

**The Presence of the Other: Racial Representation in
*Dombey and Son, Vanity Fair and Jane Eyre***

by

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ABSTRACT

In the late 1840's, people of colour were not common either in England's population, or in its literature, yet they appear as minor characters in three domestic novels of the time: *Dombey and Son*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Jane Eyre*. Working from Patrick Brantlinger's supposition that the idea of British Empire appears in even the most unlikely of domestic texts, "The Presence of the Other: Racial Representation in *Dombey and Son*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Jane Eyre*" explores the reasons behind, and the implications of, the Othering of these minor characters.

If an imperialist text insists that that which is colonized is a blank periphery onto which the Imperialist can project his/her own meaning, a deconstructive reading insists the "blank" is readable in and of itself. Treating the text as a palimpsest allows it to be read under erasure to determine the assumptions that underlie its production.

In *Dombey and Son*, the Native is initially used to characterize the imperial Major Bagstock. As the comic and stereotypic descriptions of the Native become more exaggerated, his passive suffering and the savagery of the Major's methods of civilizing him are revealed. The Native becomes a sympathetic representative of the colonized, a faceless, nameless, and voiceless backdrop to the activities of Empire.

Characters are Othered in *Vanity Fair* as a means of making moral observations about society's obsession with wealth and status. A deconstructive reading of the novel, however, demonstrates a discomfort with the contradictory nature of imperialism, which morally distances Self from Other while bringing the two sides into geographical contact.

In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha is presented as an allegorical figure representing uncontrolled female passion: on a symbolic level as an Other she acts as a moral double for Jane; on the level of plot, it is her presence as an Other which enables Jane and Rochester to marry with greater moral purity. Yet the text also reveals Bertha's status as a silenced and imprisoned colonial woman.

In conclusion, through their depiction of Others, these three novels demonstrate ambivalent feelings towards the developing construct of British Empire.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray--a carrier onto whom the master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go forward, erect and immaculate. (13)

– Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa”

The relationship between the social and political issues of an era and its literature is necessarily a close one. Fredric Jameson argues that literature is informed by the “political unconscious,” and therefore literary texts “must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community” (70). As the relationship between the text and the social processes that provide its context is a reflexive one, the text has an active correspondence with the historical subtext: the text draws the historical subtext into itself and in doing so transforms it. Through this transformation or “symbolic act” of the narrative, the text “brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction” (Jameson 81-2). A text, then, is not a “cultural artifact” but a symbol of the political-social-economic processes around it. For this reason, Allen Greenberger writes,

[L]iterature can be valuable evidence for the historian in many ways. . . . First it is one of the major sources of information which the public receives. . . . Second, since many of the authors were only vocal members of the public rather than full-fledged intellectuals, they give a broad picture of how people in general were thinking at a given time. (1)

Literature written in the late Victorian period is widely known for its representation of Empire. Critics in recent years, however, have argued that imperial concerns are also reflected in literary texts from much earlier in the century. And in fact, a brief historical survey of English literature demonstrates that there has almost always been an interest expressed about other lands and peoples.

In this introduction, I shall explore how English society's view of other peoples, Africans in particular, evolved as England became more active in trade and colonization. As well I shall discuss how Othering works, how it is a necessary aspect of the imperial endeavor, and how this evolution of the Other is reflected in literary works. This will provide a background for the discussion of racial representation in three mid-Victorian domestic texts.

Before black Africans were brought to England in the mid-sixteenth century, their image had long been a part of English culture. Medieval accounts of travel, such as John Mandeville's popular *Travels*, which appeared around 1350, described both the appearance and culture of Africans. These accounts often did not bother to differentiate between fact and fiction, their purpose being to provide an entertaining account of a strange land for English readers who were curious about, but not threatened by, a people they had never encountered. For instance, of the inhabitants of the Isle of Natumeran Mandeville writes:

Men and women of that isle have heads like hounds; and they are called Cynocephales. This folk, thereof all they be of such shape, yet they are full reasonable and subtle of wit. . . .And they gang all naked but a little cloth before their privy members. They are large of stature and good warriors, and they bear a great target, with

which they cover all their body, and a long spear in their hand.

(138)

This account of the Cynocephales' nakedness lacks the overt connection with sexuality and sin that flavours the writings of eighteenth century missionaries—while Mandeville notes and at times exaggerates difference, there is no sense of a pejorative judgement.

The attitude of the medieval church towards black Africans was also non-judgemental. J. Devisse's *The Image of the Black in Western Art* mentions the presence of black saints in medieval carvings and statuary in European cathedrals, suggesting that blacks were not yet associated with sin. Biblical passages such as the Song of Solomon 1:5-6 ("I am very dark, but comely. . . Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has scorched me.") and Jeremiah 13:23 ("Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?") refer to the darkness of Africans' skin colour, but encourage an acceptance of the difference as being a natural one, and one without any particular significance. Up until the mid-sixteenth century "Africans were perceived in a more or less neutral and benign manner" (JanMohamed 1985, 61).

Once England became involved in the triangular slave trade, however, the portrayal of Africans was "determined by the status of [their] conquest" (February 184). As the English sought to solidify their status as conquerors, establishing their right to exploit the resources and people of their colonies in the name of Empire, they codified the behaviour of the colonized into stereotyped clichés of race, establishing the Other.

Othering is a form of ethnographic representation that seeks to define a person or group of people through a limited set of physical features and character traits, usually negative. The act of Othering a foreign people is a

symptom of ethnocentricity, and according to Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow, ethnocentrism is nearly universal:

It is not going too far to say that ethnocentrism is a nearly universal human attitude. All people are so thoroughly conditioned to their own culture that their habits and learned modes of behaviour seem the inevitable expression of basic human nature. Other people with different habits acquired from their cultures seem to behave unnaturally or perversely. This is the basis of all preconception about alien cultures and the seedbed of the stereotypes by which they are described. Differences are almost always exaggerated. Even in the absence of difference, strange and unnatural behavior is projected onto the alien group simply because they *are* alien. . . . Alien behavior is made to serve as an object lesson—the contrast that highlights and affirms the worth of one's own patterns of behavior. (15-6)

It is through this representation that the colonizer claims authority over the colonized, subjugating them to a restricted and negative status as Other.

The evolution of the African's status as Other is evident in a comparison of the writings of William Shakespeare and Daniel Defoe. D.C.A. Goonetilleke notes that Shakespeare's *Othello* was written between 1602 and 1604, just as England was beginning to become involved in the slave trade, and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719, at a time when slaves were acquiring increasing economic importance—the colonies in the West Indies increasingly required slave labour to operate—and were now openly referred to as "chattel" (39).¹

¹ In 1677 the English Solicitor-General declared that blacks slaves should be considered goods and commodities within the Acts of Trade and Navigation, officially defining black slaves as subhuman (Walvin 39).

Whereas Shakespeare dramatises the mixed value of both the civilised and the primitive, Defoe implicitly endorses Crusoe's attitudes and actions. He assumes that the "benighted savage" must be civilized—this meant, made European—in a domineering way by forcing on him Christianity, English and the like. He intends Crusoe to be the average civilised man, but Crusoe carries the stamp of his period. His Christian zeal anticipates the religious mask of imperialism and, to put it at its highest, the genuine missionary spirit which got its chance under the British Empire.

(Goonetilleke 10-1)

One interesting result of the changing English view of Africans was a new interpretation of the Biblical tale of Ham. Winthrop Jordan notes that in medieval times blacks were commonly believed to be the descendents of Ham, Noah's disobedient son, a connection that was likely established because Ham's descendents are later described as having settled the territory of Gerar as far as Gaza (Genesis 9:8:19), which suggests Northern Africa (9). The particular timing of the discovery of such a dark-skinned people² in the sixteenth century was detrimental to the image of the Africans since it "came during an era when the accepted English standard of ideal beauty was a fair complexion of rose and white" (Jordan 7). There was considerable debate about the origin of such a dark skin colour, for instance whether or not the dark colour was due to the heat. As there was no proof for this particular theory, the tendency was to turn back to the medieval theory about the curse of Ham. The old theory, however, now had a new ramification:

² English encounters were initially, and principally, with West Africans who had very dark complexions (Jordan 5).

By linking the cause of Africans' blackness to the sin of their mythic progenitor, the Christian tradition with remarkable economy attached to all people of African ancestry an irrevocable bond to a sinful past. In a theological system that believes that sinfulness is the inheritance of all and that employs the trope of ablution through Baptism, the mark of sin on blacks is uniquely severe because the sign of their singleness is indelible. (Barthelemy 3)

Although the passage about Noah cursing his son is about slavery and not race ("Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:8:25), it provided more justification for participating in the African slave trade.

The imperial process involves marginalizing the colonies' natives by stripping them of their identities, leaving them unnamed and silent, to render them a blank on which the colonizers can project their own assumptions, such as the one above based on Ham, according to their needs. Ultimately Others function as beings through whom the colonizers can define themselves, or more accurately, from whom they can distinguish themselves. Frantz Fanon describes how the process works: "each individual has to charge the blame for his baser drives, his impulses to the account of an evil genius, which is that of the culture to which he belongs (we have seen that this is the Negro)" (194).

The Self/Other binary is accompanied by a whole series of polarized binaries—good and evil, beauty and ugliness, white and black, to name a few—a system of characteristic pairings that Fanon refers to as "manichean delirium" in which the scapegoat, the Other, is assigned all of the negative poles (183). Abdul R. JanMohamed expands this idea further by positing the existence of a

"manichean allegory," the symbolic system through which colonialist³ literature expresses racist attitudes. He argues that the dominant model of power in colonial societies is the "manichean opposition" between the supposed superiority of the colonizer and the supposed inferiority of the native. The resulting manichean allegory informs colonialist literature, and transforms what is purely racial difference into moral and metaphysical difference. This manichean framework is

allegorical in that it explains and orders external, accidental physical differences in terms of internal moral differences, in terms of the binary opposites of good and evil; it is metonymic to the extent that it conflates parts and wholes. Once black skin is categorized as a sign of moral inferiority, black individuals become interchangeable units of an evil group. (1983, 269)

JanMohamed terms this type of metonymy "racial pathetic fallacy": "Individual faults or merits are here ascribed not to individual personality or even to the sociology of a particular culture but to all Nigerians and eventually to all Africans" (1983, 16). This can be extended even further, from "all Africans" to all darker-skinned persons, including East Indians, Native Americans, Asians, etc. The nature of the Self/Other split is such that anyone who is not identified with Self (i.e. white English) is lumped in with the Other. The difference between Self and Other subsumes all differences between various groups of Others; what is emphasized about racial groups in the Other category is the negative qualities they share. It is not surprising that in his study of East Indian characters in English novels from 1880-1960, Allen Greenberger finds that East Indians are

³ For the purposes of this paper, imperialist literature will be defined as those literary texts which actively promote the concept of Empire; colonialist literature is informed by a discourse of empire but does not actively endorse it.

described using the same stereotypic images that are used to depict Africans: Indian people as simple children in need of strict guidance and protection (43), Indian women as sensual animals (54), and so on.

Deeply embedded in colonialist society, the manichean aesthetic infiltrates all of its literature. JanMohamed writes, "The power relations underlying the model set in motion such strong currents that even a writer who is reluctant to acknowledge [these power relations] and who may indeed be highly critical of imperialist exploitation is drawn into its vortex" (1985, 63). Theoretically, he says, a colonialist writer might be able to identify with the native, but in practice this would only be possible if the writer could somehow negate the values, assumptions and ideology of the colonialist culture. Thus, even a sympathetic portrayal of a native would be subverted by the colonialist writer's assumption of moral superiority. "Instead of being an exploration of the racial Other, such Literature merely affirms its own ethnocentric assumptions" (1985, 65).

A case in point is the abolitionist movement in England which was at least partially fueled by the romantic image of the "noble savage," an uncorrupted man suitably Europeanized by writers to render him more palatable to the English public. Although the concept of the noble savage first appeared in the early eighteenth century, it was the Romantic literary movement that helped to popularize it. Despite the apparent sympathy of the Romantic writers for the plight of the black slave, Lemuel Johnson argues that, in contrast to the powerfully dramatic voice of the Moor found in Shakespearean times, black characters in Romantic literature "demonstrate[d] a wide-eyed, melancholic bovinity" (49). Of William Blake's poem "The Little Black Boy" Johnson writes:

It is easy to imagine how the social situation of the day coalesced
into the creation by Blake of what may really be called the

prototype of Black Sambo and that monument to religious stoicism, Aunt Jemima. . . . There is no defiant virility in the blackamoor's voice. With melancholic simplicity he expresses concern in metaphors antithetical to his blackness:

And I am black, but O my soul is white;
 White as an angel is the English child
 But I am black as if bereaved of light. (53)

The writing that came directly from the abolitionist movement was not any more accurate in its portrayal of Africans. James Walvin writes, "friends of the Negro, particularly those who expressed their views in verse, frequently overstated or oversimplified their case. They tended to seize on half-truths and inflate them into distorted generalisations about black life" (186). By the 1820's and 1830's, when the abolitionist cause was at its peak, the image of the noble savage had evolved into another: the African as a child of nature (Lorimer 24). Writes Walvin, "[l]ike children [blacks] were felt to present a *tabula rasa* upon which could be impressed the sophisticated social patterns of white society" (186). As this image grew in popularity, the attitude of abolitionists towards black acquaintances was characterized by a "condescending paternalism" (Lorimer 36).

Two distinct stereotypes arose from the slavery debate (Banton 25)—the dark sensual demon promoted by the slave lobbyists, and the innocent, affectionate, impressionable child championed by the abolitionists—yet each had the same kind of impact.

By [the early nineteenth century]. . . English writers who concerned themselves with black affairs sought an explanation for black social problems not in social terms but solely in terms of the African's individual "characteristics." Moreover the English tended to view

these alleged characteristics as universal qualities, possessed by Negroes everywhere. This was perhaps the most damaging legacy of the process of black caricature; generations of Englishmen came to see Negroes as a species undifferentiated by time or place.

(Walvin 164)

Missionaries further exacerbated stereotypes in their promotional pamphlets by writing to entertain their readers and distorting their descriptions of the colonies to emphasize difference, and thus justify their work. Lorimer writes that "the association of Africans with blackness and nakedness, especially in contrast to the full-clothed Victorians, strengthened the impression that Negroes represented unregenerate mankind, sinful and unwashed" (77).

Popular literature as well as missionary pamphlets contributed towards the hardening of stereotypes in the public mind. The popularization of the concept of Africa being "the white man's grave" provides an example of this process.

The phrase itself was the title of a work by F. Harrison Rankin about Sierra Leone in which he describes an attractive land and begs for European colonization. It may have been Rankin's phrase, but not the work itself which established the image. Undoubtedly the term attained such wide usage because of the popular impression that had been gained from high disease and mortality rates and the heat and extremes of weather, which made exploration and philanthropic endeavors so hazardous, all of which were publicized by the secular press and by widely read works as Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. (Hammond 29)

Late in the Victorian period, popular adventure novels by such authors as Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling dramatize the exploration of exotic lands,

justifying exploitation in the name of Empire and "civilization." Half a century earlier the notion of Empire is far more subtle, but it appears even in the most unlikely of domestic texts (Brantlinger 12). Colonies become mysterious places to which characters can escape (Jos Sedley in *Vanity Fair*), disappear to undergo some kind of transformation for their later reappearance in the text (Walter Gay in *Dombey and Son*) or disappear in a more permanent fashion (St. John Rivers succumbing to the Indian climate in *Jane Eyre*, Sir Rawdon Crawley's death from yellow fever on Coventry Island in *Vanity Fair*). Empire also is represented in terms of furnishings, costumes and other objects, and as an almost invisible means of wealth (for Mr. Dombey in *Dombey and Son*, and Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*). And on occasion, colonial natives, such as Major Bagstock's and Jos Sedley's East Indian servants, and West Indian heiresses like Miss Swartz and Bertha Mason, show up in the periphery of the text.

It is unusual for novels from this period to have Others as characters, especially as it was unlikely that any English person would have run into any African, West or East Indian people in their day-to-day routine.⁴ When they do appear these minor characters are often dismissed by critics as extraneous to the text. Suvendrini Perera argues, however, that they are actually

⁴ Just a decade after emancipation, blacks had become a rare sight. J. S. Bratton writes that "this unfamiliarity was not confined to the middle classes. Even amongst dock and riverside workers black men were exceptional enough to present no threat and to impinge very little upon popular culture" (130). As the nineteenth century continued living conditions worsened.

[By] the 1860's, [blacks] were very few in number. The influx which had frightened middle-class opinion in the late eighteenth century had died down, and the black population had commenced a rapid decline. The conditions under which they lived hardly fostered longevity, and, most importantly, there were few black women. The scattered men married into the already very mixed populations of the poorest city districts and virtually disappeared. Eyes unaccustomed to look suspiciously for coloured blood saw their offspring as no more than examples of the new urban breed. A writer in *Blackwoods Magazine* in 1866 summed up the situation of his countrymen as 'living in a country where a full-blooded Ethiopian is as rare as a black swan, where from January to December even a mulatto is seldom seen. (Bratton 129-30)

productions of the defining oppositions between centre and margins, generated in their multiple manifestations from a specific imperial history. As such, they contribute in turn to that ongoing discourse through which empire was constituted, managed, and contested throughout the nineteenth century. (1991, 3)

If an Imperialist text insists that that which is colonized—be it land or people—is a blank periphery onto which the Imperialist can project his own meaning, what a post-colonial reading does is insist that this blank is in fact a space which can be read. By treating the text as a palimpsest—a piece of parchment or other medium from which one writing has been erased to make room for another—and reading it under Jacques Derrida's strategy of erasure (*sous rasure*)—that is, as if this "erased" writing were present—it is possible to determine the assumptions that underlie and guide its production. This is what I propose to do in this paper.

In the chapters which follow, I will do a post-colonial reading of three canonized texts produced between 1846-8—*Dombey and Son*, *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*. These novels are interesting in that the Other is not "out there" somewhere beyond the boundaries of civilization, but present in England. It is this presence that I wish to explore, its purpose and the result. In *Dombey and Son*, Dickens initially uses an East Indian servant as a way to portray his master, the mephistophelean Major Bagstock. When the servant becomes a comic figure, his stereotypical representation is underlined by a tone of sympathy not found in African stereotypes used in Dickens's journalism. In *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray Others characters such as Sambo, Loll Jewab and Miss Swartz as a way of portraying the white characters with whom they are associated. A deeper reading of two of these characters, reveals anxieties about the process of Empire, particularly the sexual "frontier" between Self and Other. Finally, in *Jane Eyre*,

Bertha is constructed as an allegorical figure representing uncontrolled female passions. In the process, as the racially ambiguous Bertha becomes active in the text, she is portrayed as black. Reading the text under a strategy of erasure reveals Bertha's status as a silenced yet defiant colonial woman.

CHAPTER ONE

But all the way home to his own hotel, the Major incessantly said to himself, and of himself, "Sly, Sir—sly, Sir—de-vil-ish sly!" And when he got there, sat down in a chair, and fell into a silent fit of laughter, with which he was sometimes seized, and which was always particularly awful. It held him so long on this occasion that the dark servant, who stood watching him at a distance, but dared not for his life approach, twice or thrice gave him over for lost.

- Chapter 10, *Dombey and Son*

In this flow of spirits and conversation, only interrupted by his usual plethoric symptoms, and by intervals of lunch, and from time to time by some violent assault upon the Native, who wore a pair of ear-rings in his dark-brown ears, and on whom his European clothes sat with an outlandish impossibility of adjustment—being, of their own accord, and without any reference to the tailor's art, long where they ought to be short, short where they ought to be long, tight where they ought to be loose, and loose where they ought to be tight—and to which he imparted a new grace, whenever the Major attacked him, by shrinking into them like a shrivelled nut, or a cold monkey—in this flow of spirits and conversation, the Major continued all day"

- Chapter 20, *Dombey and Son*

What a difference the passage of a few chapters can make. Witness the characterization of the Native, Major Bagstock's East Indian servant, in the quotes above. Early in the novel, the wheezing mephistophelean Major is an obvious comic figure, with the servant helping to define him as such by acting as a kind of "straight man." By Chapter 20, however, the Native has become a comic figure as well, with the comedy revolving around his status as a racial Other. In this chapter I hope to show that while the comic characterization of the Native is reminiscent of the manner in which Dickens stereotypes Africans in his essays and correspondence from the 1840's, the underlying tone is different. The imaginative freedoms that writing fictions allows Dickens enables a sympathy to emerge that is absent from his journalism.

The colonial endeavor provides an anchor to the enterprises of Dombey and his world:

British military and mercantile domination of the Indian continent is the literal foundation of Dombey's commercial and domestic power; he is the disciplinary center and the absolute ruler of an office just around the corner from the East India Company. (David 133)

On the margins of the text are the colonies themselves. As Suvendrini Perera notes, away from the central narrative, "colonial voyages are undertaken by all the sympathetic characters of the novel, to named destinations, for the performance of specific tasks necessary to the profitable maintenance of empire" (1990, 609). Walter Gay is sent abroad to fill a junior position at Dombey's counting-house in Barbados; Sol Gills searches Jamaica, Barbados and Demerara for his lost nephew; Walter and Florence spend their honeymoon on a long

voyage to China. Cluttering the background of the central narrative are nautical objects, emblematic of the voyages of Empire, such as the wooden midshipman and the nautical wares of Sol Gills's shop, and colonial importations like mahogany furniture in the Dombey household, and the contents of the East India House, not far from Dombey's offices, which is "teeming with suggestions of precious stuffs and stones, tigers, elephants, howdahs, hookahs, umbrellas, palm trees, palanquins, and gorgeous princes of a brown complexion sitting on carpets, with their slippers very much turned up at the toes" (DS 87-8).

Also on the margins is Major Bagstock's servant, and given the relative infrequency with which Asian and African characters appear in Dickens's novels, it is noteworthy that this servant should happen to be from India. Kathleen Tillotson has argued that Major Bagstock's characterization, which helps to develop the character of Mr. Dombey, is itself defined by this treatment of his servant (186). I would argue that it is not only the Major's treatment of the Native, but the characterization of the Native himself which helps define the status and outlook of the Major. Dickens told his illustrator, "I should premise that I want to make the Major, who is the incarnation of selfishness and small revenge, a kind of comic Mephistophelean power in the book" (*Pilgrim Letters* V, 34). Accordingly, Bagstock's speech is peppered with the words "devil" and "devilish;" he is described as an "overfed Mephistopheles" (DS 350), and he is puffing, physically purplish-blue in colour with straining eyes and veins. As well, and appropriately for such a devilish one, the Major has a history of serving in hot climates. As Miss Tox breathlessly informs Mrs. Chick, the Major "did all sorts of things in the Peninsula, with every description of firearm; and in the East and West Indies, my love, I really couldn't undertake to say what he did not do" (DS 191). As an East Indian, then, the servant's mere presence provides a kind of physical evidence of the Major's fiery past.

It is the servant's status as Other, however, that makes him most valuable in defining the Major. One of the first passages the servant appears in provides an example of how his characterization works towards that end:

When the dark servant, with full particulars, reported Miss Tox absent on Brighton service, the Major was suddenly touched with affectionate reminiscences of his friend Bill Bitherstone, of Bengal, who had written to ask him, if he ever went that way, to bestow a call upon his only son. But when the same dark servant reported Paul at Mrs. Pipchin's, and the Major, referring to the letter favoured by Master Bitherstone on his arrival in England—to which he had never had the least idea of paying any attention—saw the opening that presented itself, he was made so rabid by the gout, with which he happened to be then laid up, that he threw a footstool at the dark servant in return for his intelligence, and swore he would be the death of the rascal before he had done with him: which the dark servant was more than half-disposed to believe. (DS 187)

In this passage the servant is referred to as "the dark servant," and only as "the dark servant," four times. It is particularly significant that the word "servant" never appears without the qualifier "dark," even though there are no other servants in this passage with whom he could be confused. What "dark" does is introduce how the servant is perceived by the Major, and by the population of the novel in general, as a faceless, nameless being. That the Major would possess a "dark" servant establishes both his imperialist background and his grasping nature. As Perera argues, "the shadowy and speechless 'Native'. . . serves as an embodiment of imperial domination. At the same time, as surely as Dombey's collection of plate in a society where power is expressed through the possession

of objects, Bagstock's 'delicate exotic' registers his possessor's rating on the scale of economic value" (1990, 613).

Simply by virtue of his status as an Other, the Native provides a kind of "short-hand" for the characterization of the Major. Many of Dickens' minor characters are defined through their physical appearance: Mrs Skewton's wan attendant Withers, the apple-faced Toodles family, Mr. Toots' beaked friend the Chicken. In the case of the Native, the definitive aspect of his appearance is his race. Humphrey House writes, "in the last resort [Dickens] did not doubt that the best of British civilization as he understood it was immeasurably better than that of the coloured peoples, and he let himself run with the herd in describing them: Major Bagstock's Indian servant is constructed of mere conventional prejudice" (91). The servant's characterization is thus equipped with an inherent series of images, those of "mere conventional prejudice." This provides Dickens with a broad brush that can be used to paint the servant in with a minimum of effort, taking advantage of images and stereotypes ingrained in the readers' minds. This brush is what makes the simple word "dark" so telling, about the servant, and in turn, about the Major.

Although the dark servant's presence in the novel functions initially as evidence of the Major's imperial past, as the narrative develops, the emphasis of the servant's portrait becomes more deliberately comic and negative, much like the portraits of blacks found in Dickens's essays and correspondence dating from the late 1840's onwards. An examination of these portraits will help to foreground some of the events of the time in which Dickens is writing (and reacting to) and as well help to illustrate some of the techniques he uses to render the Native comic.

In his review of an account of the Niger Expedition of 1841 Dickens considers the difference between the races. Organized by Sir Thomas Buxton, in

order to create stations in Africa from which European values could spread (*Rule of Darkness* 177), the Expedition's goals included the abolition of the slave trade, the introduction of improved agricultural techniques, and the conversion of the natives to Christianity. As Norris Pope has documented, the Expedition had its detractors from the beginning:

From the end of 1840, *The Times* led opposition to the plan, attacking the African Civilization Society as a "medley of religionists," and warning that the scheme was not only utopian but fraught with danger for those carrying it out. *The Times* was also joined in its hostility by radical opponents, and at Norwich a group of chartists disrupted a meeting of the Civilization Society with cries of "Emancipate the white slaves before you think of the black," and "Look to the slavery and misery of the New Poor Law." (100)

In 1848, an account of the expedition, William Allen and T.R.H. Thomson's *Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's government to the river Niger in 1841, under the command of Captain H.D. Trotter, R.N.* was reviewed by Dickens in *The Examiner* and expressed similar sentiments.

In his review, while noting the valiant efforts of the crew members, Dickens makes it perfectly clear that, in his opinion, their humanitarian efforts would have been better applied at home. Given that the mission was an ill-fated one, with many of its participants dying from malaria, perhaps this is a reasonable conclusion. This is only the surface, however, of Dickens's argument; its supporting framework consists of very clear binary oppositions: where the Europeans are civilized, the Africans are barbarous and savage; where the Europeans are educated, the Africans are ignorant. To bridge the two sides of this "great gulf" is, in Dickens's mind, quite impossible. The text employs

similar polarities throughout. In descriptions of the Europeans' negotiations with African leaders such as King Obi and King Boy, for instance, Africans are depicted as sly and untrustworthy, and the Europeans as honest and forthright. Of the blacks who make up part of the mission's crew, the view is more positive, but no less stereotypical. They are described as "a faithful, cheerful, active affectionate race" ("Niger Expedition" 119), a doglike characterization that implies a lack of both intellect and rationality, and serves to distance them from the Europeans on the vessel. Dickens agrees with the account's author, William Allen, that these blacks, being partially civilized already through their contact with whites, might help educate the other black Africans: "they, under civilized direction, are the only hopeful human agents to whom recourse can ultimately be had for aid in working out the slow and gradual raising up of Africa" ("Niger Expedition" 119-20). One notes, however, the claims that the black crew would require "civilized" (read "white English") direction in order to complete this task, and the continued assumption that it is Africa which needs to be raised in order to reach Europe's level.

What bothers Dickens most about the whole expedition is that it wasted lives to help a race he considers innately inferior to the European. His concluding comments are stunning in their blatant racism:

No amount of philanthropy has a right to waste such valuable life as was squandered here, in the teeth of all experience and feasible pretence of hope. Between the civilized European and the barbarous African there is a great gulf set. . . . To change the customs even of civilized and educated men, and impress them with new ideas is—we have good need to know it—a most difficult and slow proceeding; but to do this by ignorant and savage races, is a work which, like the progressive changes of the globe itself,

requires a stretch of years that dazzles in the looking at. ("Niger Expedition" 133)

For Dickens, there is no hope of "civilized direction" here.

Patrick Brantlinger argues that, in general, "Dickens thought savages so far beneath Europeans on the great chain of being that only fools expected to 'railroad' them into civilization" (1988, 178), and a letter written to Mrs. Richard Watson shortly after the review of Allen's account was published confirms that Dickens indeed believes blacks to be less than human. In it he briefly mentions a letter he has written to her brother, "in which [he] propounded various enquires. . . about Blacks as a species" (*Pilgrim Letters* V 419). The use of the word "species" suggests a belief that blacks are more akin to animals than humans: it is unlikely Dickens ever referred to the French or the Germans as other "species."

Further, in "The Noble Savage," which appeared in *Household Words* in June 1853, Dickens complains about the cult of the "noble savage" which had arisen from Rousseau. While his arguments are directed towards the cult itself—described as "whimpering . . . with maudlin admiration" about the savages—Dickens has little positive to say about the "savage" in general, be he "Ojibbeway," Bushman or Zulu:

I call him a savage, and I call a savage a something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth. I think a mere gent (which I take to be the lowest form of civilization) better than a howling, whistling, clucking, stamping, jumping, tearing savage. It is all one to me, whether he sticks fish-bone through his visage, or bits of trees through the lobes of his ears. . . . Yielding to whichever of these agreeable eccentricities, he is a savage—cruel, false, thievish, murderous; addicted more or less to grease, entrails, and beastly

customs; a wild animal with the questionable gift of boasting; a conceited, tiresome, bloodthirsty, monotonous humbug. ("Noble Savage" 120)

The article as a whole contains a strange mixture of tones, and the passage quoted above provides a good sample of this. While the comic tone is meant to predominate, a hostile tone of almost frightening aggressiveness exists simultaneously, and the two alternate throughout the passage. The passage begins with a violent statement that it would be desirable for the savage to be "civilized off the face of the earth." This is followed by the comic definition of the gent as "the lowest form of civilization." Next there is a string of adjectives, arranged in no particular order, describing the behaviour of the savage, with "clucking" as the most comic, and "tearing" as the most aggressive. Next body piercing rituals are sarcastically characterized as "agreeable eccentricities" by descriptions that reduce the wood used to "bits of tree" and inflate the idea of a face to a "visage." This is followed by another string of adjectives, increasing in savagery, and a series of nouns describing what the savage is "addicted" to, again ranging from harmless and silly ("grease") to savage ("beastly customs"). The idea of a wild animal is then juxtaposed with the concept of his "questionable gift of boasting," and finally there is a comic description of the savage as a humbug, with "bloodthirsty" undermining the other comic adjectives used. The article as a whole alternates between trivial complaints about the Africans, such as their lack of decorum, and passages such as this:

All the noble savage's wars with his fellow-savages (and he takes no pleasure in anything else) are wars of extermination—which is the best thing I know of him, and the most comfortable to my mind when I look at him. He has not moral feelings of any kind, sort or

description; and his "mission" may be summed up as simply diabolical. ("Noble Savage" 123)

The hostility displayed here is startling, especially in an article where the predominant leaning is a comic one, and where the main complaint is really about the "whimpering" of those who endorse the idea of the noble savage.

Similar hostilities emerge in a letter to Samuel Cartwright written in January 1868 from Baltimore⁵:

The ghost of slavery haunts the houses; and the old, untidy, incapable, lounging, shambling black serves you as a free man. Free of course he ought to be; but the stupendous absurdity of making him a voter glares out of every roll of his eye, stretch of his mouth, and bump of his head. I have a strong impression that the race must fade out of the States very fast. It never can hold its own against a stringing, restless, shifty people. In the penitentiary here, the other day, in a room full of all blacks (too dull to be taught any of the work in hand), was one young brooding fellow, very like a black rhinoceros. He sat glowering at life, as if it were just endurable at dinner time until four of his fellows began to sing, most unmelodiously, a part song. He then set up a dismal howl, and pounded his face on a form. I took him to have been rendered quite desperate by having learnt anything. (Hogarth Letters 404)

This is an example of what JanMohamed refers to as racial pathetic fallacy (1983, 32), a mechanism in which the faults or merits of an individual are ascribed to a group as a whole. Caricatured physical appearance, such as the rolling eye and

⁵ Sidney Moss writes, "Dickens' detestation of America almost extinguished his antislavery sentiments altogether, for he began to focus his anger upon the North, whose publishers had acted to refuse him copyright and whose newspapers and magazines had blackguarded him and threatened to ruin his reputation" (190).

the stretched mouth, as well as the configuration of the head (the subject of phrenology, a science then becoming popular) are presented as evidence of the black's lack of intellectual ability. One man is referred to as a rhinoceros, and described as howling and pounding his face as an animal would. As well, the free black servant is depicted as incapable, shambling and lazy; it seems the only aspect of the notorious stereotype of blacks Dickens rejects is the notion of their natural musical ability. The effect is meant to be comic but there is condescension and hostility evident in his arguments, particularly where the oppositions are employed.

According to John Kucich: "When Dickens sets a grotesque scene. . . it is often difficult to tell whether the grotesquerie belongs to the scene or to the disconnected energies of style, and whether the grotesquerie is meant to condemn or simply to luxuriate in its own absurdity" (225). The passage analyzed above is a good example of Kucich's point. The tone of the passage is rendered ambivalent by the split between Dickens's desire to create a comic effect (the absurdity of the images) and his need to express hostility (condemnation), and leads ultimately to the undermining of his own argument. He begins with the intention of showing why free blacks must not be given the vote, but then his desire to stress the comic leads into a grotesquely exaggerated account of the behaviour of some imprisoned blacks, whose state makes them completely extraneous to his argument. This kind of comic energy works far more effectively in the grotesque characterizations found in Dickens's novels, like that of the Major in *Dombey and Son*. Kucich writes,

Joey Bagstock's obsession with his name provides Dickens with an excellent opportunity to exploit the capacity of a linguistic fixation-free of desires to communicate, free to spin its wheels uselessly—to give way to infinite variation. Such characters present Dickens

with a brilliant excuse for the transparently playful exercise of florid prose, and categories of possible linguistic play here overlap with the categories of satirized prose, circumlocution, convolution, euphemism—in short, nonsense. (213)

This excursion into nonsense results in the portrayal of a comic yet malevolent individual, a split that is both intentional and successful.

By Chapter 20 of *Dombey and Son*, as though he has suddenly realized the comic potential of the situation, Dickens begins to use this same kind of high energy that Kucich describes to portray Major Bagstock's servant. As a result "the dark servant" becomes "the Native," mirroring a corresponding change in the character's function in the text. Initially present to act as a foil to the Major's comic excesses, the Native is developed into a humourous character in and of himself. In order to bring about this transformation, descriptions of the Native's appearance, identity, and reactions to the Major's rages are exaggerated. While this is a technique Dickens uses for many of his comic characters, because the exaggerated descriptions are all related to the Native's race, the effect is to further isolate the Native from the white Europeans in the text. Once his characterization becomes comic, all of these qualities stem from his difference: he is thoroughly Othered.

One way in which comic energy is expressed is through the servant's namelessness within the text. Bagstock's servant is never referred to by his own proper name. Up to and including Chapter 10, he is referred to as "the dark servant"; afterwards he called "the dark servant" as well as "the exile," "the ill-starred Native," "the afflicted foreigner," among other names, and the Major calls him "scoundrel," "villain," and "vagabond." The labels are all variations on the two themes, depending on who is referring to him, the narrator—in which case the focus is the Native's unfortunate situation—or Bagstock—in which case

the focus is the Native's supposed lack of principles. In either case, the repetition of these labels mimics the kind of alterations that Bagstock imposes upon his own name during his self-narrations. For comic effect, the text exaggerates the servant's lack of identity further yet. The namelessness is stretched to such a degree that the narrator reports "The Native. . . had no particular name, but answered to any vituperative epithet" (*DS* 346). Whenever the Major says anything particularly vigourously, he causes "the unhappy native to stop, and turn round in the belief that he was personally addressed" (*DS* 451). The text plays with the anonymity of his homeland as well. Miss Tox cannot be bothered to wonder where the servant is from (*DS* 144), and the most direct reference in the text to the servant's past life is both indefinite and in parentheses—he is "(currently believed to be a prince in his own country)" (*DS* 350).

The absence of a proper name (he "ha[d] no particular name" (*DS* 346)) has two effects consistent with racial stereotyping that reflect the Native's status in this novel: it marks the servant as lacking value as an individual, and it suggests the interchangeability of all dark foreigners. Both of these aspects are reinforced in Chapter 20, when the text echoes Miss Tox's habit of referring to the servant as "the Native." The capitalization of the word "native" suggest that it is an acceptable substitute for his proper name. The new "name" not only defines him as someone from another country, but it reinforces the idea that there is no need to differentiate him from anyone else from his country, or any other colonized country for that matter. The only difference that is important is the one between him and the Europeans.

The conversion of the servant into a comic figure hinges on how well the text is able to distance him from the white European characters around him through physical difference. When Hablot Browne first sent Dickens a sketch for

Chapter 21, Dickens sent it back for revision because it showed the servant dressed in East Indian clothing. Dickens writes: "First—I must grieve to write it—that Native—who is so prodigiously good as he is—must be in European costume. He may wear ear-rings, and look outlandish, and be dark brown, but his fashion must be of Moses, Mosesy—I don't mean old testament Moses, but him of the Minorities" (*Pilgrim Letters* V 35). The following description reinforces the effect Dickens wished to achieve:

the Native . . . wore a pair of ear-rings in his dark-brown ears, and . . . his European clothes sat [on him] with an outlandish impossibility of adjustment—being, of their own accord, and without any reference to the tailor's art, long where they ought to be short, short where they ought to be long, tight where they ought to be loose, and loose where they ought to be tight—and to which he imparted a new grace, whenever the Major attacked him, by shrinking into them like a shrivelled nut, or a cold monkey. (*DS* 357-8)

The description of his appearance centres around the contrast between the two cultures, foregrounding his status as Other. His "European" clothing suits him poorly, indicating the "impossibility" of him adapting even slightly to the dress code of his new environment. Personified in the way that it "sit[s]" on him, and the way it acts "by its own accord," the clothing appears to be too much for the timid servant to struggle with, as though it, like the Major, is tyrannizing him. Providing a further contrast are his "dark-brown" ears and the exotic earrings he wears in them. Finally, the situation of an exotic in an unforgiving environment is summed up through the images of a "shrivelled nut" and a "cold monkey."

Images such as the nut and the monkey do much to reveal the Native's subhuman status in this text. Perera writes,

The power relations governing *Dombey and Son* are laid bare in the text's assumption of "the Native's" unrepresentability in human terms; in its confidence that "the Native's" predicament is comic, and *can* only be represented humourously. This utter negation of the colonial subject is summed up in a striking image of dispossession as the Major appropriates even the shade of "the Native's" body: "The afternoon being sunny and hot, he ordered the Native and the light baggage to the front, and walked in the shadow of that expatriated prince." (1990, 612)

Images of dispossession such as this help to draw attention away from the exaggerated descriptions of how the Native is treated, minimizing the abuse itself. The Native is a commodity, a physical measure of his master's status, and a being completely under his master's command—"the Major plumed himself on having the Native in a perfect state of drill, and visited the least departure from strict discipline with this kind of fatigue duty" (*DS* 451). As such, the Native is dehumanized: he is the Major's punching bag, to use and abuse as he pleases. When in one of his frequent rages, the Major subjects the Native to "the pelting of a shower of miscellaneous objects, varying in size from a boot to a hairbrush, and including everything that came within his master's reach" (*DS* 451). This excessive description focuses attention on the stream of objects themselves, rather than on the person at whom they are being thrown or on the impact they have on him when they land. The last appearance of the Native in the text is much the same;

The unfortunate Native, expressing no opinion, suffered dreadfully; not merely in his moral feelings, which were regularly

fusilladed by the Major every hour in the day, and riddled through and through, but in his sensitiveness to bodily knocks and bumps, which was kept continually on the stretch. For six entire weeks after the bankruptcy, this miserable foreigner lived in a rainy season of boot-jacks and brushes. (DS 911)

Here the language of the passage—the clever military imagery, the alliteration—is such that it diverts attention away from, and thus minimizes, the abuse.

The Native's behaviour, as a result of the Major's treatment, is to be paralyzed with fear, the description of which is, again, stretched to a ridiculous degree. When he enters Miss Tox's room to have her suddenly collapse in his arms, the surprise, "coupled with his consciousness of being closely watched by the wrathful Major, who had threatened the usual penalty in regard of every bone in his skin in case of any failure, combined to render him a moving spectacle of mental and bodily distress" (DS 494). The "afflicted foreigner" (DS 495), the contents of Miss Tox's watering-can emptying into his shoe as he supports her, remains frozen in this ridiculous position until Mrs. Chick orders him to put Miss Tox down and leave. The scene is comic, yet the presence of the Native's fear creates an underlying feeling of sympathy for his situation.

Although the technique of comic exaggeration used in depicting the Native is similar to that found in Dickens's essays to describe the Africans, the underlying hostility is absent. Nicholas Coles writes that, in general, the opinions expressed in Dickens's novels often differs from those expressed in his journalism giving the "sense of Dickens's politics as a muddle" (145). He argues that this has to do with

fiction and journalism us[ing] different modes of presentation, which reflect differing imaginative activities, and different occasions and purposes for writing. . . . [I]n fairly consistent ways

the political bearings of the novels diverge from and at times oppose the positions that Dickens takes in other public discourses; in the novels he persistently "goes too far," reaching positions which would be untenable outside the fiction in the world to which his activity as a reformer-journalist was addressed. (145-6)

In his depiction of the Native, Dickens's sympathy for the underdog comes through. In his articles about the Niger Expedition and the Noble Savage, the message is "look what the imperial endeavour is doing to *us*," pointing out the costs of the impossible project of bringing "civilization" to the "savages." As the "natives" are in their own country, the situation can be resolved by the English simply returning home. In *Dombey and Son*, however, the "native" is on English soil. Now the point of view changes to "look what the imperial endeavour doing to *them*," a situation not so easily resolved. The Native cannot overcome the lack of societal status his race accords him in England, even if he is rumoured to be royalty in his own country. As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan points out, he is not even "allowed to be one of the 'company downstairs'" (99); only at Dombey's wedding do we see him with other servants. A return to England is impossible without the Major's consent, and the Major's treatment of him makes any kind of rebellion out of the question; even an imagined act of insubordination causes the Major to "instantly thrust his cane among the Native's ribs and. . . stir him up, at short intervals" (DS 451). Throughout the novel, the Major is depicted as violent, brutal, and ultimately "savage" while the hapless Native is not only sympathetic in his victimhood, but perhaps even morally superior in his forbearance. His lack of individuation could be seen as emblematic of all the faceless black victims of imperial exploitation. The relationship between the two is never resolved beyond this, and they leave the

novel fixed in the same power relations in which they arrived (Rajan 100), the Major hurling whatever is within reach at his long-suffering servant.

CHAPTER TWO

"The initial ethnographic gesture," writes Mary Louise Pratt, "is the one that homogenizes the people to be subjected, that is, produced as subjects, into a collective *they*, which is distilled even further into an iconic 'he' (the standardized adult male specimen)" (1992, 63-4). The homogenization of a people is part of Othering them, a process which Pratt argues is

a normalizing discourse, whose work is to codify difference, to fix the Other in a timeless present where all "his" actions and reactions are repetitions of "his" normal habits. Thus, it textually produces the Other without an explicit anchoring either in an observing self or in a particular encounter in which contact with the Other takes place. "He" is a *sui generis* configuration, often only a list of features set in a temporal order different from that of the perceiving and speaking subject. (1985 139-140)

This list of features, what Pratt calls a "portrait of manners and customs," is very much the basis of racial stereotypes.

It is no surprise that Thackeray, an author who "thinks persistently in racial stereotypes" (Brantlinger 104), should employ the characteristics of Others as a shorthand to portray the white characters with whom they are associated, a technique similar to the one Dickens uses in *Dombey and Son*. Starting with what are essentially "portraits of manners and customs" that center around the physical characteristics of the racial Other, Sambo is used to help define the status of the Sedley family, Loll Jewab is used to illustrate the vanity of the status-conscious Jos Sedley, and Miss Swartz is used to comment discreetly on the predatory nature of George Osborne's sexuality. As well, Miss Swartz is

more significantly Othered in order to illustrate a society willing to condone marriages made for the sake of wealth and status.

These functions, however, operate only on the surface of the text; a reading on a deeper level reveals how contradictions inherent in the nature of colonial enterprise have been inscribed in the text. The imperial frontier, Pratt argues, places "notions of normal, familiar action and given systems of difference" in jeopardy.

There Europeans confront not only unfamiliar others but unfamiliar selves; there they engage in not just the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production but its expansion through displacement of previously established modes. It is no accident that, in the literature of the imperial frontier, manners-and-customs description has always flourished as a normalizing force and now retains a kind of credibility and authority it has lost elsewhere.

(Pratt 1985, 140)

This frontier of identity is one that concerned domestic novelists in the mid-Victorian era just as much as it did the European explorers whom Pratt describes in the passage above. While the colonial enterprise defines the geographical frontier as a limit that is meant to be pushed back and overcome, at the same time the moral justification for doing so⁶ renders the preservation of the psychological frontier, the polarization between Self and Other, essential.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the characterization of Other that appears in Dickens's journalism and in his fiction are similar in technique but

⁶ George Bearce notes how in 1844 Thackeray himself wrote a review for *The Foreign Quarterly Review* in which he "revealed some of the traditional, indeed unthinking and inconsistent opinions which floated around in British and Anglo-Indian society" (244) by describing, among other things, how "the British had suppressed many evils such as thuggee, sati, and infanticide—the vicious offspring of prejudice and the pride of caste" (245).

differ in tone. The process involved in creating fiction allows an imaginative exploration of situations and possibilities not possible in journalism. This may result, despite that author's intent, in opinions and positions that contradict those which would develop from a more "logically" argued discourse. Although the manner in which Thackeray describes racial Others in his correspondence is very similar to that which he uses to describe them in *Vanity Fair* the result is different. In his correspondence, Thackeray pokes fun at the African slaves in European dress, assured that the difference between the races is insurmountable. In the novel, the text pulls away from this kind of confidence. The Othering of Loll Jewab reveals as much about Thackeray's ambivalent attitude towards the imperial ideal as it does about Jos Sedley's vanity. The aggressive Othering of Miss Swartz tells us something of Thackeray's own unacknowledged anxieties regarding the connection between the Orient (to use Edward Said's term) and sexuality.

Of the three Others in *Vanity Fair* whom I will discuss in this paper, "Black Sambo," the Sedley's generically named black footman, is the briefest manners-and-customs sketch. Characterized by frequent references to his skin colour and his constant grin, Sambo is the stereotypical black servant; there is little else to him. And for Thackeray's purposes, there needs to be little else. Sambo is nothing more than one of the stock black servant characters Thackeray employs in his novels to indicate the status of other characters⁷, in this case the

⁷ It first became fashionable to keep black servants when James I ascended to the throne in 1603. In noble households the servant was often on display, dressed in outrageous fineries, and "[u]nlike their white fellow-workers, who frequently wore similar clothing, the blacks were often obliged to wear the metal collar of the slave" (Walvin 1973, 62). James Walvin argues that it was due in part to the expansion of the English slave trade that blacks became regarded as possessions rather than people (1973, 39).

Sedley family. In the eighteenth century in particular, there was "a certain social cachet attached to the owning of a gorgeously dressed black pageboy or footman" (Bratton 129), partially due to their exotic difference from white servants (which was emphasized by the fancy dress) and partially due to their lack of numbers. One of the ways the text is able to establish the Sedleys as members of the upper-middle class is through the Othering of one of their servants.

Loll Jewab, Jos Sedley's East Indian servant, is a more developed character than Sambo but is Othered in a similar fashion. His characterization revolves around his foreign race beginning with his body, as manners-and-customs portraits conventionally do (Pratt 1985, 139). The emphasis is initially on his skin colour, his teeth and his "eyeballs," but builds outwards from there, playing on established racial stereotypes. For instance, in one passage Thackeray links the servant's dark colouring with evil:

Jos's native servant arose and began to get ready his master's ponderous dressing apparatus, and prepare his hookah: then the maidservants got up, and meeting the dark man in the passages, shrieked, and mistook him for the devil. (VF 734)

This link with the devil is a comic one—"the dark man" is obviously benign—and it is extended through references to the heat of Jewab's homeland, references again brought about through descriptions of his body. Jewab's apparent inability to cope with English weather is demonstrated through its effect on both his teeth and his complexion. He is described as sitting "with chattering teeth, shuddering in a shawl on the box by the side of the new European servant" (VF 751), and as having a "brown face. . . now livid with cold, and of the colour of a turkey's gizzard" (VF 752).

In other passages Jewab's animal nature is emphasized—the focus again on his body—through descriptions of him “moaning in a strange piteous way, and showing his yellow eyeballs and white teeth” (VF 752). In addition to this he never speaks; like an animal he seems to be incapable of language. The idea of him as animal, or at best subhuman, is extended even further through his namelessness throughout most of the text. Although Jewab is given a name, it is not introduced until he is transported back to India:

Loll Jewab, of whom the boys about St. Martin's Lane used to make cruel fun whenever he showed his dusky countenance in the street, was sent back to Calcutta in the *Lady Kicklebury* East Indiaman. (VF 756)

Loll Jewab's anonymity in the novel until his departure suggests that while he is in England he is somehow subhuman, unworthy of being named.

It is worth noting that even in the brief passage quoted above Jewab's skin colour is mentioned. This is the nature of the manners-and-customs portrait: to reduce the Other to a list of parts and features, in particular descriptive details that emphasize his/her difference through race. It is not enough for Jewab to have a “countenance,” it must be a “dusky” one. His presence in the novel is all teeth and eyeballs; their prominence suggests that they provide a vivid contrast with the darkness of his skin, drawing attention again to the physical difference between Jewab and any of the European characters.

The Anglo-Indian soldier had long been a literary joke by the 1840's (Perera 1990, 612), and just as the unfortunate Native is used to characterize the mephistophelean Major in *Dombey and Son*, so Jewab is Othered to illustrate the care Jos Sedley takes in creating his own imperial image. Jos's inflated physical stature is proportional to his inflated sense of himself, his vanity demonstrated by the hours he spends adorning himself, his toilet-table “covered with as many

pomatum and essences as ever were employed by an old beauty" (VF 28). Upon returning from his second tour of duty in India, Jos brings with him an Indian servant to act as visible proof of his imperialistic endeavors. The servant acts as "his valet and pipebearer. . . [wears] the Sedley crest in silver on his turban" (VF 728); and plays as much a part in Jos's wardrobe as the uniform Jos affects, and as much a part in Jos's reputation as Jos's tales of his exploits at the battle of Waterloo.

What is further revealed through the Othering of Jewab is Jos's selfish and cowardly nature. Loll Jewab's timorousness reflects Jos's own cowardice in battle and in life, a side of himself he attempts to disguise through his imperial image. The shivering Jewab is shown to be unaccustomed to the English climate, and ridiculed by the English boys because of his appearance. And unlike Sambo who, in his love for a cook and in his battle "with the coachman in her behalf" (VF 60), is closely linked with other servants (Rajan 104), Jewab is isolated and alone. Yet it is only when Dobbin insists that Jos fulfil his promise to house the destitute Mr. Sedley and Amelia that Jewab is "sent back to Calcutta in the *Lady Kicklebury* East Indiaman, in which Sir William Dobbin had a share; having previously taught Jos's European the art of preparing curries, pilaws, and pipes" (VF 756). The ease with which he is replaced by this European servant shows that Jewab suffers in England for no other reason than that his Otherness bolsters Jos's status. That Jewab suffers at all reveals how selfish Jos is; in that respect Jos has much in common with any colonizer who takes what he wants of a colony's resources without considering the effects of his actions nor the responsibility of ownership.

The Othering of Loll to characterize Jos reveals a contradiction about Empire which underlies the text. On the one hand, the text portrays Jos, the novel's clearest representation of the imperial idea, as a selfish and cowardly

fool. On the other hand, the text employs what is essentially the tool of the imperialist, the Othering of the native, to create that portrait. This contradiction reveals some of the tensions and ambiguities that surrounded issues of race and Empire in the 1840's. It may also indicate some of Thackeray's own unacknowledged anxieties, anxieties which are more fully revealed through a deconstructive reading of Miss Swartz as Other.

"My sisters say she has diamonds as big as pigeons' eggs. . . . How they must set off her complexion! A perfect illumination it must be when her jewels are on her neck. Her jet-black hair is as curly as Sambo's. I dare say she wore a nose-ring when she went to Court; and with a plume of feathers in her top-knot she would look a perfect Belle-Sauvage" (VF 244-5).

This is how George introduces the topic of Miss Swartz, a young heiress his sisters have recently befriended, to Amelia, and it is significant that he characterizes her as an Other as he does so. Although this is not Miss Swartz's first appearance in the text, it is her first appearance as a very eligible match on the marriage market: "She was reported to have I don't know how many plantations in the West Indies; a deal of money in the funds; and three stars to her name in the East India stockholders' list. She had a mansion in Surrey, and a house in Portland Place" (245). Despite her wealth and her social status, George equates Miss Swartz with Sambo, and uses the imagery of a nose-ring and a top-knot to create the mental construct of the "perfect Belle-Sauvage." He further describes her appearance to Amelia as follows:

"You should have seen her dress for court, Emmy. . . . Her diamonds blazed out like Vauxhall on the night we were there. . . . Diamonds and mahogany, my dear? think what an advantageous

contrast—and the white feathers in her hair—I mean in her wool. She had earrings like chandeliers; you might have lighted 'em up, by Jove—and a yellow satin train that streeled after her like the tail of a comet." (VF 245-6)

Here George compares Miss Swartz's skin to mahogany, a dark glossy wood imported from the West Indies, foregrounding its darkness and exotic nature. The contrast between her skin and the diamonds is depicted as excessive, emphasizing her darkness. Finally, he calls her hair "wool," suggesting that she is closer to animal than human. Throughout the novel the darkness of her skin is emphasized, and images of savagery and animals are associated with her. Even the novel's narrator, who is generally more sympathetic to Miss Swartz than George is, notes how she creates a ridiculous "primitive" flamboyancy, appearing "about as elegantly decorated as a she chimney-sweep on May-Day" (VF 252).

This depiction of Miss Swartz is startlingly similar to the way Thackeray describes slaves in his correspondence from his 1853 American tour. Throughout, Thackeray pounces on any evidence of slaves showing interest in their personal appearance and describes it as ridiculously excessive:

I wish you could see that waiter at our hotel with 5 gold metals in his shirt 2 gold chains and a gold ring. The African Church on a Sunday I am told is a perfect blaze of pea-green, crimson, earrings, lace collars, satin and velvet which the poor darkies wear.

(Letters, to Albany Fonblanque, 4 March 1853, 228-229)

In another letter he describes a black ball and, as he does with Miss Swartz, he contrasts the darkness of the women's skin with the whiteness of their attire (I will have more to say later about his derogatory judgement): "the women were preternaturally hideous all of them and dressed in such white frocks with tiaras

& feathers and white satin shoes (a few) and black shoulders and arms so queer in the white dresses" (Letters, to Harriet Thackeray, 11 March 1853, 235).

JanMohamed writes, "Because the perpetuation of the colonialist's privileged position is directly dependent upon the 'uncivilized' state of the native, any African who assimilates Western culture" becomes a threat (1983, 35). Much of Thackeray's correspondence during his tour consists of comic descriptions of slaves which, in distancing the blacks from the whites, preserve the physical frontier of difference and thus the privileged status of the whites. And he further translates this physical difference into an intellectual one. In the same letter, almost immediately after the description quoted above, he writes,

I don't mean to say that Slavery is right but that if you want to move your bowels with compassion for human unhappiness, that sort of aperient is to be found in such a plenty at home, that it's a wonder people won't seek it there.

(Letters, to Albany Fonblanque, 4 March 1853, 228-9)

Taking a view of the abolition movement promoted by such writers as Charles Dickens and Thomas Carlyle, Thackeray argues that the British should help their own poor before worrying about those in foreign lands. His arguments are explicitly founded on race, stating that not only are the black slaves happy with their condition but, due to their low status⁸, they deserve no better. In another letter he writes:

They are not my men & brethren, these strange people with retreating foreheads, with great protruding lips & jaws: with capacities for thought, pleasure, endurance quite different to mine.
 . . . they don't seem to me to be the same as white men, any more

⁸ Patrick Brantlinger and John Sutherland are among many critics who have noted Thackeray's tendency to rely upon racist arguments.

than asses are the same animals as horses; I don't mean this disrespectfully, but simply that there is such a difference of colour, habits, conformation of brains, that we must acknowledge it, & can't by any rhetorical phrase get it over; Sambo is not my man & my brother; the very aspect of his face is grotesque & inferior.

(Letters, to Mrs Carmichael-Smyth, 13 Feb 1853, 199)

The passage starts off with a description that in its emphasis on body features is similar to the portrayal of both Loll Jewab and Sambo—"retreating foreheads, with great protruding lips & jaws" and "such a difference in colour." Yet, where these two fictional characters are little more than a list of features, the letter extrapolates physical difference into a more fundamental one. The difference in lips and jaws translates into a difference in "capacities for thought, pleasure, endurance"; the difference of colour translates into a difference of "habits, conformation of brains." Physical difference becomes proof that black slaves are at a level lower than whites and therefore not entitled to the same rights and freedoms. Using "scientific" theories in vogue at the time, Thackeray makes an explicit comparison between slaves and children: "[Black slaves] are not more fit for freedom than a child of 10 years old is fit to compete in the struggle of life with grown up folks; and the physiologists who take that side of the question say they never can be." (Letters, to Anne and Harriet Thackeray, 14-19 March 1853, 242).

In *Vanity Fair* a similar connection is drawn between Miss Swartz's race and her lack of intellect.

Poor Swartz was seated in a place where Emmy had been accustomed to sit. Her bejewelled hands lay sprawling in her amber satin lap. Her tags and ear-rings twinkled, and her big eyes rolled about. She was doing nothing with perfect

contentment, and thinking herself charming. . . . "Dammy,"
 0 p ><| George said to a confidential friend, "she looked like a China
 doll, which has nothing to do all day but to grin and wag its
 head" (VF 255).

Despite her fashionable clothing and her twinkling jewels, Miss Swartz's head is vacant; her "big eyes" roll and she grins and wags her head. Her stupidity is further indicated by the passive way she "was seated," suggesting that someone else directed her to sit there, and by the manner in which her hands "lay sprawling" in her lap. Her "thinking herself charming" points out her inability to recognize the situation. Even her education is ridiculed. George says to Amelia (of course noting Miss Swartz's skin colour as he does so),

"why, the Black Princess, though she has only just left school, must be two or three-and-twenty. And you should see the hand she writes! Mrs. Colonel Haggistoun usually writes her letters, but in a moment of confidence, she put pen to paper for my sisters; she spelt satin satting, and Saint James's, Saint Jams'" (VF 246).

Miss Swartz's accomplishments are few. She plays only two pieces on the piano, knows only three songs, which she performs "as often as ever they asked, and with an always increasing pleasure to herself" (VF 252), and mispronounces "*Fleuve du Tage*" as "*Fluvy du Tajy*" (VF 255).

George Osborne's family wants him to marry Miss Swartz but when pressed by his father about the matter his response is both racist and cruel: "I don't like the colour sir" (VF 259). Phillips Davies argues that the reason Thackeray introduces the idea of miscegenation into *Vanity Fair* is "to emphasize one of the major contentions of the novel: English society is so money-centered that it will do anything, even marry into another race, to gain wealth" (331).

Certainly Becky jealously recognizes why the others at Miss Pinkerton's treat Miss Swartz so kindly: "How they cringe and bow to that Creole, because of her hundred thousand pounds! I am a thousand times cleverer and more charming than that creature, for all her wealth." (VF 19). Amelia makes a similar comment later in the novel, wistfully noting how badly the Miss Osbornes treat her in comparison to Miss Swartz (VF 246).

What purpose is served in making Miss Swartz an Other? Were Miss Swartz white there would be little to differentiate her from Amelia, and the same points could still be made about matches made for money and status, points which are also illustrated through the career of the social-climbing Becky. Thackeray's own history may yield some clues. Thackeray had an older half-sister, Sarah, who was partially East Indian, the offspring of his father's mistress several years before his marriage to Thackeray's mother. Although there is little record of Thackeray having much contact with Sarah⁹, his father's will charged him with ensuring she received an annuity equal in size to his own. Given Thackeray's financial woes as a young man this was not always easy. Davies writes, "In 1832, two years after he left Cambridge and a year before he lost most of his fortune in an Indian bank failure, Thackeray was obsessed by thoughts of his needy part-Indian relative, despite the fact she was receiving an evidently adequate annuity" (327). After receiving a letter from his aunt Augusta in India reminding him that he had not yet paid Sarah her annuity, Thackeray wrote that he "[w]ent to Bedford and dined on turtle and cold beef—I wish the turtle had

⁹ There are very few references to Sarah Blechyndon in Thackeray's correspondence, but he seems to have kept in touch with her family. In 1848, few years after Sarah's death, "he had his 'black niece' to stay with him . . . who wrote to Mrs. Carmichael-Smyth as 'dear Grandmamma,' a form of address Thackeray imagined would cause some astonishment in Paris" (Monsarrat 184). It is not clear whether his amusement with this is due to his niece's presumption of kinship or the implied deflation of his mother's status.

choked me—there is poor Mrs. Blechyndon starving in India, whilst I am gorging in this unconscionable way here” (Letters and Papers I 1964, 245).

It may be that Thackeray felt guilty about how relatively well-off he was in comparison compared to his half-sister. It may have been that he felt slighted that she received the same amount of annuity as he did, despite the fact that he was the offspring of a legal marriage and she was an illegitimate child. It seems most likely, however, that he was uncomfortable with the idea that she was the offspring of a relationship that, because of its unofficial status and because of its interracial nature, may have been perceived as primarily sexual. Thackeray himself was not particularly squeamish about sexual matters *per se*. Janice Carlisle writes, “He was indeed troubled by the infamous though exaggerated prudery of the mid-Victorian audience. In his fiction, more frequently than in that of Dickens and George Eliot, morality means, specifically, one’s attitudes toward sexual behavior” (57). British sexuality, however, was one thing, the sexuality of the Other another. Deborah Thomas notes that Thackeray saw “the ‘sensuality’ and subjection of women. . . as intrinsic to ‘Oriental’ life” (51), and part of the comedy of *Jos Sedley* is his “uneasiness in the presence of women and ‘dread lest they should make love to him’ [(VF 759) which] only makes his ‘Oriental’ posturing in chapter 57-59 more ridiculous” (52). In a reading of the text based on the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatari, Edward Musslewhite writes:

The Orient . . . marks for Thackeray a release from the constraints and taboos of his society and offers him instead all the indulgences of the flesh and spirit. But the adventure is not without risk. . . . To move off the map of one’s society . . . to abandon its grammar, is, perhaps, to lose that security which a sanctioned and authorized

codification of the relationship between desire and the body affords. (127)

As a black woman, then, what Miss Swartz represents in *Vanity Fair* is sexual licence. When the unauthorized desires projected onto the colonial woman's "unmapped" body challenge the frontier between Self and Other, the text attempts to neutralize this threat by normalizing the Other into a list of body parts. As a result, Miss Swartz is more aggressively Othered than either Sambo or Loll Jewab. Perera argues that the links Miss Swartz has with both Becky and Amelia provide "a shadowy and repressed commentary on the[ir] sexual careers" (1991, 98). For my purposes, I will reverse her argument to show how the parallels between Miss Swartz and Becky and Amelia provide commentary on Miss Swartz's sexual status as Other.

Becky and Miss Swartz are linked through their "obscure and suspect" histories (Perera 1991, 98) and this ultimately serves to comment on Miss Swartz's sexuality. As the mulatto daughter of a German slave-owner, there is a suspicion underlying the text that Miss Swartz's mother was a slave herself, although this is never explicitly stated. Becky's own family history is likewise left cloudy: her father was an artist "with a great propensity for running into debt, and a partiality for the tavern" (VF 15), and her mother an opera dancer, although the "humble calling of her female parent, Miss Sharp never alluded to" (VF 16). Throughout the novel Becky's sexuality is suspect, and she shows no hesitation in using it to manipulate situations to her benefit. Certainly she is far more overtly sexual than Miss Swartz. Yet when Mrs. Sedley protests her son's match with Becky, an artist's daughter with no fortune, Mr. Sedley retorts, "Better she, my dear, than a black Mrs. Sedley, and a dozen of mahogany grandchildren" (VF 62), a sweeping statement which implies that hyper-

sexuality would be inherent in a relationship with any colonial woman, and one which indirectly refers to the woman who wants to be a black Mrs. Osborne.

This idea of hyper-sexuality is echoed in George's reaction to his father's demand that he marry Miss Swartz: "Marry that mulatto woman?" George said, pulling up his shirt-collars. 'I don't like the colour, sir. Ask the black that sweeps opposite Fleet Market, sir. *I'm* not going to marry a Hottentot Venus.'" (259). The reference to a "Hottentot Venus" marks "the intersection of sexual and racial difference" (Perera 1991, 99). The original Hottentot Venus, Sartjee Baartman, was a South African woman displayed in Europe as an anatomical curiosity. She was portrayed in popular culture as being "financially well-endowed," and contemporary satirists played on the idea that she might be "an advantageous match for an ambitious suitor" (Lindfors 48-9), linking her wealth with her exaggerated physique, and implying an exaggerated sexuality in the process. Perera argues that in his reference to the Hottentot Venus, George makes "a brutal allusion to the sexuality of the colonized woman, a sexuality he exploits during his West Indian campaign but . . . rejects wholesale in a wife" (1991, 99)

The text reflects discomfort not only with the idea of Miss Swartz as a wife, but with her presence in the marriage market at all, and this discomfort is registered through the exaggerated descriptions of her dress. When George comes home one evening from visiting Amelia, he finds his sisters in the drawing room with "honest Swartz in her favourite amber-coloured satin, with turquoise-bracelets, countless rings, flowers, feathers, and all sorts of tags and gimcracks, about as elegantly decorated as a she chimney-sweep on May-Day" (VF 252) The exaggeration of Miss Swartz's attire works on a few levels. On the surface it works as comedy simply because she is described as looking silly. On another level it works as commentary on her status as Other, implying that

European clothing does not suit her. On a deeper level still, it suggests Thackeray's discomfort with the desirability of the Other woman. As I have argued earlier, the appearance of blacks in fancy dress is a favourite comic target for Thackeray, who regards the spectacle as being much the same as children playing "dress-up" in their parents' clothing. In his correspondence he describes a black ball as follows:

It was such queer melancholy fun! The men danced capitally they are house-servants in the town mostly, as grave & polite as if they had been noblemen. But the women were preternaturally hideous all of them and dressed in such white frocks with tiaras & feathers and white satin shoes (a few) and black shoulders and arms so queer in the white dresses. (Letters, to Harriet Thackeray, 11 March 1853, 235).

The male dancers, with their "grave & polite" manner, almost meet the standard of noblemen, but the female dancers, whom one might expect to be described as beautiful, are "preternaturally hideous." For Thackeray their white gowns and accessories only serve to emphasize their Otherness, their "black scraggly shoulders and arms so queer."

This particularly negative description of the female dancers is notable because it suggests Thackeray's discomfort with the idea of black women dressing as European women do. This may be the reason Thackeray so relentlessly Others Miss Swartz's appearance through her attire; he finds it disturbing that she is dressing to attract George Osborne as a mate.

As an Other, Miss Swartz's implied passions are both sexual and emotional. Perera sees the association of Miss Swartz with the Hottentot Venus as a reference to George's sexual adventures in the West Indies (1991, 99), citing the following passage as evidence: "George Osborne is a devil of a fellow," a

fellow soldier confides: 'There was a judge's daughter at Demarara went almost mad about him; then there was that beautiful quadroon girl, Miss Pye, at St Vincent's, you know'" (VF 140). Miss Swartz's interest in George echoes this passage, providing a discreet reference to the predatory nature of George's sexuality (confirmed by Amelia's own "interesting" condition, suggesting George has already made a conquest of her). The passage about the West Indian women also foregrounds the sexual nature of the colonial woman, a being capable of going "almost mad" with passion. The text likewise Others Miss Swartz through references to her passion. When Amelia departs from Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, Miss Swartz is described as being "in such a passion of tears, that they were obliged to send for Dr. Floss and half tipsify her with sal volatile" (VF 7). Her cries are not in the form of dainty tears but "hysterical *yoops*" (VF 10). Other references more immediately connect her emotional behaviour with her race. She has "a very warm and impetuous nature," and responds to the Misses Osbornes' overtures "with quite a tropical ardour" (VF 251), both references to the climate of St. Kitt's, and both insinuations that her passionate temperament is due less to her personality than to her race.

Perhaps the Hottentot Venus is the ultimate manners-and-customs portrait. Less a woman than an exaggerated set of features, she became a symbol of Other for the Georgians, someone onto whom to project the negative side of manichean binaries, particularly sexual ones. To normalize a dark stranger into a list of body parts is to conquer him/her symbolically and thus preserve the status quo. Loll Jewab, Sambo and Miss Swartz, like the Hottentot Venus, are little more than lists of stock racial characteristics, described in the same fashion again and again in order to reaffirm their positions as harmless Others, and refortify the frontier of difference between the races.

Yet, in a deconstructive reading of the text, these same manners-and-customs portraits reflect the anxieties of a society not entirely comfortable with the issues of race or the implications of the imperial process. The stereotypical depiction of Loll Jewab reveals Jos Sedley to be an imperial fool who is both grasping and cowardly. Miss Swartz's comic portrait reveals the text's discomfort with the female Other, in particular with her sexuality. The process of building Empire, by pushing the frontier, necessarily brings Self and Other face to face. Brantlinger notes that Thackeray uses racial stereotypes as a substitute for political analysis and self-criticism (106): Othering is Thackeray's tool to keep these two faces from merging.

CHAPTER THREE

When *Jane Eyre* first appeared in 1847, there were those who expressed concern that the debauched behaviour of Bertha Mason Rochester was too shocking. In a letter to W.S. Williams, written in January 1848, Charlotte Brontë defends the characterization as being true to life:

I agree with them that the character is shocking, but I know that it is but too natural. There is a phase of insanity which may be called moral madness, in which all that is good or even human seems to disappear from the mind and a fiend-nature replaces it. The sole aim and desire of the being thus possessed is to exasperate, to molest, to destroy, and preternatural ingenuity and energy are often exercised to that dreadful end. The aspect in such cases, assimilates with the disposition; all seems demonized. . . . Mrs. Rochester indeed lived a sinful life before she was insane, but sin is itself a species of insanity: the truly good behold and compassionate it as such. (*The Brontës*, 173)

The gothic imagery employed in this excerpt to describe the nature of moral madness—the replacement of anything human by a “fiend-nature,” the “preternatural ingenuity and energy” that is involved, how all seems “demonized”—reflects the type of imagery used in the novel to tie insanity and apparent debauchery to her race, making her the “racial Other incarnate” (Perera 1991, 82). The overt intent of this Othering is to enable Jane to marry Rochester with greater moral purity. A deconstructive reading, however, shows how the text pulls away from this to reveal Bertha’s status as a colonial woman, allowing her to emerge as a sympathetic figure.

The imagery used to characterize Bertha shifts throughout the novel—first as demonic, then as animal, and then as black—to symbolically link her sin with her madness, and finally with her race. The first time Bertha becomes active in the text, and the first time Jane (unwittingly) encounters her, the imagery used describes her as though she were possessed with a demon.

This was a demoniac laugh—low, suppressed, and deep—uttered, as it seemed at the very key-hole of my chamber door. The head of my bed was near the door, and I thought at first the goblin-laughter stood at my bedside—or rather, crouched by my pillow: but I rose, looked round, and could see nothing; while, as I still gazed, the unnatural sound was reiterated: and I knew it came from behind the panels. . . . “Was that Grace Poole? and is she possessed with a devil?” thought I. (*JE* 151)

In this passage, Bertha’s laughter is described as “demoniac,” “goblin-laughter,” and as an “unnatural sound.” Given the nature of this imagery, Jane’s further discovery that Rochester’s bed is in flames is entirely appropriate. The association of Bertha with supernatural evil runs throughout the novel. Later in the text her voice is described as that of a “mocking demon,” (*JE* 212), and her activities as “the gambols of a demon” (*JE* 296). Her appearance reminds Jane of “the Vampyre” (*JE* 287), and she is called a “fiend” and a “Fury” (*JE* 212). Her homeland, the West Indies, is described by Rochester as a fiery hell:

“The air was like sulphur-streams—I could find no refreshment anywhere. Mosquitoes came buzzing in and hummed sullenly round the room; the sea, which I could hear from thence, rumbled dull like an earthquake—black clouds were casting up over it; the moon was setting in the waves, broad and red, like a hot cannonball—she threw her last bloody glance over a world

quivering with the ferment of tempest. I was physically influenced by the atmosphere and scene, and my ears were filled with the curses the maniac still shrieked out. . . . 'This life,' said I at last, 'is hell! this is the air--those are the sounds of the bottomless pit! "' (JE 310)¹⁰

The final image of Bertha in the novel is that of her standing on the battlements of the burning Thornfield Hall before she leaps to her death (JE 431).

In Jane's next encounter with Bertha, when Jane is tending Richard Mason, battered after an attack by his sister, this demon imagery is gradually superseded by animal imagery. As she stands beside Richard, trying to stop his bleeding, Jane asks herself,

What crime was this, that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner?—What mystery, that broke out, now in fire and now in blood, at the deadliest hours of night? What creature was it, that masked in an ordinary woman's face and shape, uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey? (JE 212)

In this transitional passage, Bertha is associated with fire (evil) and blood (animal), mocking demon (evil) and carrion-seeking bird of prey (animal). The dichotomy between demon and animal imagery continues in the description of Bertha's behaviour. When she attacks her brother she bites him, worrying him "like a tigress" (JE 214), but also like a vampire: such is her savagery that

¹⁰ Suvendrini Perera writes, "The full vocabulary of savage Otherness deployed here (hurricane, tempest, earthquake, mosquitoes, sulphur, fire, cannon) fuses with the more familiar Gothic element of *Jane Eyre*, as the environment of empire becomes the symbolic landscape of horror, and Bertha's uncontained rage and explicit sexuality the ultimate expression of un-Englishness" (86-7).

Richard Mason reports "She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart" (JE 214). Bertha later wrestles with Rochester, "grappl[ing] his throat viciously, and [laying] her teeth to his cheek" (JE 296).

By her fourth appearance in the novel, when Bertha is finally presented as Rochester's wife and as the source of the sounds and activities of the third floor and the fire in Rochester's chamber, "it," as Jane as narrator refers to Bertha, is a captive animal.

In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (JE 295)

Bertha's behaviour marks her as being on the border between beast and human. She paces, snatches, growls, and grovels "seemingly on all fours." She is strange and wild, and her dark hair is the equivalent of a mane. Only the presence of her clothing assures Jane that Bertha is indeed human. When Bertha sees Rochester, her "fierce cry seemed to give the lie to [Grace's] favourable report: the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet." (JE 295). It is when Bertha stands up on her feet that the narrator finally refers to "her" rather than "it," as a human rather than an animal.

These passages lay down the foundation for the characterization of Bertha as an allegorical figure of uncontrolled female passion, symbolically linking sin with irrational animal passion, and hence with madness. This connection with madness becomes explicit when Rochester tells her story, making it clear that her insanity followed closely on her increasing debauchery. Many critics trace the excesses of Bertha, "a wife both intemperate and unchaste" with "gross, impure,

depraved" nature (*JE* 312-3), directly to her sexuality. Elaine Showalter notes that in women one of the chief symptoms of moral insanity is sexual appetite: "it was subject to severe sanctions and was regarded as abnormal or pathological" (Showalter 1977, 120)¹¹. Bertha is a flesh-and-blood representation of Victorian fears about uncontrolled female passion. John Maynard writes, "She seems conceived after the Victorian idea of woman falling, when she falls, into complete sensuality. . . . Created thus out of Brontë and her culture's fears of sexuality, Bertha functions primarily as a warning exemplum of the dangers of sex" (*JE* 107). He further argues that Bertha functions as "a touchstone of sexual madness against which Jane is forced to test her own sanity as she herself falls under increasing sexual pressure" (Maynard 108). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar see Bertha playing a broader role: she "is Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead" (*JE* 359). As Jane's double, Bertha represents Jane's repressed sexuality and her suppressed anger. Rochester himself sets up Bertha and Jane as opposites: "Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk" (*JE* 296). While these arguments establishing Bertha as a symbolic representation of Jane's repressed passions are convincing, these critics fail to explore how Bertha's characterization develops beyond that of a double. Suvendrini Perera argues,

¹¹ In *The Female Malady*, Showalter notes how Bertha's madness is also linked to female sexuality and the periodicity of the menstrual cycle. Her worst attacks come when the moon is "blood-red" (chap. 25), or "broad and red" (chap. 27); at these moments she is vicious and destructive, although at other times she is lucid and calm. Still a prisoner of her reproductive cycle (we can calculate from the novel that she is forty-two years old), Bertha suffers from the "moral insanity" associated with women's sexual desires. (1980, 67)

if the barely human prisoner caged in the Thornfield attic is the truest expression of women's anger and aspiration, these critics overlook that she is also the racial Other incarnate—a bestial, violent creature with an inordinate sexual appetite, caught in the colonized West Indies and confined “for her own good” by a master who has appropriated both her body and her wealth. (1991, 82)

The text does leave the definition of Bertha's race ambiguous. For instance, like many critics, Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak considers her a white colonial woman (247). Perera, on the other hand, defines Bertha as the offspring of an interracial union (1991, 99). Bertha and her mother are both referred to as “The Creole” but in the nineteenth century the term was racially ambivalent, used to describe both blacks and whites who were born in the West Indies (Meyer 164). Whatever her racial background, Bertha, as described by Rochester in the days of their courtship, appears to be caucasian: beautiful, tall, dark and majestic, not all that different from Blanche Ingram.

But when she actually emerges in the course of the action, the narrative associates her with blacks, particularly with the black Jamaican antislavery rebels, the maroons. In the form in which she becomes visible in the novel, Bertha has *become* black as she is constructed by the narrative. (Meyer 163-4)

Bertha's first physical appearance in the text is her night foray into Jane's bedroom. Jane describes Bertha's features to Rochester as follows:

“Fearful and ghastly to me—oh sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the

roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!"

"Ghosts are usually pale, Jane."

"This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed; the black eyebrows widely raised over the blood-shot eyes. Shall I tell you of what it reminded me?"

"You may."

"Of the foul German spectre—the Vampyre." (*JE* 286).

Bertha's thick and dark hair (*JE* 285), swollen black face (*JE* 287), and "the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments" (*JE* 286) all suggest that she is literally black. Jane's description, which Rochester dismisses as coming from a state of consciousness somewhere between nightmare and waking, is confirmed when she is finally shown Bertha: "The maniac bellowed: she parted her shaggy locks from her visage, and gazed wildly at her visitors. I recognized well that purple face,—those bloated features" (*JE* 295). Bertha's appearance corresponds with the popular image of the African savage, and Rochester's later descriptions of her having a mask (*JE* 296) rather than a face, and a black and scarlet visage (*JE* 312), highlight this connection.

As Susan Meyer points out, it is only when Bertha becomes active within the text that she becomes "black." Once she is established as such, a direct correlation is made between race, sin and madness. Consider Rochester's description of the disintegration of his marriage:

"her character ripened and developed with frightful rapidity; her vices sprang up fast and rank. . . . What a pigmy intellect she had—and what giant propensities! How fearful were the curses those propensities entailed on me! Bertha Mason,—the true daughter of an infamous mother—dragged me through all the hideous and

degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife both intemperate and unchaste. . . . a nature the most gross, impure, depraved I ever saw, was associated with mine, and called by the law and by society a part of me. And I could not rid myself of it by any legal proceedings: for the doctors now discovered that *my wife* was mad—her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity." (JE 312-3)

Meyer argues the phrase "true daughter of an infamous mother" implies that Bertha's madness is not due solely to her sinful past, but to her racial background. This implication underlies Rochester's explanation to Jane of how Bertha's excesses had "'prematurely developed the germs of insanity'" (JE 309) and how she had "'dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste'" (JE 308-9). Rochester's earlier description of Bertha, made when he is confronted in the church by Richard Mason, is of how "'she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations. Her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard!'" (JE 294) Meyer argues that here he "locates both madness and drunkenness in his wife's maternal line, which is again emphatically and ambiguously labeled "Creole" (164-5). Bertha's father is not mad; a merchant and an acquaintance of Rochester's father, he is also not Creole. It is Antoinetta Mason, "the Creole," who is shut up in an asylum, and all of her offspring are "tainted" by her blood: her youngest son is described by Rochester as "a complete dumb idiot" (JE 308), and the mental state of her eldest son Richard, whom Rochester considers a weak but decent man, is on the decline and expected to deteriorate eventually to the same level as Bertha. Richard's decline is manifested further in his characterization as a feeble child, also a stereotypical depiction of the Other. Jane describes him as a man easily led (JE

218) and Rochester says that Richard has "some grains of affection in his feeble mind; shown in the continued interest he takes in wretched sister and also in a doglike attachment he once bore me" (JE 308)¹². Not only does Richard lack intelligence, he requires Rochester's protection from the senseless rage of his mad sister, an illustration of a weak race needing the help of the strong.

With such strong connections established between race, sin and madness, it is clear that the text's intention is to Other Bertha. Cora Kaplan writes that

Women's texts often move through the rhetoric of radical individualism towards a critique of both patriarchal and capitalist relations. Yet this same writing will be painfully class-bound and often implicitly or explicitly racist, displacing on to women in subordinate groups the "bad" elements of female subjectivity so that a reformed and rational feminine may survive. *Jane Eyre* is the emblematic example of this process in mid-nineteenth-century writing, a proto-feminist text that both moves within and pushes beyond "bourgeois ideology." (3)

In their book, *The Africa that Never Was*, Dorothy Hammond and Alba Jablow argue that ethnocentrism is nearly universal. People from one culture perceive those from another as being different, and will tend to exaggerate these differences, projecting strange behaviour onto the group and creating stereotypes. "Xenophobia" moves beyond the alienation inherent in ethnocentrism to an actual fear or hatred of all things and people foreign. Charlotte Brontë herself had difficulties identifying with people from other

¹² According to Elizabeth Imlay, Richard Mason embodies Brontë's notions of homosexuality (51). She argues that a passage from the opening to *The Professor* ("What animal magnetism drew me and thee together I know not; certainly I never experienced anything of the Pylades and Orestes sentiment for you, and I have reason to believe that you, on your part, were equally free from all romantic regard to me") indicates that Brontë was aware of alternative sexualities.

European cultures.¹³ Phyllis Read notes that in Brontë's texts the measure of inferiority of other cultures is based on their geographical distance from England:

as a general rule it could be said that the basis for evaluation of any person or place in Brontë's novels is their distance from rural Yorkshire; the scale would go from best to worst as the location moved from Yorkshire to its antipode if west is preferable to east [avoiding Ireland and the West Indies], so north is preferable to south, which is associated with the exotic, the pagan, and the adulteration of white blood with dark. (20-1)¹⁴

There is xenophobia evident in the text's treatment of Adèle Varens, the daughter of Rochester's French mistress. Although Jane says that she likes the

¹³ Phyllis Read argues that xenophobia is present in Brontë's fiction and suggests that it is reflective of Brontë's personal beliefs: "there is ample evidence to show that her narrators and heroines speak for Charlotte Brontë herself. Not only do the lives of her heroines frequently parallel her own life, but her letters abound with explicit statements which show that her heroines' sentiments are her own" (Read 23). In 1842, Brontë and her sister Emily traveled for schooling to Belgium, their first trip outside of England. Brontë had a difficult time adjusting. Enid Duthie writes,

On her arrival Charlotte had remarked that she and Emily were isolated in the midst of numbers because of the difference of country and religion. She decided at an early stage that the Belgians disliked the English, but her own conviction of English superiority to the foreigner was not calculated to help matters. (30)

This conviction of superiority is evident in a letter Brontë wrote to Ellen Nussey in July 1842: "If the national character of the Belgians is to be measured by the character of most of the girls in the school, it is a character singularly cold, selfish, animal and inferior . . . they are very mutinous and difficult for the teachers to manage and their principles are rotten to the core" (*The Brontë Letters* 99). Although she later warmed to at least one Belgian, M. Heger, a professor at the Athénée with whom she fell in love, there is no indication in Brontë's correspondence that her opinion of Belgians as a people ever changed.

Winnifred Gérin notes that there were two pupils from the West Indies enrolled with Charlotte Brontë when she was at Cowan Bridge and that the former Superintendent told Mrs Gaskell that one of them was a great friend of Brontë's (Gérin 9). Laura Hinkley suggests that the character of Bertha was based at least partially based on a girl from the West Indies that Brontë encountered in her role as teacher, and that this girl provided the basis for other characters as well, such as Dolores in *Villette*, and *The Professor's* Juana Trista – who came from "the —— Isles" – a character Hinkley describes as "cruel, vicious, obstinate" (Hinkley 208).

¹⁴ Brontë was not alone in believing character to be defined by geography. John Ruskin, for instance, wrote a section about the difference between the northern and the southern character in *The Stones of Venice*.

girl, she describes Adèle's conversation, particularly her tendency to prattle on, as betraying her "superficiality of character, inherited probably from her mother, hardly congenial to an English mind" (JE 148). Despite her French background, however, the narrator indicates that there is apparently hope for Adèle. By the end of the novel, "a sound English education [has corrected] in a great measure her French defects" (JE 453), but, one should note, not entirely—a point which emphasizes how deeply these foreign character defects run. Throughout the novel continental Europe is associated with sexual licence: Rochester's past mistresses are from France (Céline), Italy (Giacinta), and Germany (Clara). It is not insignificant that when Rochester seeks to make Jane his next mistress he offers to take her to France (Duthie 30). Likewise, it is not insignificant that the morally mad Bertha is from the West Indies. According to Perera, while "empire functions in both Brontë and Thackeray as a space that complements and extends the unsatisfactory confines of England; in *Jane Eyre*, it is simultaneously the moral antithesis of home" (1991, 86).

Likewise, the colonial Other becomes the moral antithesis of the British Self. Following Kaplan's line of argument, the most obvious reason for polarizing all that is negative onto Bertha is so that Jane, in comparison, is characterized as being rational enough to tame her own passionate urges. Less obvious is how this polarization serves to make the actions of Jane and Rochester more sympathetic to the reader. Spivak points out that "through Bertha Mason, the white Jamaican/Creole, Brontë renders the human/animal frontier as acceptably indeterminate so that a good greater than the letter of the Law can be broached" (247). Brontë uses the stereotypical images to present Bertha as a mad, sub-human Creole who is both evil and dangerous, and thus to create sympathy for the man trapped in marriage with this creature. Rochester's deliberate attempt to commit bigamy appears justifiable—after all his wife is

hardly human—as does Jane’s brief but agonizing temptation to stay and become his mistress despite her knowledge of Bertha’s existence. Were Bertha more civilized in her madness—or, to put it another way, were she fair-coloured and English—certainly Jane’s and Rochester’s relationship would take on a more adulterous dimension.

Despite how she is Othered, Bertha remains a far more sympathetic character than either Blanche Ingram or the Reeds, characters who also have dark colouring and treat Jane in a threatening manner¹⁵. Linda Kauffman argues that there is ultimately a sympathetic link between Jane and Bertha, demonstrated by Jane’s “defence” of Bertha when Rochester attempts to explain why he is not really married, “speaking out on her behalf and articulating the injustice of male definitions on sanity and madness.” (190). Kauffman also claims that it is when Jane finds herself destitute on the Rivers’ doorstep, at the point of collapse, that

she comes closest not just to imagining but to experiencing what it has felt like to be Bertha Mason, to endure “moral degradation, blent with physical suffering” it is only in the retrospective focalization that Jane fully sees herself as Bertha’s voice; her narrative is an expiation, an attempt to “speak the silence that is

¹⁵ Susan Meyer makes an interesting argument about how *Jane Eyre* parallels black slaves with people oppressed by the hierarchies of class and gender in England.

By associating the qualities of darkness and imperiousness in Blanche, Brontë suggest that imperialism brings out both of these undesirable quantities in Europeans, that the British have been sullied, “darkened,” and made “imperious” or oppressive by contact with the racial “other,” and that such contact makes them arrogant oppressors both abroad, and like Blanche, at home in England (172).

The association of the class oppressor with “dark races” is also hinted at in the descriptions of the Reeds and of Rochester, a gender oppressor. The result, Meyer argues, is that “By using dark-skinned peoples to signify not only the oppressed but also the oppressor, Brontë dramatically empties the signifier of dark skin in her novel of any of its meaning in historical reality and makes it merely expressive of ‘otherness’” (172-3).

woman," a testimony to Bertha's mute suffering as well as to Jane's blind idolatry. (194).

There are two points to be made against Kauffman's arguments. Jane has not endured moral degradation: she has not sinned; she has only asked for charity in order to prevent starving to death. To make this claim is to ignore the explicit link the text makes between sin and madness. As for Jane's "defence" of Bertha, her question only provides an opportunity for Rochester to explain his side of the story and argue that he did not reject Bertha because she was mad but because her moral character disgusted him.

The breakdown of Jane's behaviour in her roles as critical listener and narrator raises suspicion about the accuracy of Rochester's version of Bertha's story, and thus secures sympathy for Bertha. Jane's authority as a narrator is limited; her knowledge is confined to what she has experienced and what others tell her. Her critical manner, however, does much to compensate for this; even as a child she is able to recognize and rebel against inaccurate statements and unfair judgements. Her relationship with Rochester is marked by her determination to speak her mind even when she knows her opinion is unwelcome. For instance, when she first tells him of her intention to leave,

His voice and hand quivered: his large nostrils dilated: his eye blazed: still I dared to speak:—

"Sir, your wife is living: that is a fact acknowledged this morning by yourself. If I lived with you as as you desire, I should then be your mistress: to say otherwise is sophistical—is false." (JE 306)

Throughout the novel, Jane, both as character and as narrator, rarely hesitates to interrupt Rochester's monologues to add her own comments. Yet, when he describes his life with Bertha, Jane listens silently and, when he says he will not continue because Jane looks almost sick, she insists he go on: her only remarks

are made to prevent him from interrupting his own narrative. Later, however, during the latter part of his tale when he is describing his European mistresses and his dissipated lifestyle, Jane's behaviour as a character/listener reverts back to normal, frequently questioning him as to what he did next and actively disapproving of his behaviour: "I don't like you so well as I have done sometimes, indeed, sir. Did it not seem to you in the least wrong to live in that way: first with one mistress and then another? You talk of it as a mere matter of course" (JE 314). Meanwhile, Jane as narrator interrupts Rochester's narrative to describe her own thoughts and feelings, again something she does not do during the portion of his tale concerning Bertha. Dennis Porter argues that the uncritical acceptance of Bertha's story shown by Jane is uncharacteristic of her, and suggests that Jane herself may harbor "a combination of nineteenth-century parochialism and racism that [makes] it normal for her to associate colonial living with the idea of degeneracy and madness" (548). Jane's hesitance to test Rochester's tale about Bertha also suggests a fear that it might not hold up to questioning, and that Rochester might not be entirely blameless in Bertha's degeneration. This suspicion, however slight, is enough to undermine Bertha's portrait as a mad Other in its suggestion that she is more of a victim than the surface narrative suggests; this creates sympathy for her.

The absence of Bertha's side of her own story is glaring: we learn of her history from one source alone, Rochester: a man who married her for her wealth and beauty, and when his lust for her became repugnant to him, viewed her as morally depraved (a projection of his repugnance), and then used this as an excuse to use her wealth to imprison her far away from her home and family; a man who now views her not as a human being but as an impediment to his own happiness. The only information that Richard Mason provides about Bertha is that she is his sister and that their mother is Creole. The absence of her story

creates a trace that suggests its presence, a story that no one is willing to admit exists and which Bertha has been rendered unable to tell herself. In this respect, her silence and her visible anger are far more eloquent about her lack of status and power than any of Jane's or Rochester's speeches, and this too secures sympathy for her.

In the end, what Bertha represents is a legal and a morally symbolic obstacle to the union of Jane and Rochester (von Schmidt 88) that must be surmounted before the novel can come to a close. Legally, only her death can clear the way for them to marry and have a socially approved union; symbolically, as "[m]adness is explicitly associated with female sexual passion, with the body, with the fiery emotions Jane admits to feeling for Rochester. . . . it becomes inevitable that Bertha's death, the purging of the lusts of the flesh must precede any successful union between Rochester and Jane" (Showalter 122). Spivak reads Bertha's fate as "an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer" (1985, 251). Spivak's reading, however, disregards that this colonial subject does not immolate herself to glorify her colonizer but to escape him. Laura Donaldson argues that Bertha's death is an act of resistance which challenges her status as a colonial woman and which "maims the wholeness of the text with a visible wound which we can neither suture over nor erase within the white (fe)male palimpsest" (76). This wound reveals the palimpsest to have yet another layer, the story of a colonial woman.

In *Jane Eyre*, madness is both Bertha's reward (through her sinful depravity) and her destiny (through her race). Yet her final rebellion reveals her to be more than an allegorical construct of uncontrolled female passion. It confirms the gaps in Jane's narrative which undercut the "official" history

Rochester gives of Bertha, foregrounding Bertha's silence and powerlessness, thus further establishing her status as a colonized possession in an imperialistic system but also as a woman in a patriarchal system.

CONCLUSION

Othering is a strategy of representation which allows the colonizer to claim authority over the colonized. When seemingly unnatural behaviour of the natives is too alien to be assimilated by the colonizer it becomes a challenge, one that can "only be absorbed into the European frame as a mirror image, or more appropriately, the negative of the positive concept of the civilized, the black Other to the white norm, the demonic opposite to the angels of reason and culture" (Ashworth 159). By polarizing characteristics into positive and negative and projecting the negative qualities onto the colonized, the colonizer protects his/her cultural hegemony.

In *Dombey and Son*, the Native is initially used to characterize the imperial Major Bagstock. As Dickens becomes caught up in comic and stereotypic descriptions of the Native, his passive suffering and the savagery of the Major's methods of civilizing him are revealed. The Native becomes a sympathetic representative of the colonized, a faceless, nameless and voiceless backdrop to the activities of Empire.

Like Dickens, Thackeray uses the Othered characters as a kind of shorthand in sketching English characters. Like Brontë, he uses the Othering of characters to make moral statements, in this case about society and its obsession with wealth and status. In both cases a deconstructive reading reveals a discomfort with Imperialism, which morally distances Self and Other yet, through its very nature, brings the two sides into geographical contact. So while on the surface Loll Jewab is used to illustrate Jos Sedley's vanity, the way he is Othered also reveals Jos, the most obvious representative of the Imperialism in the novel, as a selfish and cowardly fool. Miss Swartz is used to comment both on George Osborne's sexuality and on the lengths society is willing to go to

secure wealth. The comical treatment of Miss Swartz through her race, however, reveals a fear of the desirability of the female Other, a threat to the psychological and physical distance between Self and Other.

In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha is presented as an allegorical figure representing uncontrolled female passion: on a symbolic level as an Other she acts as a moral double for Jane; on the level of plot, it is her presence as an Other which enables Jane and Rochester to marry with greater moral purity. Yet the text also reveals Bertha's status as a silenced and imprisoned colonial woman.

It is interesting to note how each novel resolves their Othered characters' fates. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha chooses death rather than a rescue that would mean further confinement. In *Vanity Fair*, those characters who cannot adapt to England are shipped back to the colonies, as Loll Jewab is. Those who can adapt, quickly melt into the strata of English society where they are most accepted. When the Sedley family is ruined and their servants leave, "Black Sambo with the infatuation of his profession, determined on setting up a public-house" (VF 214). When Amelia becomes prosperous again in Chapter 61, the rich Miss Swartz, now safely married, makes a brief reappearance: "Our old friend Miss Swartz, and her husband came thundering over from Hampton Court, with flaming yellow liveries, and was as impetuously fond of Amelia as ever. Swartz would have liked her always if she could have seen her. One must do her that justice." (VF 781) And in *Dombey and Son*, there is no resolution: the Native continues to passively suffer the Major's gratuitous abuse.

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