bernard's father is, naturally, a high-ranking U.S. Senator in an important chairmanship whose "name was a household word throughout the nation" while "his reputation was international" (65). He is also a Southern white man and former Confederate, and in paying Leonard to teach Bernard, he hopes the boy will "scale the high wall of prejudice" thereby enabling him "to own" his mulatto son and black wife to the world, legitimately, outside of the bonds of slavery (66). The education designed for the Bernard, then, is exceptional, special, one explicitly designed to undo years of race prejudice; it is not the industrial education, certainly, that was increasingly being replicated and reproduced throughout the South and exported into the new U.S. territories.

The exceptional mis-education designed for Bernard, but which Belton also earns through perseverance, centers upon two subjects, "the History of the United States" and

“rhetoric,” and their study includes a Who’s Who of Revolutionary rhetoric from “Leonidas, Marco Bozarris, Arnold Winkleraid, Louis Kossuth, Robert Emmett, Martin Luther, Patrick Henry” (25). “Absor[bed] in the history of the Revolution,” “breath[ing] the atmosphere of heroes and read[ing] with bated breath their deeds of daring” the two bitter rivals receive also learn to “crav[e] for the opportunity to do the like” (25). Through chance and spite, Bernard and Belton, in other words, receive a liberal, rather than an industrial, education, one that teaches them to love liberty and which (“at the expiration of twelve years” writes Griggs in typically hyperbolic time lapsed style) earns them a “reputation as brilliant students and eloquent speakers...over the whole surrounding country” (25). They learn, in other words, “equality of the races,” to think of themselves as free and equal persons (42). Such a “lesson,” of course, cannot be neatly narrated, confined to the classroom, or even learned. Fittingly, then, each character faces a series of dilemmas that prompt them, in turn, to continue the process of defining what liberty and equality mean and what they should entail. The two characters are set upon very different life journeys and pursue very different practices of liberty and citizenship— dissimilar paths the merits of which readers are, at novel’s end, left to judge by themselves.

In the character of Belton, Griggs’s presents us with a black man who is confronted by but unable to accept the “facts,” for better or worse: Belton is constantly being instructed to learn his place in the realistic racial hierarchy and failing miserably to do so. From the get-go, his teacher Leonard seeks to have him fail. Rather than accepting this, Belton studies harder and better. Having acquired worldwide renown, the two rivals are to be graduated by Leonard; on that day, they will compete in a rhetorical

competition. Leonard, of course, hopes to use this opportunity as a means of humiliating Belton and prepares Bernard accordingly. Belton knowing both that he is equal and that Leonard wants to see him fail, studies and prepares for his test, while also setting up a practical joke for his teacher. On the day of the speech, Bernard delivers a powerful speech about the glory of the Anglo-Saxon race; Belton delivers his about Robert Emmett. Everyone believes Bernard to have won but the judges use a loophole to award the victory to Bernard, on account of the fact that “we don’t like to see nigger blood triumph over any Anglo-Saxon blood” (29). Belton, however, speaks one thing and does another, ostensibly accepting Anglo-Saxon ascendancy while contradicting it in his speech. Importantly, he also deflates the seriousness of the hard facts that his schooling seeks to make him observe. “Revening” himself upon Leonard, Belton makes him the butt of a practical joke, orchestrating a scenario where Leonard, reveling in the unfair victory of his star pupil, has the stage upon which he is standing collapse, plunging him into a vat of water that Belton has placed below him. Belton makes a buffoon out of Leonard, who is left yelping, “Murder! Murder! Murder!...Help! Help! Help! I am drowning. Take me out, it is cold” (29). Belton upends not only his teacher and his sense of his place in the world both literally and metaphorically, but also the minstrel stereotype that would make Belton the object, rather than subject of the prank. Later on, Griggs elaborates on just such a reversal when Belton is mistaken for a chicken thief at university, when he makes a ruckus attempting to witness a black professor presiding over a mixed race faculty meeting: “the teachers decided that they had had been visited by a Negro hunting for chickens, laughed heartily at their fright and resumed deliberations. Thus again a patriot was mistaken for a chicken thief and in the South to-

day a race that dreams of freedom, equality, and empire, far more than is imagined, is put down as a race of chicken thieves. As in Belton's case, this conception diverts attention from places where startling things would otherwise be discovered" (44). Black ambitions are unintelligible within existing epistemological frameworks.

As Belton gets older, he meets again and again with situations that tempt development into someone who believes in his own inferiority. Complicating his belief in his own equality, however, is his understanding of the origin of his equality, his patriotism. How does his belief in racial equality square, if at all, with the demands of national citizenship? Leaving home, Belton heads to Nashville to continue his studies at Stowe University, named, in case we missed the allusion, "in honor of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (38). At Stowe, Belton begins to increasingly map his equality onto and into a nationalist framework and through a sentimental attachment to the flag, which ultimately seems to lead him to an Uncle Tom-like series of paradoxically self-asserting self-abnegations; the modern nation state being, as previously discussed, predicated upon the recognition of racial hierarchies, racial hierarchies which ran contrary to Belton's attachments to an older model of patriotism which he believes to include racial equality. The tension that develops in this section—as we cheer Belton's assertions of his own dignity, while attempting to understand his frustrating inability to fully accept white intransigence and supremacy as the very foundation of the nation state—takes an aesthetic shape that refuses the sentimentality of Belton's allegiance to the nation while also refusing to fall neatly into a realistic order. It is in this way that we can make sense of the strange and tonally shifting workings of the

plot surrounding Belton, which moves from jokes and prank playing on one end of the spectrum to rape, lynching, and murder on the other.

At Stowe, Belton learns to assert his racial equality. This school along with others of its ilk, the narrative educates us, was “fought” by “the White South...with every weapon at its command. Ridicule, vilification, ostracism, violence, arson, murder were all employed” because the “Old South instinctively foresaw danger to its social fabric as then constituted, and therefore despised and fought the agencies that were training and inspiring the future leaders of the Negro race...rightfully fear[ing] these schools more than they would have feared factories making powder, moulding balls and fashioning cannons” (40-41). The school, however, while educating students to be leaders of their race, insists upon forms of racial hierarchy: upending the social traditions of the academy, one of Belton’s black teachers is forced to eat with his students rather than his colleagues. Forming a plan, Belton called together the male members of his class in order to form a “secret organization” with the “purpose to coerce the white teachers into allowing the colored teacher to eat with them” (44). Banding together under a “black flag” the students triumph over a group of “confused and bewildered teachers” who “felt like hens who had lost their broods” because “the cringing, fawning, sniffing, cowardly Negro which slavery left, had disappeared, and a new Negro, self-respecting, fearless and determined in the assertion of his rights was at hand” (46). This episode, which the narrator tells us marks an “epoch in the career of races and nations,” points us to an emerging distinction in the novel —between race and nation—and is quickly followed up two other similar episodes. Soon after Belton succeeds in asserting racial equality under a black flag, he attends a graduation sermon given by the president of the University (who

pages ago sought to suppress the student call for equality). In his speech, the president urges “his dear boys” to advance the “forward march of the Negro” by being “true patriots” rather than “time-serving demagogues,” to “let your kingdom be within” rather than “organizing [the tigers of the forest] into marauding regiments simply for the honor of being in the lead” (50). The lesson of Dr. Lovejoy—to which “None listened more attentively than Belton. None were more deeply impressed than he. None more readily incorporated the principles enumerated as a part of their living lives”—frames the collective efforts of the black students to exert their authority and ensure their equality as “demagoguery” rather than “true patriotism”; “true patriotism,” Lovejoy holds, builds “kingdoms . . . within” rather than within the contemporary moment and allows one to “live in the sweetened memory of your countrymen” (51). Finishing school, Belton must reconcile two conflicting ideas about the meaning of (racial) citizenship and patriotism—is he black (believing in collective action to secure an already established equality) or is he an American (believing in racial development and hoping to occupy outposts of power abandoned by benevolent whites)—while believing that these identities need not be mutually exclusive.

During his post-college career, Belton is buffeted by a series of increasingly aggravated racial assaults, assaults from which Belton refuses to learn. Taking up a teaching job, he falls in love with another teacher. Hoping to earn more money in order to marry this woman, Belton starts a weekly journal and a job printing business. When the paper “champions the cause of honest elections” by arguing that “practicising frauds [were] debauching the young men, the flower of the Anglo-Saxon race,” Belton loses his teaching job because his words constituted an “attack” upon “Southern institutions” (88).

Belton attempts to marry his desire for racial equality with concern for “his countrymen,” which postpones his own nuptials (what can be read as his obsequiousness, of course, can also be read as his “trickery,” we cannot be certain). The irreconcilability of the two positions, as well as the uneven distribution of wealth and power, leads to Belton’s dismissal from teaching and means the end of his business, as his fellow teachers are forced to withdraw their economic and moral support “on pain of losing their positions” (Griggs 88). When, through his efforts on behalf of a Republican candidate, Belton earns a political patronage position in the Post Office, he is able to marry. Only a year later, though, he loses his position after he asserts that cannot support the Congressional candidacy of a man who is “prejudiced against colored people” (89). Belton is “crushed” by the loss of his job, unable to understand how his assertion of full personhood would disqualify him for a position within the workings of the national machinery(89). Upon losing his job, Belton cannot find another one and becomes part a growing contingent of educated but unemployed young black men. In response to their situation, these young men, “grew to hate the flag that would float in an undisturbed manner over such a condition of affairs. They began to abuse and execrate a national government that would not protect them against the color prejudice, but on the contrary practiced it itself. Beginning with passively hating the flag, they began to think of rebelling against it” (91). Rather than joining up with those whom the narrator calls “malcontents and insurrection breeders, Belton goes “undercover.” At this moment, Belton is blind to the irreconcilability that the other young men begin to see and which he has already seen, unable to shed his affections for the nation, unable to understand that one cannot simultaneously be both black and an American.

When Belton seems unable to un-tether his belief in his own equality from his belief in the U.S., the novel ups the assaultive ante, insisting that Belton accept the fundamental racial hierarchy at the heart of his patriotism. Belton cannot and will not learn this lesson, though, and his refusal to do so makes him seem frustratingly stupid; this violent, strange, bizarre section of the novel, in turn, puts readers in a good position to recognize the schism between his idealized version of America and an actual America. These an-aesthetic moments clear the way for a new definition of the reality of racial citizenship, one that isn't tied into Howellsian realism. In "Sensationalizing Patriotism," Stephen Knadler argues that it is at this point that Griggs's treatment of Belton moves into open satire. Belton is according to Knadler "except for his relatively brief membership in the Imperium...an ardent supporter of Citizen Tom's patriotic sentimentalism" (688). In my reading, however, Belton and the novel are much more ambivalent, leaving the reader to decide and critique the political affects and strategies of both protagonists. Belton is at moments "stupid" and frustratingly unable to "see" or acknowledge the reality of the racist world; he is also alternately a "rebel" and a believer in his own radical equality. While Knadler argues that Griggs's characterization of Belton blasts sentimental patriotism out of the water by making the character a walking joke, I counter that in realistic characterizations black people were already walking jokes. Griggs's representation tempers open mockery by making Belton's stupidity oddly heroic; he is possessed of an intuitive — rather than rational — sense and defense of the self. The novel models confusion rather than the clarity of a coherent critique and this, I contend, is part of its critique: that these affects are tied up with one another, potentially generative, potentially negative and communities need people of

nuance and bravery in order to understand and navigate this complexity; the novel is attempting to produce readers capable of creating a new political reality and aesthetic from this jumble.

There are two particularly important bizarre and confounding scenes that “cleanse” away the progressive realist vision of developmental racism. In the first scene, Belton disguises himself as a black woman in order to infiltrate white society as a domestic worker; working inside white homes, he hopes he will learn firsthand what white people think about “the labor situation” and “the race problem.” What he discovers surprises him: the “reality” of white life does not include any inkling of the race problem. Because “the barbers, the nurses, the cook and washerwomen, the police column of the newspapers, comic stories and minstrels were the sources through which the white people gained their conception of the Negro,” (92) white people do not think that there is a race problem. The racial realism of “life among the lowly,” of the comic representations of people of color happily contented with their lives, leaves a white upper class perfectly contented with their own lives in the status quo. Following closely upon this exposition about how these realistic representations feed a sense of white complacency and racial domination, Belton-as-domestic worker is subjected to sexual intimidation and though it goes unwritten, one is led to believe, violation. “The young men in the family,” Griggs writes, “seemed to have a poor opinion of the virtue of colored women” and constantly make unwanted sexual advances towards Belton. Unable to tolerate Belton’s rejections of carriage rides, trips, and money in exchange for sexual favors, “a number of [the young men] decided to satisfy themselves at all hazards...resort[ing] to the bold and daring plan

of kidnapping and overpowering Belton” (91-92). The novel continues its narration “after that eventual night Belton did no more nursing” (93).

The reality of life under the color line, of the emasculation of black men, the illicit desires of white men for black women (foregrounded as well in the ‘mysterious’ story of Bernard’s birth), and the constant sexual violence visited upon black women are unrepresentable within Griggs’s aesthetic and affective schema. This moment of disjunction jars the reader out of the settled ease of continuous, developing aesthetic and affective experience; the world Griggs represents is strange, violent and unsettling. Neither “equal” nor “American,” Belton is abject and traumatized, beyond politics and aesthetics. There is no return to “normal” life for Belton, though (the whole novel upsetting this notion of “normalcy”), and his experience reverberates upon his return “home.” Coming back into the fold of his family, Belton is delighted to discover that his wife is pregnant with their first child. His delight soon turns to despair when he sees his child: “Antoinette was brown. The color of Belton was dark. But the child was white!” (94). Belton’s rape demonstrates to him the fragility of his own masculinity and his claims to paternity, in turn; a fragility that manifests itself in an accusing his wife of infidelity. In this moment, Belton re-discovers his rebellious inclinations and his anti-patriotic fervor: “what were his feeling in those days toward the flag which he had loved so dearly, which had floated proudly and undisturbed, while color prejudice, upheld by it, sent, as he thought, cruel want with drawn sword to stab his family honor to death. Belton had now lost all hope of personal happiness and prepared to give his life wholly to the righting the wrongs of his people” (95). Belton’s decision to abandon his feelings for the flag, however, are tied to abandoning his loyalty to his wife in the name of a racial

allegiance based upon blood purity.¹⁵ Writing her out of his new politics, he also writes her out of his new aesthetics: Belton “tenderly...laid *the image* of Antoinette to rest in the grave in the very center of his heart...he acknowledged the presence of a corpse in his heart, ‘twas the corpse of one he loved” (95).

Belton’s picaresque journey takes him next to Louisiana, where he is to become the President of Cadeville College. On his journey there, he gets thrown bodily off of a moving train for riding in the first-class compartment, thereby violating the racial demarcation of space and rank. Wandering into a nearby town, he insists upon eating food he’s ordered from a white restaurateur *in* said restaurant. The owner calls the police and “wondering what kind of country he had entered, Belton followed the officer and incredible as it may seem, was locked up in jail for a night” (Griggs 99). The realistic social order predicated upon black social and political subjugation to white authority, upon keeping one’s place, reads as “incredible” to both Belton and the audience, incredible because the educator cannot and will not be educated into his second class citizenship. Once in his office, Belton attempts to add an industrial component to his institution, deciding, too, to “have colored men erect the building” (94). Though creating, in part, a curriculum of industrial education (which can be read as growing amenable to structural second-class citizenship), Belton also seeks to create a market for the types of work skills he seeks to create; he hopes, in other words, not simply to “make” black workers but to hire them, forging a self-sustaining community, rather than one where black workers can be exploited by white employers or not hired at all. He’s making space for “the New Negro.” “The white brick-masons,” however, “organized a mob” and “took charge of the work themselves, letting the colored brick masons act as hod

carriers”; “the colored people,” Griggs continues, “knew that it meant death to resist and they paid the men *as nothing unusual* had happened” (101 italics mine). Here, Griggs has Belton, having abandoned his “sentimental patriotism” yet again, challenge the status quo; because he is not “patriotic” anymore, the purpose of this cannot be to rinse away anything of his flag fixation. Instead, what this episode demonstrates again is the ways in which Belton keeps running up against expectations of the “usual,” the normal, the real, the status quo, that insist upon the non-personhood of people of color. While it acknowledges the necessary survival skills of the black community, Griggs’s narrative also refuses to call the necessity for them anything *but* unusual.

In the remainder of this chapter, “On the Dissecting Board,” Belton undergoes yet another extraordinary trial, one that “cleans the remaining dross out of his nature” and finally ends whatever remains of the novel’s claims to verisimilitude. Belton is accosted by a white mob of “Nigger Rulers” for having the “impudence” to aid a young white woman who cannot find the correct hymn at church (103). Seeking to avenge this “crime” against white womanhood, as well as to collect a “fine specimen of physical manhood” for further scientific study, the white mob first lynches Belton and when he appears to be dead, the mob’s ringleader shoots the already-dead Belton in the back of the head for good measure. These attempts upon Belton’s life, however, somehow miss the mark. Rather than dying, Belton has only temporarily lost consciousness. Finding himself upon the eponymous dissection table of the Dr. Zackland who hopes to examine his corpse, Belton regains consciousness but “kept his eyes closed, thinking it best to feign death” (106). The doctor then begins to operate, surgically removing the bullet from the back of the living, breathing, fully conscious man’s skull. Belton, however, Griggs is careful to

note, "did not wince." Concerned suddenly that the corpse is not dead enough, the doctor says, "'the nigger is dead or else he would show some sign of life. But I will try pricking his palm'" and proceeds to stab the hand of Belton/Belton's body. Despite the excruciating pain, "Belton showed no sign of feeling" (106). Stifling his pain until alone in the room with the doctor, Belton picks up a surgical knife. The scene that follows Griggs narrates thusly: "The doctor turned round and was in dread alarm at the sight of the dead man returned to life. At that instant he was too terrified to act of scream, and before he could recover his self-possession Belton plunged the knife through his throat. Seizing the dying man he laid him on the dissecting board and covered him over with a sheet" (107). Here, Belton rises up against a "reality" that would render him anaesthetized, meaning both numb and without the forms with which to make sense of his life. Reality and realism demand that Belton over and over again "feign" his own social death, they leave him no words with which to shape, argue, or confront his pain, anger, fear, love, joy, or frustration.¹⁶ Dr. Zackland, who considered having "such a robust, well-formed, handsome nigger to dissect and examine...one of the greatest boons of his medical career," uses Spencerian racial scientism to thinly veil his contempt for black Americans and to justify the subordination of people of color in the U.S. and abroad (106). Zackland would make Belton a specimen, not a person.¹⁷ Rising up, Belton forces Dr. Zackland to undergo the fear, voicelessness, and lack of self-possession that Dr. Zackland, in his support of the science of racial realism, has forced him to undergo. Belton even leaves Dr. Zackland on the table as a specimen for others to examine. Where other parts of the story seem to aim at the "heart" and its patriotic affections, Belton here seeks to cut out the "logic" of America's racial realism, leaving Dr. Zackland virtually

decapitated. Importantly, the novel also offers readers the vicarious thrill of extraordinary survival of and revenge for the quotidian racial violence heaped upon them.

Griggs's flirtation with the un-real doesn't end with Zackland's murder, but continues in the way that Belton is able to evade "justice." Again *showing* remarkably little wear and tear (Belton's pain does not translate into the signs and language of the prevailing aesthetics), Belton leaps the fence around the doctor's home in a bound, escapes on foot through the woods of Louisiana and deposits himself into the hands of the state Governor in order to avoid the possibility of being lynched *a second time* by an angry white mob. The Governor orders that a jury try Belton for murder. The jury, allowed to "mingle freely with the people" and composed largely of the mob who first attempted to lynch Belton, absorbs the "bitter public sentiment against Belton" and returns a near-immediate guilty verdict, sentencing Belton to be hanged; lynching and the racial hierarchy upon which it is predicated, once extra-legal, are given the force and authority of law. While waiting to be hanged, however, Belton is sought out by a liberal newspaper reporter, who "telegraphed broadcast" Belton's story and "aroused sympathetic interest everywhere" (108). This account spurs Belton's schoolmate, Bernard, into action. Bernard, the illegitimate mulatto son of a "certain influential democratic senator," manages through "influence...brought to bear" to "maneuver" Belton's case to the Supreme Court, "though all precedent was violated" (108). Bernard pleads on his friend's behalf with such oratorical skill that the "Supreme Court wept scalding tears," (109) reversed the verdict of the lower court and granted a change of venue. In his new trial, Belton is acquitted and lives to tell the tale, although the "tragic experience burned all the remaining dross out of [his] nature" (109). In this fantasy that

“defies all precedent,” Griggs allows his readers to enjoy the image of an America that not only protects them, but also weeps for their sufferings. Alongside the fantasy of revenge is this fantasy of possible, if unlikely, reconciliation, where instead of playing with the patriotic affections of the people, the institutions of the government are brought into sympathetic harmony with black citizens.

Critically, Griggs’s text arranges this “magic” transformation through the power of the “telegraphed broadcast” (108). This moment is one of the most powerful examples the novel offers up of the ways in which communication technologies can transform the lives of black communities, but not the only one; throughout the novel, there are many such moments of near instantaneous broadcast that end up saving the imperiled lives of the characters or conveying their skill and knowledge beyond the limited confines of their immediate vicinity and connecting them to larger communities.¹⁸ In much the same way that Belton reverses the direction of racial scientism’s gaze by putting Dr. Zackland in his own place upon the dissection table, Griggs reverses the polarities of these “electric” technologies which were used both to trumpet America’s jingoistic claims in its build up to war and imperial dominion, as well as to justify the non-contiguous nature of this facet of American empire. Writing in 1898, Senator Albert Beveridge, for example, argued for the colonization of the Philippines despite its distance from the mainland U.S., exclaiming to the delight of thousands of spectators that, “Steam joins us; electricity joins us — the very elements are in league with our destiny. Cuba not contiguous? Porto Rico not contiguous! Hawaii and the Philippines not contiguous! The oceans make them contiguous. And our navy will make them contiguous” (Beveridge). Murat Halstead, the editor, also argued that:

In the Philippine Islands the situation is for us absolutely novel. It cannot be said to be out of the scope of reasonable American expansion and is in the right line of enlarging the area of enlightenment and stimulating the progress of civilization. The unexpected has happened, but it is not illogical... The incident of war was the "rush" order of the President of the United States to Admiral Dewey to destroy the Spanish fleet at Manila, for the protection of our commerce. The deed was done with a flash of lightning, and lo! we hold the golden key of a splendid Asiatic archipelago... Never before had the sweep of sea power, ordered through the wires that make the world's continents, oceans and islands one huge whispering gallery, such striking exemplification. (Halstead 16)

Here, the power of communication technologies bolsters and supplements U.S. military might, making the far near: wires make the world's continents contiguous. This breaking down of distances makes provides a novel logic for the advance of America's racially-tiered empire; similarly, the "rush" of these technologies provides clear evidence of the speed and modernity of American civilization relative to that of the Philippines, the American voice can be here now. What was once "out of the scope of [the] reasonable" has become by virtue of this technology merely "unexpected." In Griggs's telling, however, the technologies are used to disrupt the illusions of normalcy that American empire depends upon, rescuing Belton, celebrating his successes and those of Bernard, and ultimately bringing together the Imperium, the all-black government that secretly exists alongside/inside the U.S. government and threatens its very existence. On an aesthetic level, these moments of communication produce jarring textual juxtapositions and jumps through time and rationality. These technologies give shape to the novel's brand of radical discontinuity, forging an unexpected but not illogical aesthetic: technology is the nervous system of the shadow government and the novel's dark optimism, producing not a coherent, rational politics, but a "rush," a possibility that things might be arranged differently, better.

In many ways the novel's illogical aesthetic comes about because it insists upon intertwining the story of Belton Piedmont with that of Bernard Belgrave: the novel moves back and forth between these two characters, jumping across time, place and plotline to create a messy mix. The radical juxtaposition of this plotting and the intertwining of the fictional lives of the novel's characters call attention to and ask us to reconsider Bernard's model for making sense of his place and that of black people within the American scene. Bernard Belgrave, Belton's schoolmate and the future leader of the Imperium, becomes by novel's end a "racial realist": he believes that the form of the nation demands separate but unequal races and grows increasingly willing to violently enforce black racial purity in the service of his nationalist dreams.

Bernard's trajectory is quite different than that of Belton's. Having unfairly bested Belton in his graduation speech, Bernard ends up attending Harvard. Returning home, the mystery of his paternity is revealed to him and finally learns the fateful news that he is the son of a white Senator. Attempting to fight race prejudice and make his father able to "own him," Belton pursues a career in politics, deciding "to make a diligent study of the art of pleasing the populace...to become the obedient servant of the people that he might thus make all the people his servants" (68). Systematically, Bernard courts every part of the black population, beginning with the "rowdy and criminal" (68). Bernard wins this group over by being "always ready to defend them," willing to "serve them free of charge and ... pay their fines for them," and by "[giving] money freely to those who begged of him"; he becomes, in fact, through these efforts, "the very ideal of the vicious element" (69). He is also able, though, to "[win] favor with the better elements of citizens" and "conquer the social world" (69). Bernard harnesses this support and runs for a seat in

Congress. During his campaign, Griggs writes, “the masses of colored people rallied around his flag. Ministers of colored churches came to his support. Seeing that the colored people were so determined to elect Bernard, the white republicans fell into line. Viola Martin organized patriotic clubs among the women and aroused whatever voters seemed lethargic” (74). When Bernard wins his election, communal affection for him only rises:

The colored people hailed Bernard as the coming Moses. ‘Belgrave, Belgrave, Belgrave,’ was on every Negro tongue. Poems were addressed to him. Babies were named after him. Honorary titles were showered upon him. He was in much demand at fairs and gatherings of notable people. He accepted every invitation, and traveled far and wide winning friends by his bewitching eloquence... (77)

Belgrave’s campaign for Congress quickly changes its tone, aligning the patriotic affections of the black community with the flag of Bernard and away from allegiance to the U.S. Not simply a representative of the people, Bernard becomes the language through which all of the joys, frustrations, and hopes of the black community get spoken; he’s an aesthetic unto himself as he becomes the focal point for communal longing. Bernard’s courting of all elements of society, even the unsavory ones, as well as the ascription of a motive to him beyond fighting the racism, namely, that he wants “to make all the people his servants” suggests a critique to come about how liberatory impulses can “go bad.” Bernard wants his father to “own him” in public, but in order for that to happen the novel suggests he must own the people; he seems to be Dr. Lovejoy’s demagogue come to life. We can also, however, read the episode as not simply an attack upon the leader of the black masses. The passage, indeed, suggests the almost religious nature of black hope in the face of an unrelenting white supremacist reality: the affections people have for Bernard are similar in kind, but not in direction, to that felt for the nation—

people feel compelled to conjure up a possible messiah, a poem, an imaginary possibility in grappling with an intractable reality. The question for the novel and its readers is what is the best possible way to construct and deploy these desires. Imagining otherwise serves an important political function.

Over the course of the novel, Bernard serves in Congress and becomes a successful lawyer, eventually rescuing Belton from hanging (the nature of the one-time schoolhouse enemies enduring friendship is never narrated). All the while he accumulates friends and influence, however, he cannot win the heart of Viola Martin. Obviously in love with Bernard, Viola nevertheless cannot bring herself to marry him when after years of courtship, he finally proposes to her; instead, she chooses to gas herself to death. In her suicide note to Bernard, Viola explains her action, stating that the intermarriage of mulattoes (Bernard is light-skinned) is “devitalizing” the power of the black race. For the preservation of the race, therefore, she can “never marry a mulatto man”(119), while because she only loves Bernard, she can never marry anyone else. Since she cannot fulfill her function as a walking womb, she must, of course, die. Bernard responds to Viola’s death by obeying her command that black racial purity be consolidated and that the races be separated, advocating the position that because the black and white races cannot co-exist within the existing national framework of the U.S., the Imperium should splinter off and violently assert its own nationhood by taking over Texas. In combating white supremacy, then, Bernard would replicate some of its most pernicious effects, effects that not only require the death of his beloved, but also an abjection of himself and his light-skinned mother. Adopting the logic of white supremacy and its fears of miscegenation and violation make Belton’s wife a corpse in his heart and

mean that Bernard, too, must build for himself a mausoleum for both his past and his future affections. The dream of racial purity is a dream without a future: neither man is capable of producing or owning a child that would fulfill this vision of racial destiny.

That this is too high a price to pay is brought home later on in the novel, when Belton's buried-alive wife, Antoinette, is brought back to life in a manner of speaking. Taking mercy upon his wife for her infidelity/rape, Belton decides to return home to the wife and child he had earlier abandoned, both of whom had been made social outcasts by their community on account of Belton's implicit accusations of infidelity. When Belton rushes into her house for a happy reunion, Antoinette can only cry, "Belton! There is your white child! Look at him!," pointing to a child who was dark-skinned and quite obviously his own. Antoinette then "rushed to her album and show[ed] him pictures of the child taken at various stages of its growth. Belton discerned the same features in each photograph, but a different shade of color of the skin. His knees began to tremble. He had come, as the most wronged of men, to grant pardon. He now found himself the vilest of men, unfit for pardon" (171). Here, Griggs's novel gets it both ways. The desire for racial purity that Belton feels is marked as troubled: it has split his family apart. When he discovers that his child is *his child* and black, the novel allows its readers the thrill of having that racial purity, while also putting the desire for just that up for inspection. Belton's certainty, anchored by his belief in unchanging racial categories, has done a grievous harm to his wife, child, himself and their community. Seeing that his child was white at birth, he believed that this momentary reality would be so forever; he believed in the permanence of racial distinction. The photographs, the supposedly truest-to-life form of representation, "testify" to racial change and the instability of "realistic" racial

categories; contrary to the representational regime of racial realism, the reality of the situation seems to be that white can turn to black.

Critically, this moment of uncertainty comes just after the novel has seemed to arrive at some conclusions. Prior to this scene, Bernard and Belton find themselves squaring off in a fight for the soul and control of the Imperium. The murder of a black appointee of President McKinley by a white mob prompts the Imperium “to meet and act upon the whole question of the relationship of the negro race to the Anglo-Saxons”; the group deliberates around “a golden casket containing [the murdered man’s] heart,” attempting to discern the proper ways to manage the communal black heart and its allegiances, affections and affiliations. In this scene, a post-lynching Belton, a different character again, argues that the Imperium should reveal its existence to white Southerners and allow them to recognize the rights of black persons; failure to do so would then result in the wholesale removal of the race of “New Negroes” to the state of Texas, where “having an unquestioned majority of votes” the group would “secure possession of the State government” and then proceed to “work out [its] destiny in the United States of America” (163). His speech more closely resembles Woodrow Wilson’s developmental *History of the United States* than his previous assertions of radical equality. Bernard, the U.S. Congressman, advocates for a plan that would have the Imperium purchase “all Texas land contiguous to states and territories of the Union” and place gunned fortifications upon them. The Imperium would then “enter into secret negotiations with all of the foreign enemies of the United States” and engage in hostilities with the U.S., seizing Texas and “thus will the Negro have an empire of his own” (Griggs 168). The fight, for a moment, seems to crystallize: race within nation or race within another nation.

After rousing speeches by both men, the Imperium decides to pursue Bernard's plan of armed revolution; because Belton cannot come to terms with this and refuses to be a traitor to either his nation or his race, he will be executed. Only *after* these decisions does Belton reconcile with his wife. In the moment, then, when Belton's brand of beliefs about the future of the Imperium are seemingly put to fictional bed—that one can be black, American and equal, that blacks should be grateful to Anglo-Saxons and will eventually get their rights—the imagined violent alternative is also heavily scrutinized. The placement of Belton's reconciliation in the novel mars the celebratory ascendancy of Bernard's brand of racial realism and ethnic nationalism.

The triumph of Bernard is short-lived in more ways than one, as Berl Trout, a member of the Imperium “prove[s] traitor and reveal[s] the existence of the Imperium” shortly after Belton's death (176). While some critics read this moment as a turn away from the radical politics of Bernard—a closer reading of the defusing of those politics only pages earlier can and rightly should lead us to another interpretation. The novel's end provides little in the way of pat lessons and predictable outcomes and that is part of its lesson. The injection of a third player in the drama of the twinned Belton and Bernard is not simply a rejection of both their politics, but an upending of a hierarchy that has gone unchallenged within the novel heretofore: the hierarchy of those who know and those who do not. This supposed hierarchy of knowledge, which begins with the teacher Leonard, a “master-mind,” governs the relations of dominance, political and aesthetic, throughout the novel. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Jacques Ranciere enunciates how “the pedagogical myth divides the world into two: the knowing and the ignorant, the mature and the unformed, the capable and the incapable” (xx). This is progressive racial

realism and the ending of Griggs's novel functions as an antidote to this mythology. Bernard and Belton presume to know what is best for the black community, in a way homologous to the ways whites presume to know what is best for blacks. In this final moment, the unknown injects himself into this relationship between the elites and masses. Is Trout a traitor or a patriot? becomes a moot question: he has authorized himself to speak and created a representational schema that abandons these hierarchies in favor of a political aesthetic addressed to "mankind," "humanity," and "civilization" (177). In this way, liberalism's call for radical equality does not come to mean radical individualism. The goals and desires of the individual are tempered with a desire for communal wellbeing. Refusing the certainty of leadership and the guaranteed futures of realism, the inter-nationalism upon which empire predicates itself, Trout trusts that "love of liberty is such an inventive genius, that if you destroy one device it at once constructs another more powerful" (177). The novel offers no plan for re-shaping the world, only the imperative that readers recognize their radical equality (his final declaration being that, "men made in the image of God...will not be the slaves of another image"—of other men) and their responsibility to give new shapes, political and aesthetic, to their love of liberty.

¹ To track this critical genealogy, see Gloster, Bone, Fleming, and Elder. Gloster writes, "American Negroes who espouse black beauty, black pride, black militancy, and black separatism are the ideological successors of Dr. Sutton Griggs" (iii). Bone counters Gloster, writing that Griggs's text, by virtue of the historical position of African-Americans in this post-Reconstruction moment, is more conflicted, "on occasion, he is militant and challenging...at other times, he is conciliatory to the point of servility," eventually settling upon the somewhat scornful description of Griggs as "an old-fashioned Southerner" (32-33). Fleming, in turn, argued, "even in the most militant of his works Griggs expresses an aversion to violence" (74).

² In his 1969 recuperation of the text, for example, Hugh Gloster compared Griggs to Charles Chesnutt, arguing for the political superiority of Griggs by virtue of his positive representations of "black pigmentation" and his abhorrence of "black stereotypes" (vii). In the next sentence, Gloster qualifies this moral and political superiority with a casual catalogue of the author's literary failings: "As an artist, however, Chesnutt is the superior in every way, for deficiencies in plot, characterization and diction loom obtrusively in the novels of Griggs" (vii). A.J. Verdelle argues that Griggs deserves attention because, "despite limited artistic skills," his work "chronicle[d] men who were custodians of an era," serves as a

"record of a Negro's extreme vulnerability during that time" and is "worthy as history" (xi-xii). On a similar note, Cornel West writes in his introduction that "despite his artistic lapses and literary limitations," Griggs's "witness and work" remain relevant because it portrays "black despair and black hope against hope in a powerful and poignant manner" (xvii).

¹ The urge to read anything anti-sentimental *as* realism replicates the long-standing tendency to pit the two aesthetics against one another in a Manichean battle akin to the one plotted in the novel between black and white.

² In the past thirty years' recuperation of sentimentality, the roots of the African American literary tradition's investment in realism is somewhat clarified. On the one hand, critics such as Philip Fisher and Jane Tompkins argued for the redemptive power and political usefulness of sentimental representations of African Americans, like that in Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These representations, they claimed, enabled "prisoners, children, animals, and slaves—the weak and the helpless within society [to] gain...full representation" (Fisher 95). Other critics, echoing the thoughts of the "sentimentalized," however, countered that there were many potentially negative political consequences of proliferating sentimental portraits of "the weak and the helpless." For these critics, sentimentalism "reveals itself as a mechanism, in turn, not for the mitigation of authority but really for the extension of its control," and sadistically "aimed at the subjection of different classes and even races" (Brodhead 73; Wexler 15). As Claudia Tate contended in *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels* (1998), such recognitions prompted the construction of African American literary field dominated not simply by men, but by "protest-oriented objectives" that made other types of persons, protest, politics and problems imperceptible, even impossible (Tate 4). These conscious and unconscious (they are "tacitly" agreed upon by scholars and readers) directives, she argued, caused black texts which neither follow the socially sanctioned protest plot nor "explicitly represent...lived experiences with racial oppression" to be censured and marginalized as "not black enough" (4, 3). Any longing, in other words, that is not explicitly, "realistically" political has been disappeared in the interest of consolidating a cohesive African American cultural identity, which, in turn, can be employed to achieve those sanctioned political ends.

³ In *A Future for Astyanax* (1969), Leo Bersani argued that realistic representation was inextricably bound up with the nefarious practices of power it was thought to subvert (59-61). In the wake of Bersani and Foucault, New Americanist critics, such as Kaplan, Seltzer, and Michaels, have tended to read realism in this vein of subversion and containment (Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism*; Seltzer; Michaels). Contra Howells and V.L. Parrington, who wrote the seminal *The Beginnings of Critical Realism* (1927), these critics argued that realism did the cultural work of imagining, representing and containing social upheaval and class differences during the development and consolidation of industrial capitalism and the emergence of mass culture in the postbellum period (Parrington). While indebted to this scholarship, this essay hews closer to a line of reasoning first drawn by Kenneth Warren in *Black and White Strangers* (1995) by attempting to trace the ways that this particular form of realism (there are multiple) came to articulate itself as an arena for politics in the first place.

⁴ In his history of Mississippi (1902), James Garner's chapter on the enactment of what we now call The Mississippi Plan is subtitled "Riots and Disturbances in 1875" and titled "The Revolution." This rhetorical subsuming of anti-governmental "riot" into patriotic nationalism of "The Revolution" suggests the ways that the Mississippi Plan became a national plan. Revealing its identification with nationalist rhetoric stemming from the initial revolution.

⁵ Reading ability was also clearly an asset, for example, when entering into contractual agreements, as freemen and women working on southern plantations would often negotiate "education" clauses for themselves and their children into their labor contracts (J. D. Anderson 22).

⁶ Southern planters tended to be skeptical of industrialist school reformers, despite reassurances that the intent of such reforms was to produce more efficient workers for factories and the plantation systems.

⁷ In addition to preparing black persons for their role as second class citizens in a modern, i.e., racially hierarchized, democracy, these reformers believed that proper schooling in industrial education would aid

in the modernization of the South's economic infrastructure, supplying factories with a ready supply of cheap, efficient black workers (J. D. Anderson 90-92). With this labor supply, the South would lead the way in breaking the back of the rapidly growing organized labor movement.

⁸ The co-identification of "black" and "Southern" during these years became so strong that when Jean Toomer famously resisted revisiting his Southern material after the success of *Cane* (1922) he was accused of rejecting his "true" racial identity. Much of the criticism produced since the book's rediscovery in the 1960s has been insistently biographical, focusing largely on Toomer's statement that he was an "American" rather than a "black" man or "Negro poet" and relating this declaration (or denunciation, depending on the critic) to the author's failure to achieve success in the literary marketplace after 1923. On the one hand, critics are careful to lay the blame on a reading public that, like publisher Boni and Liveright who insisted upon selling Toomer and *Cane* as "Negro," was not yet ready to accept Toomer's new American race. Slyly, though, these critics simultaneously suggest that Toomer was to blame, casting him as both the "father" of the New Negro Renaissance and its betrayer. In his 1926 essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Langston Hughes famously declared that resistance to the appellation "Negro poet" was a really a foolish wish to be "white" that prevented Negro artists from achieving the flowering of their true genius. Following the lead of Hughes, the critical tendency has been to retroactively read Toomer's career failure as the result of his rejection of his "true" racial identity. According to such a reading, Toomer was a racist idealist who chose abstraction over a genuinely constructive politicking. In choosing to betray his talent of "blackness" and abandoning the "real" material, the rescued slave songs and organic Negro folk culture that make for great art, good book sales and proper politics, therefore, Toomer earned the obscurity into which his works fell.

⁹ The Spanish-American War is known in Cuba as the Spanish-Cuban-American War, the elision of the "liberated" parties is a telling indicator of how imperial intentions did prevail.

¹⁰ In his review of Charles Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition*, Howells famously damned the novel, declaring that it was, "in fact, bitter, bitter." Although Howells's praises the artistry of Chesnutt and declares, "it cannot be said that either his aesthetics or ethics are false," Chesnutt's realism, wherein black magnanimity and medical skill earn the race a "moral victory," nevertheless discomfits him. Howells declared that Chesnutt's previous representations of his "distant cousins of the Southern cabins" and "the wonder of their beauty" prompted "whatever is primitive and sylvan or campestral in the reader's heart [to be] touched by the spells thrown on the simple black lives in these enchanting tales"; this newer representation of African Americans outside of this primitive perspective, though, prompted Howells to argue that Chesnutt had "lost literary quality in acquiring literary quantity, and though his book, 'The Marrow of Tradition,' is of the same strong material as his earlier books, it is less simple throughout" ("Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt's Stories" 700, "Review: A Psychological Counter-Current in Recent Fiction" 785).

¹¹ See Joel Chandler Harris *Uncle Remus and His Sayings* (1880), Thomas Dixon *The Leopard's Spots* (1902) for but two examples.

¹² In *Black and White Strangers*, Kenneth Warren argues that though some progressive realists, such as William Dean Howells, attempted to "unfix the barbaric from ethnic identification," thereby extending democracy's hand to the newly emancipated, their aesthetics ran athwart their politics (77, 89); anti-sentimental representation entailed with it anti-sentimental politics, wherein the possibilities for overcoming all difference was not "realistic." Because "acknowledgement of intransigent social difference [was] necessary for the project of generic distinction," the purpose formerly served by notions of the inherent biological inferiority of some races was fulfilled by translating race into the social terms of class and "civilization" (82-84).

¹³ This seems quite apparent when one pairs it with the work of the statistic-laden, straight-forwardly, "realistic" representations of Griggs's contemporary Ida B. Wells's in her muckraking exposé "Lynch Law in America" (1900). Wells had at her disposal such an enormity of "real" data that she was able to "give

day and detail of one thousand men, women, and children who during the last six years were put to death without trial before any tribunal on earth" (24).

¹⁴ In an example of the novel's unrealistic plotting, Mr. Leonard is presented without any type of narrative introduction. The text simply expects us to *know* who he is or alternately, does not care if we do. Mr. Leonard is the first of many "surprise" characters in the novel.

¹⁵ Griggs writes, "His feelings towards his wife were more of pity than reproach. Like the multitude he supposed that his failure to properly support her had tempted her to ruin. He loved her still; if anything, more passionately than ever" (Griggs 94). Here, the novel makes hers a surrender to advances rather than an assault – it cannot, again, speak the violence.

¹⁶ See Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*.

¹⁷ Knadler does an interesting reading of Zackland as an imaginative rewriting of Texas, the site of the future imperium, with Zack being short for Zachary Taylor, whose military heroics were critical to U.S. expansion into Texas (690). The initial spelling of Zackland as Zakeland in Griggs' novel is an inconsistency that might trouble this reading (100).

¹⁸ Griggs writes of the student exploits, for example: "These achievements were so remarkable that the Associated Press telegraphed the news over the country" (61). On another occasion, "the news was flashed over the country" (77). Bernard learns of the Imperium through a telegram (121). Belton runs a printing company.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By WILKIE COLLINS.

Author of "The Woman in White," "No Name," etc.

Printed from the Author's Manuscript.
RICHLY ILLUSTRATED.

Prologue.

THE STORMING OF SERINGAPATAM (1799):
(Extracted from a Family Paper).



I ADDRESS these lines—written in India—to my relatives in England.

My object is to explain the motive which has induced me to refuse the right hand of friendship to my cousin, John Herncastle. The reserve which I have hitherto maintained in this matter has been misinterpreted by members of my family whose good opinion I can not consent to forfeit. I request them to suspend their decision until they have read my narrative. And I declare, on my word of honor, that what I am now about to write is, strictly and literally, the truth.

The private difference between my cousin and me took its rise in a great public event in which we were both concerned—the storming of Seringapatam, under General Baird, on the 4th of May, 1799.

In order that the circumstances may be clearly understood, I must revert for a moment to the period before the assault, and to the stories current in our camp of the treasure in jewels and gold stored up in the Palace of Seringapatam.

II.

One of the wildest of these stories related to a Yellow Diamond—a famous gem in the native annals of India.

The earliest known traditions describe the stone as having been set in the forehead of the four-handed Indian god who typifies the Moon. Partly from its peculiar color, partly from a superstition which represented it as partaking of the nature of the deity whom it adorned, and growing and lessening in lustre with the waxing and waning of the moon, it first gained the name by which it continues to be known in India to this day—the name of THE MOONSTONE. A similar superstition was once prevalent, as I have heard, in ancient Greece and Rome: not applying, however (as in India), to a diamond devoted to the service of a god, but to a semi-transparent stone of the inferior order of gems, supposed to be affected by the lunar influences—the moon, in this latter case also, giving the name by which the stone is still known to collectors in our own time.

The adventures of the Yellow Diamond begin with the eleventh century of the Christian era. At that date the Mohammedan conqueror, Mahmood of Ghizni crossed India: seized on the holy city of Somnath; and stripped of its treasures the famous temple which had stood for centuries—the shrine of Hindoo pilgrimage, and the wonder of the eastern world.

Of all the deities worshipped in the temple, the moon-god alone escaped the rapacity of the conquering Mohammedans. Preserved by three Brahmins, the inviolate deity, bearing the Yellow Diamond in its forehead, was removed by night, and was transported to the second of the sacred cities of India—the city of Benares.

Here, in a new shrine—in a hall inlaid with precious stones, under a roof supported by pillars of gold—the moon-god was set up and worshipped. Here, on the night when the shrine was completed, Vishnu the Preserver appeared to the three Brahmins in a dream.

The deity breathed the breath of his divinity

on the Diamond in the forehead of the god. And the Brahmins knelt and hid their faces in their robes. The deity commanded that the Moonstone should be watched, from that time forth, by three priests in turn, night and day, to the end of the generations of men. And the Brahmins heard and bowed before his will. The deity predicted certain disaster to the presumptuous mortal who laid hands on the sacred gem, and to all of his house and name who received it after him. And the Brahmins caused the prophecy to be written over the gates of the shrine in letters of gold.

One age followed another—and still, generation after generation, the successors of the three Brahmins watched their priceless Moonstone, night and day. One age followed another, until the first years of the eighteenth Christian century saw the reign of Aurungzebe, Emperor of the Moguls. At his command havoc and rapine were let loose once more among the temples of the worship of Brahmins. The shrine of the four-handed god was polluted by the slaughter of sacred animals; the images of the deities were broken in pieces; and the Moonstone was seized by an officer of rank in the army of Aurungzebe. Powerless to recover their lost treasure by open force, the three guardian priests followed and watched it in disguise. The generations succeeded each other; the warrior who had committed the sacrilege perished miserably; the Moonstone passed (carrying its curse with it) from one lawless Mohammedan hand to another; and still, through all chances and changes, the successors of the three guardian priests kept their watch, waiting the day when the will of Vishnu the Preserver should restore to them their sacred gem. Time rolled on from the first to the last years of the eighteenth Christian century. The Diamond fell into the possession of Tippee, Sultan of Seringapatam, who caused it to be placed as an ornament in the handle of a dagger, and who commanded it to be kept among the choicest treasures of his armory. Even then—in the palace of the Sultan himself—the three guardian priests still watched in secret. There were three officers of Tippee's household, strangers to the rest, who had won their master's confidence by conforming, or appearing to conform, to the Mussulman faith; and to those three men report pointed as the three priests in disguise.

III.

So, as told in our camp, ran the fanciful story of the Moonstone. It made no serious impression on any of us except my cousin—whose love of the marvelous induced him to believe it. On the night before the assault on Seringapatam he was absurdly angry with me, and with others, for treating the whole thing as a fable. A foolish wrangle followed; and Herncastle's unlucky temper got the better of him. He declared, in his boastful way, that we should see the Diamond on his finger if the English army took Seringapatam. The sally was saluted by a roar of laughter, and there, as we all thought that night, the thing ended.

Let me now take you on to the day of the assault.

My cousin and I were separated at the outset. I never saw him when we forded the river; when we planted the English flag in the first breach; when we crossed the ditch beyond; and, fighting



"THE BOY BECAME QUITE STIFF, AND STOOD LIKE A STATUE, LOOKING INTO THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND."

every inch of our way, entered the town. It was only at dusk, when the place was ours, and after General Baird himself had found the dead body of Tippee under a heap of the slain, that Herncastle and I met.

We were each attached to a party sent out by the general's orders to prevent the plunder and confusion which followed our conquest. The camp-followers committed deplorable excesses; and, worse still, the soldiers found their way, by an unguarded door, into the treasury of the Palace, and loaded themselves with gold and jewels. It was in the court outside the treasury that my cousin and I met to enforce the laws of discipline on our own soldiers. Herncastle's fiery temper had been, as I could plainly see, exasperated to a kind of frenzy by the terrible slaughter through

which we had passed. He was very unfit, in my opinion, to perform the duty that had been intrusted to him.

There was riot and confusion enough in the treasury, but no violence that I saw. The men (if I may use such an expression) disgraced themselves good-humoredly. All sorts of rough jests and catch-words were bandied about among them; and the story of the Diamond turned up again unexpectedly, in the form of a mischievous joke. "Who's got the Moonstone?" was the rallying cry which perpetually caused the plundering as soon as it was stopped in one place to break out in another. While I was still vainly trying to establish order I heard a frightful yelling on the other side of the court-yard, and at once ran toward the cries, in dread of finding some new outbreak of the pillage in that direction.

I got to an open door, and saw the bodies of two Indians (by their dress, as I guessed, officers of the palace) lying across the entrance, dead.

A cry inside hurried me into a room, which appeared to serve as an armory. A third Indian, mortally wounded, was sinking at the feet of a man whose back was toward me. The man turned at the instant when I came in, and I saw John Herncastle, with a torch in one hand and a dagger dripping with blood in the other. A stone, set like a pommel, in the end of the dagger's handle, flashed in the torch-light, as he turned on me, like a gleam of fire. The dying Indian sank to his knees, pointed to the dagger in Herncastle's hand, and said, in his native language: "The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!" He spoke those words, and fell dead on the floor.

Before I could stir in the matter the men who had followed me across the court-yard crowded in. My cousin rushed to meet them, like a madman. "Clear the room!" he shouted to me, "and set a guard on the door!" The men fell back as he threw himself on them with his torch and his dagger. I put two sentinels of my own company, on whom I could rely, to keep the door. Through the remainder of the night I saw no more of my cousin.

Early in the morning, the plunder still going on, General Baird announced publicly by beat of drum that any thief detected in the fact, be he whom he might, should be hung. The provost-marshal was in attendance to prove that the general was in earnest; and in the throng that followed the proclamation Herncastle and I met again.

He held out his hand as usual, and said, "Good-morning."

I waited before I gave him my hand in return.

"Tell me first," I said, "how the Indian in the armory met his death, and what those last words meant when he pointed to the dagger in your hand."

"The Indian met his death, as I suppose, by a mortal wound," said Herncastle. "What his last words meant I know no more than you do."

I looked at him narrowly. His frenzy of the previous day had all calmed down. I determined to give him another chance.

"Is that all you have to tell me?" I asked.

He answered, "That is all."

I turned my back on him; and we have not spoken since.



"THE MOONSTONE WILL HAVE ITS VENGEANCE YET ON YOU AND YOURS"

Figure 1

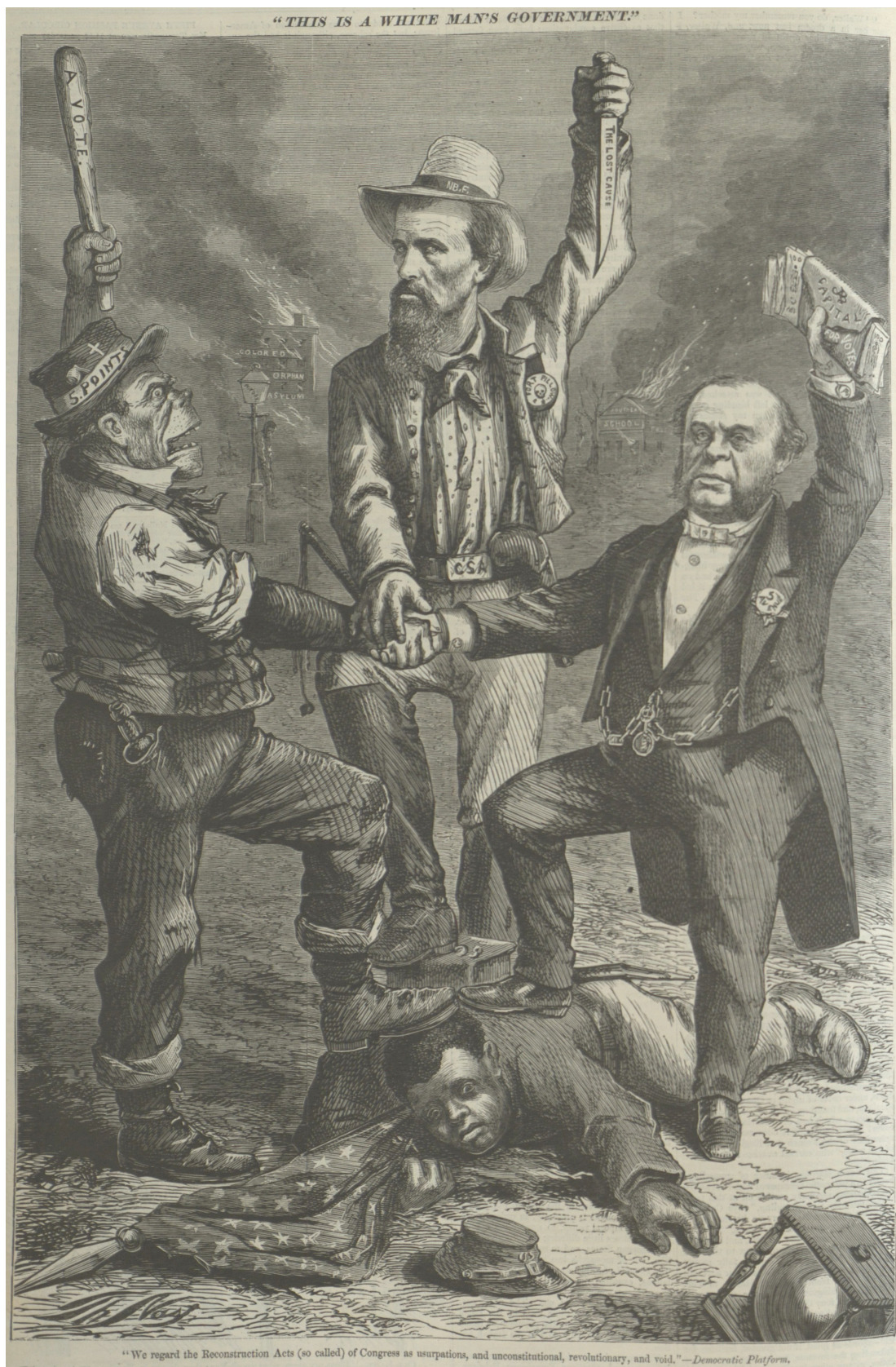


Figure 2

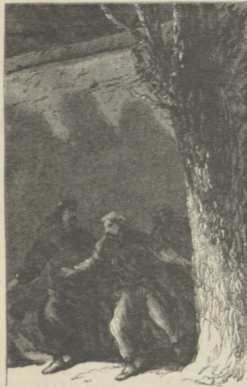
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CHAPTER VIII.

HERE, for one moment, I find it necessary to call a halt.

On summoning up my own recollections—and on getting Penelope to help me, by consulting her journal—I find that we may pass pretty rapidly over the interval between Mr. Franklin Blake's arrival and Miss Rachel's birthday. For the greater part of that time the days passed, and brought nothing with them worth recording. With your good leave, then, and with Penelope's help, I shall notice certain dates only in this place, reserving to myself to tell the story day by day, once more, as soon as we get to the time when the business of the Moonstone became the chief business of every body in our house.

This said, we may now go on again—beginning, of course, with the bottle of sweet-smelling ink which I found on the gravel-walk at night.

On the next morning (the morning of the twenty-sixth) I showed Mr. Franklin this article of jiggery, and told him what I have already told you. His opinion was, not only that the Indians had been lurking about after the Diamond, but also that they were actually foolish enough to believe in their own magic—meaning thereby the making of signs on a boy's head, and the pouring of ink into a boy's hand, and then expecting him to see persons and things beyond the reach of human vision. In our country, as well as in the East, Mr. Franklin informed me, there are people who practice this curious hocus-pocus (without the ink, however); and who call it by a French name, signifying something like brightness of sight. "Depend upon it," says Mr. Franklin, "the Indians took it for granted that we should keep the Diamond here; and they brought their clairvoyant boy to show them the way to it, if they succeeded in getting into the house last night."

"Do you think they'll try again, Sir?" I asked. "It depends," says Mr. Franklin, "on what the boy can really do. If he can see the Diamond through the iron safe of the bank at Prizingshall, we shall be troubled with no more visits from the Indians for the present. If he can't, we shall have another chance of catching them in the shrubbery before many more nights are over our heads."

I waited pretty confidently for that latter chance; but, strange to relate, it never came. Whether the jugglers heard, in the town, of Mr. Franklin having been seen at the bank, and drew their conclusions accordingly; or whether the boy really did see the Diamond where the Diamond was now lodged (which I, for one, flatly disbelieve); or whether, after all, it was a mere effect of chance, this, at any rate, is the plain truth—not the ghost of an Indian came near the house again, through the weeks that passed before Miss Rachel's birthday. The jugglers remained in and about the town plying their trade; and Mr. Franklin and I remained waiting to see what might happen, and resolute not to put the rogues on their guard by showing our suspicions of them too soon. With this report of the proceedings on either side, ends all that I have to say about the Indians for the present.

On the twenty-ninth of the month, Miss Rachel and Mr. Franklin hit on a new method of working their way together through the time which might otherwise have hung heavy on their hands. There are reasons for taking particular notice here of the occupation that amused them. You will find it has a bearing on something that is still to come.

Gentlefolks in general have a very awkward rock ahead in life—the rock ahead of their own idleness. Their lives being, for the most part, passed in looking about them for something to do, it is curious to see—especially when their

tastes are of what is called the intellectual sort—how often they drift blindfold into some nasty pursuit. Nine times out of ten they take to torturing something, or to spoiling something; and they firmly believe they are improving their minds, when the plain truth is, they are only making a mess in the house. I have seen them (ladies, I am sorry to say, as well as gentlemen) go out, day after day, for example, with empty pill-boxes, and catch newts, and beetles, and spiders, and frogs, and come home and stick pins through the miserable wretches, or cut them up, without a pang of remorse, into little pieces. You see my young master, or my young mistress, poring over one of their spiders' insides with a magnifying-glass; or you meet one of their frogs walking down stairs without his head; and when you wonder what this cruel nastiness means, you are told that it means a taste in my young master or my young mistress for natural history. Sometimes, again, you see them occupied for hours together in spoiling a pretty flower with pointed instruments, out of a stupid curiosity to know what the flower is made of. Is its color any prettier, or its scent any sweeter, when you do know? But there! the poor souls must get through the time, you see—they must get through the time. You dabbled in nasty mud, and made pies, when you were a child; and you dabble in nasty science, and dissect spiders, and spoil flowers, when you grow up. In the one case and in the other the secret of it is that you have got nothing to think of in your poor empty head, and nothing to do with your poor idle hands. And so it ends in your spoiling canvas with paints, and making a smell in the house; or in keeping tadpoles in a glass box full of dirty water, and turning every body's stomach in the house; or in chipping off bits of stone here, there, and every where, and dropping grit into all the victuals in the house; or in staining your fingers in the pursuit of photography, and doing justice without mercy on every body's face in the house. It often falls heavy enough, no doubt, on people who are really obliged to get their living, to be forced to work for the clothes that cover them, the roof that shelters them, and the food that keeps them going. But compare the hardest day's work you ever did with the idleness that spoils flowers and pokes its way into spiders' stomachs, and thank your stars that your head has got something it *must* think of, and your hands something that they *must* do.

As for Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel, they tortured nothing, I am glad to say. They simply confined themselves to making a mess; and all they spoiled, to do them justice, was the paneling of a door.

Mr. Franklin's universal genius, dabbling in every thing, dabbled in what he called "decorative painting." He had invented, he informed us, a new mixture to moisten paint with, which he described as a "vehicle." What it was made



"MISS RACHEL THEN COVERED THE SURFACE, UNDER HIS DIRECTIONS AND WITH HIS HELP, WITH PATTERNS AND DEVICES."

of I don't know. What it did I can tell you in two words—it stank. Miss Rachel being wild to try her hand at the new process, Mr. Franklin sent to London for the materials; mixed them up, with accompaniment of a small which made the very dogs sneeze when they came into the

room; put an apron and a bib over Miss Rachel's gown, and set her to work decorating her own little sitting-room—called, for want of English to name it in, her "boudoir." They began with the inside of the door. Mr. Franklin scraped off all the nice varnish with pumice-stone, and made what he described as a surface to work on. Miss Rachel then covered the surface, under his directions and with his help, with patterns and devices—griffins, birds, flowers, cupids, and such like—copied from designs made by a famous Italian painter, whose name escapes me—the one, I mean, who stocked the world with Virgin Marys and had a sweet-heart at the baker's. Viewed as work, this decoration was slow to do and dirty to deal with. But our young lady and gentleman never seemed to tire of it. When they were not riding, or seeing company, or taking their meals, or piping their songs, there they were with their heads together, as busy as bees, spoiling the door. Who was the poet who said that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do? If he had occupied my place in the family, and had seen Miss Rachel with her brush, and Mr. Franklin with his vehicle, he could have written nothing truer of either of them than that.

The next date worthy of notice is Sunday, the fourth of June.

On that evening we, in the servants' hall, debated a domestic question for the first time, which, like the decoration of the door, has its bearing on something that is still to come.

Seeing the pleasure which Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel took in each other's society, and noting what a pretty match they were in all personal respects, we naturally speculated on the chance of their putting their heads together with other objects in view besides the ornamenting of a door. Some of us said there would be a wedding in the house before the summer was over. Others (led by me) admitted it was likely enough Miss Rachel might be married; but we doubted (for reasons which will presently appear) whether her bridegroom would be Mr. Franklin Blake.

That Mr. Franklin was in love, on his side, nobody who saw and heard him could doubt. The difficulty was to fathom Miss Rachel. Let me do myself the honor of making you acquainted with her; after which I will leave you to fathom her yourself—if you can.

My young lady's eighteenth birthday was the birthday now coming, on the twenty-first of June. If you happen to like dark women (who, I am informed, have gone out of fashion lately in the gay world), and if you have no particular prejudice in favor of size, I answer for Miss Rachel as one of the prettiest girls your eyes ever looked on. She was small and slim, but all in fine proportion from top to toe. To see her sit down, to see her get up, and specially to see her walk, was enough to satisfy any man in his senses that the graces of her figure (if you will pardon me the expression) were in her flesh, and not in her clothes. Her hair was the blackest I ever saw. Her eyes matched her hair. Her nose was not quite large enough, I admit. Her mouth and chin were (to quote Mr. Franklin) morsels for the gods; and her complexion (on the same undeniable authority) was as warm as the sun itself, with this great advantage over the sun, that it was always in nice order to look at. Add to the



"SHE CAUGHT ROSANNA AT MR. FRANKLIN'S DRESSING-TABLE, SECRETLY REMOVING A ROSE," ETC.

Figure 3

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by HARPER & BROTHERS, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

THE MOONSTONE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

Author of "The Woman in White," "No Name," etc.

Printed from the Author's Manuscript.
RICHLI ILLUSTRATED.



SECOND NARRATIVE.

Contributed by *Mathew Bruff, Solicitor, of Gray's Inn Square.*

CHAPTER I.

My fair friend, Miss Clack, having laid down the pen, there are two reasons for my taking it up next, in my turn.

In the first place, I am in a position to throw the necessary light on certain points of interest which have thus far been left in the dark. Miss Verinder had her own private reason for breaking her marriage engagement—and I was at the bottom of it. Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite had his own private reason for withdrawing all claim to the hand of his charming cousin—and I discovered what it was.

In the second place, it was my good or ill fortune, I hardly know which, to find myself personally involved—at the period of which I am now writing—in the mystery of the Indian Diamond. I had the honor of an interview, at my own office, with an Oriental stranger of distinguished manners, who was no other, unquestionably, than the chief of the three Indians. Add to this, that I met with the celebrated traveler, Mr. Murthwaite, the day afterward, and that I held a conversation with him on the subject of the Moonstone, which has a very important bearing on later events. And there you have the statement of my claims to fill the position which I occupy in these pages.

The true story of the broken marriage engagement comes first in point of time, and must therefore take the first place in the present narrative. Tracing my way back along the chain of events, from one end to the other, I find it necessary to open the scene, oddly enough as you will think, at the bedside of my excellent client and friend, the late Sir John Verinder.

Sir John had his share—perhaps rather a large share—of the more harmless and amiable of the weaknesses incidental to humanity. Among these, I may mention as applicable to the matter in hand, an invincible reluctance—so long as he enjoyed his usual good health—to face the responsibility of making his will. Lady Verinder exerted her influence to rouse him to a sense of duty in this matter; and I exerted my influence. He admitted the justice of our views—but he went no further than that, until he found himself afflicted with the illness which ultimately brought him to his grave. Then, I was sent for at last, to take my client's instructions on the subject of his will. They proved to be the simplest instructions I had ever received in the whole of my professional career.

Sir John was dozing, when I entered the room. He roused himself at the sight of me.

"How do you do, Mr. Bruff?" he said. "I shan't be very long about this. And then I'll go to sleep again." He looked on with great interest while I collected pens, ink, and paper. "Are you ready?" he asked. I bowed, and took a dip of ink, and waited for my instructions.

"Every thing to my wife," said Sir John. "That's all." He turned round on his pillow, and composed himself to sleep again.

I was obliged to disturb him.

"Am I to understand," I asked, "that you leave the whole of the property, of every sort and description, of which you are the possessor, absolutely to Lady Verinder?"

"Yes," said Sir John. "Only I put it shorter. Why can't you put it shorter, and let me go to sleep again? Every thing to my wife. That's my will."

His property was entirely at his own disposal, and was of two kinds. Property in land (I purposely abstain from using technical language), and property in money. In the majority of

cases, I am afraid I should have felt it my duty to my client to ask him to reconsider his Will. In the case of Sir John, I knew Lady Verinder to be, not only worthy of the unreserved trust which her husband had placed in her (all good wives are worthy of that—but to be also capable of properly administering a trust which, in my experience of the fair sex, not one in a thousand of them is competent to do). In ten minutes Sir John's Will was drawn and executed, and Sir John himself, good man, was finishing his interrupted nap.

Lady Verinder amply justified the confidence which her husband had placed in her. In the first days of her widowhood she sent for me and made her Will. The view she took of her position was so thoroughly sound and sensible that I was relieved of all necessity for advising her. My responsibility began and ended with shaping her instructions into the proper legal form. Before Sir John had been a fortnight in his grave the future of his daughter had been most wisely and most affectionately provided for.

The Will remained in its fire-proof box at my office, through more years than I like to reckon up. It was not till the summer of eighteen hundred and forty-eight that I found occasion to look at it again under very melancholy circumstances.

At the date I have mentioned the doctors pronounced the sentence on poor Lady Verinder, which was literally a sentence of death. I was the first person whom she informed of her situation; and I found her anxious to go over her Will again with me.

It was impossible to improve the provisions relating to her daughter. But, in the lapse of time, her wishes in regard to certain minor legacies, left to different relatives, had undergone some modification; and it became necessary to add three or four Codicils to the original document.

Having done this, at once, for fear of accidents, I obtained her ladyship's permission to embody her recent instructions in a second Will. My object was to avoid certain inevitable confusions and repetitions which now disgraced the original document, and which, to own the truth, graced sadly on my professional sense of the fitness of things.

The execution of this second Will has been described by Miss Clack, who was so obliging as to witness it. So far as regards Rachel Verinder's pecuniary interests, it was, word for word, the exact counterpart of the first Will. The only changes introduced related to the appointment of a guardian, and to certain provisions concerning that appointment, which were made under my advice. On Lady Verinder's death, the Will was placed in the hands of my proctor to be "proved" (as the phrase is) in the usual way.

In about three weeks from that time—as well as I can remember—the first warning reached me of something unusual going on under the surface. I happened to be looking in at my friend the proctor's office, and I observed that he received me with an appearance of greater interest than usual.

"I have some news for you," he said. "What do you think I heard at Doctors' Commons this morning? Lady Verinder's Will has been asked for, and examined, already!"

This was news indeed! There was absolutely nothing which could be contested in the Will; and there was nobody I could think of who had the slightest interest in examining it. (I shall perhaps do well if I explain in this place, for the benefit of the few people who don't know it already, that the law allows all Wills to be examined at Doctors' Commons by any body who applies, on the payment of a shilling fee.)

"Did you hear who asked for the Will?" I inquired.

"Yes; the clerk had no hesitation in telling me. Mr. Smalley, of the firm of Skipp & Smalley, asked for it. The Will has not been copied yet into the great Folio Registers. So there was no alternative but to depart from the usual course, and to let him see the original document. He looked it over carefully, and made a note in his pocket-book. Have you any idea of what he wanted with it?"

I shook my head. "I shall find out," I answered, "before I am a day older." With that I went back at once to my own office.

If any other firm of solicitors had been concerned in this unaccountable examination of my deceased client's Will I might have found some difficulty in making the necessary discovery. But I had a hold over Skipp & Smalley which made my course in this matter a comparatively easy one. My common-law clerk (a most competent and excellent man) was a brother of Mr. Smalley's; and, owing to this sort of indirect connection with me, Skipp & Smalley had, for some years past, picked up the crumbs that fell from my table, in the shape of cases brought to my office, which, for various reasons, I did not think it worth while to undertake. My professional patronage was, in this way, of some importance to the firm. I intended, if necessary, to remind them of that patronage on the present occasion.

The moment I got back I spoke to my clerk; and after telling him what had happened I sent him to his brother's office, "with Mr. Bruff's compliments, and he would be glad to know why Messrs. Skipp & Smalley had found it necessary to examine Lady Verinder's Will."

This message brought Mr. Smalley back to my office, in company with his brother. He acknowledged that he had acted under instructions received from a client. And then he put it to me, whether it would not be a breach of professional confidence on his part to say more.

We had a smart discussion upon that. He was right, no doubt; and I was wrong. The truth is; I was angry and suspicious—and I insisted on knowing more. Worse still, I declined

to consider any additional information offered to me, as a secret placed in my keeping; I claimed perfect freedom to use my own discretion. Worse even than that, I took an unwarrantable advantage of my position. "Choose, Sir," I said to Mr. Smalley, "between the risk of losing your client's business, and the risk of losing mine." Quite indefensible, I admit—an act of tyranny, and nothing less. Like other tyrants, I carried my point. Mr. Smalley chose his alternative, without a moment's hesitation. He smiled resignedly, and gave up the name of his client:

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

That was enough for me—I wanted to know no more.

Having reached this point in my narrative, it now becomes necessary to place the reader of these lines—so far as Lady Verinder's Will is concerned—on a footing of perfect equality, in respect of information, with myself.

Let me state, then, in the fewest possible words, that Rachel Verinder had nothing but a life-interest in the property. Her mother's excellent sense, and my long experience, had combined to relieve her of all responsibility, and to guard her from all danger of becoming the victim in the future of some needy and unscrupulous man. Neither she nor her husband (if she married) could raise sixpence, either on the property in land or on the property in money. They would have the houses in London and in Yorkshire to live in, and they would have the handsome income—and that was all.

When I came to think over what I had discovered, I was sorely perplexed what to do next.

Hardly a week had passed since I had heard (to my surprise and distress) of Miss Verinder's proposed marriage. I had the sincerest admiration and affection for her; and I had been inexpressibly grieved when I heard that she was about to throw herself away on Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. And now, here was this man—whom I had always believed to be a smooth-tongued impostor—justifying the very worst that I had thought of him, and plainly revealing the mercenary object of the marriage, on his side! And what of that?—you may reply—the thing is done every day. Granted, my dear Sir. But would you think of it quite as lightly as you do, if the thing was done (let us say) with your own sister?

The first consideration which now naturally occurred to me, was this. "Would Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite hold to his engagement, after what his lawyer had discovered for him?"

It depended entirely on his pecuniary position, of which I knew nothing. If that position was not a desperate one, it would be well worth his while to marry Miss Verinder for her income alone. If, on the other hand, he stood in urgent need of realizing a large sum by a given time,

then Lady Verinder's Will would exactly meet the case, and would preserve her daughter from falling into a scoundrel's hands.

In the latter event, there would be no need for me to distress Miss Rachel, in the first days of her mourning for her mother, by an immediate revelation of the truth. In the former event, if I remained silent, I should be conniving at a marriage which would make her miserable for life.

My doubts ended in my calling at the hotel in London, at which I knew Mrs. Ablewhite and Miss Verinder to be staying. They informed me that they were going to Brighton the next day, and that an unexpected obstacle prevented Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite from accompanying them. I at once proposed to take his place. When I was only thinking of Rachel Verinder, it was possible to hesitate. When I actually saw her, my mind was made up directly, come what might of it, to tell her the truth.

I found my opportunity, when I was out walking with her, on the day after my arrival.

"May I speak to you," I asked, "about your marriage engagement?"

"Yes," she said, indifferently, "if you have nothing more interesting to talk about."

"Will you forgive an old friend and servant of your family, Miss Rachel, if I venture on asking whether your heart is set on this marriage?"

"I am marrying in despair, Mr. Bruff—on the chance of dropping into some sort of stagnant happiness which may reconcile me to my life."

Strong language! and suggestive of something below the surface, in the shape of a romance. But I had my own object in view, and I declined (as we lawyers say) to pursue the question into its idle issues.

"Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite can hardly be of your way of thinking," I said. "His heart must be set on the marriage, at any rate?"

"He says so, and I suppose I ought to believe him. He would hardly marry me, after what I have owned to him, unless he was fond of me."

Poor thing! the bare idea of a man marrying her for his own selfish and mercenary ends had never entered her head. The task I had set myself began to look like a harder task than I had bargained for.

"It sounds strangely," I went on, "in my old-fashioned ears—"

"What sounds strangely?" she asked.

"To hear you speak of your future husband as if you were not quite sure of the sincerity of his attachment. Are you conscious of any reason in your own mind for doubting him?"

Her astonishing quickness of perception detected a change in my voice, or my manner,



"YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ENTITLED TO PAY THE MONEY BACK IN ONE YEAR'S TIME FROM THE DATE AT WHICH IT WAS FIRST ADVANCED TO YOU."

Figure 4

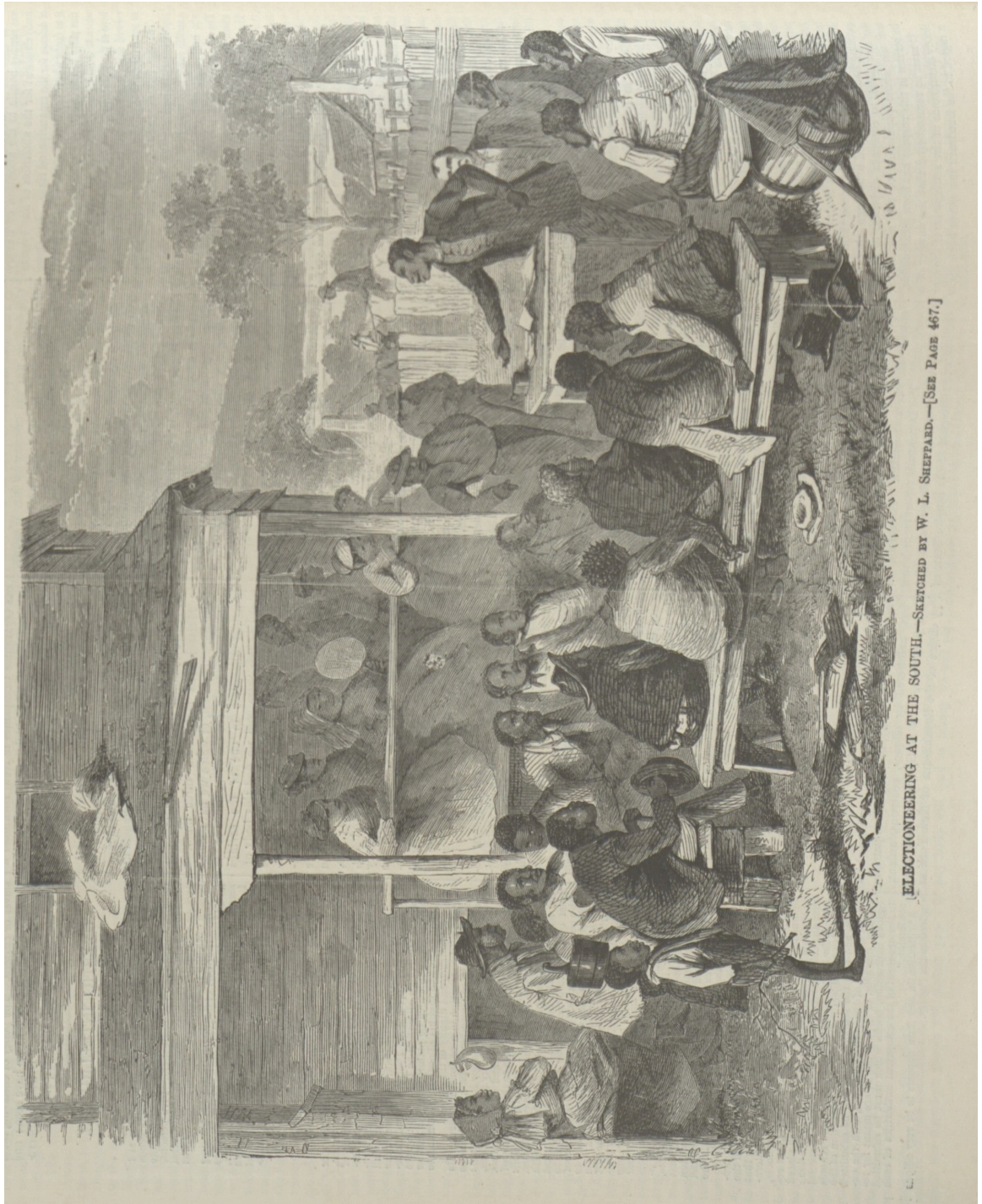
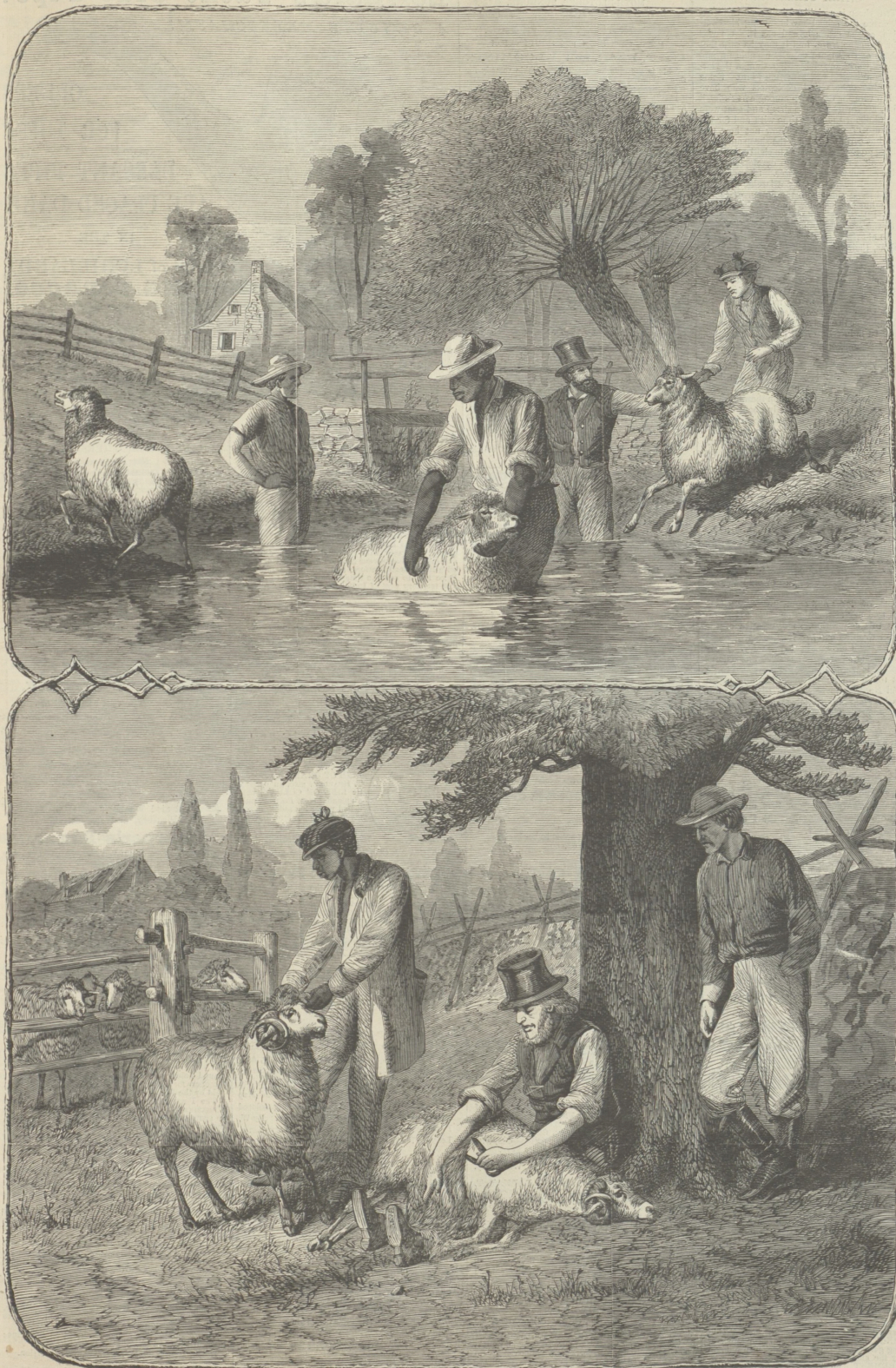


Figure 5



WASHING AND SHEARING SHEEP IN THE COUNTRY.—SKETCHED BY EDWIN FORBES.—[SEE PAGE 462.]

Figure 6



AMERICA. "Brothers and Sisters, I am happy to present to you the Oldest Member of the Family, who desires our better acquaintance."

Figure 7

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