

WRITING AMBIVALENCE

WRITING AMBIVALENCE:
IMPERIALISM AND RACE IN DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S *DEADLOCK*

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ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship has emphasized the predominant influence of imperialist race ideology on the literary establishment of nineteenth-century Britain. Almost no significant criticism of imperialism or its assumptions about race may be observed in Victorian literature. During the early twentieth century, however, this situation altered as imperialist ideology began to unravel rapidly. Thus, most authors of the modernist period reproduced imperialism's assumptions about race, but, unlike their immediate predecessors, they also contested the validity of these assumptions. This project will explore the ambivalent treatment of issues of race in Dorothy Richardson's novel *Deadlock* (1921). The novel challenges the imperialist assumption that cultural differences are manifestations of underlying racial differences, especially when this assumption establishes the racial superiority of Europeans. And yet, the novel naively exhibits racial stereotypes and also defends imperialist strategies for governing the racial Other.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	
Imperialism and its Others	1
Chapter One	
The Modernist Dilemma: <i>Deadlock's</i> Ambiguous Critique of Imperialism	32
Chapter Two	
Miriam, Woman, Other: <i>Deadlock</i> and the Stereotypes of Race	58
Conclusion	74
Notes	77
Works Cited or Consulted	83

Introduction

Imperialism and its Others

Compared with the diverse range of criticism that has accumulated around the better known modernist writers, the criticism of Dorothy Richardson's fiction is relatively undeveloped. Not only are there few citations about her writings, but many of the significant issues have yet to be examined in detail. Richardson's representation of race is one such largely unexamined issue and is perhaps the most glaring omission when we consider its central importance in her work, an importance that I will be emphasizing in this thesis. Kristin Bluemel observes that critics of Richardson's fiction must begin to "examine other axes of identity such as...race" (85). Unfortunately, she decides to "leave it to others" to investigate "the implications of race for Richardson's writing" (188 n) and fill this striking gap in the criticism.¹ In recent years, several theorists have argued that the vicissitudes of imperialism during the period between the two World Wars strongly influenced the development of British writing at that time.² According to these theorists, the increasingly ambivalent representation of race in early twentieth-century British literature is symptomatic of the cultural dominance of imperialist race ideology *and* of its gradual decline. Working from such arguments, this thesis will explore how Richardson's novel *Deadlock* (1921) simultaneously challenges and reproduces imperialism's ideas about race.³

At irregular intervals between 1915 and 1938, Richardson published the twelve extant volumes of her opus, a *roman fleuve* that she entitled *Pilgrimage*.⁴ Because race is one of several important themes that appear in each novel of the sequence, I could readily have presented similar arguments based on material from any of the other novels. I began to consider *Deadlock* as the primary text for this thesis when I discovered that the novel has received the most attention in the scholarly criticism about aspects of race in Richardson's work. After I had read the novel, I could understand immediately why it merited such attention. In *Deadlock*, Miriam Henderson first encounters members of minority groups like Jews and Africans.⁵ The main issues that were debated in early twentieth-century controversies about race are raised in the novel, and several common racial stereotypes appear on its pages. *Deadlock* is largely about issues of race, an emphasis that is not shared to the same degree by any other novel in *Pilgrimage*.

Before I provide a summary of the central arguments of my thesis, I would like to examine the issues that have been raised in the scholarly criticism of Richardson's representation of race. The following critical survey will appear conspicuously short in length, despite its being an exhaustive sample of the relevant criticism.⁶ Before the 1990s, no Richardson scholar, so far as I have been able to determine, had written about the representation of race in any of her works. My purpose in writing this survey is not simply to identify, and in this way avoid, the basic arguments that have already been articulated by other scholars. I will demonstrate that my thesis moves significantly beyond the scope and vision of previous criticism into a consideration of crucial issues that have not yet been

adequately interrogated. It is precisely these unexamined issues that desperately need interrogation in the current criticism about Richardson's use of race.

Most of the criticism that existed before the current spate of articles and books was concerned with Richardson's contributions to feminism and modernism. The criticism remained within the parameters of these disciplines and reproduced their critical assumptions and biases. Without speculating on the institutional blindnesses or ideological effects within feminist and modernist criticism which could have prompted the scholarly omissions that I have mentioned, it seems likely that the current popularity of studies that examine the significance of race in Richardson's writing is connected with the growing interrogation of racial issues within established disciplines like feminism, a growth which has been involved in the emergence of such disciplines as post-colonial studies. This new disciplinary sensitivity to racial issues may explain why the criticism I survey develops noticeably in sophistication over time, as the scholars build on previous work done in the field and subsequently learn what it is both possible and permissible to write about Richardson's representation of race.

It may be useful to read the growing critical awareness of race issues in Richardson's work as an increasing willingness on the part of the scholarly community to interrogate, with appropriate rigour and severity, a pioneering woman author's involvement in the textual appropriation and suppression of the racialized Other. By arranging the studies in the chronological order of their composition, I hope to provide a sense not only of the limitations of individual studies but also of how each study contributes to the development of the field. In the earliest studies, the respective critics are apparently unwilling to explore issues of race

beyond a narrowly defined focus and are largely preoccupied with Miriam's supposed racism. Later studies begin to explore the connection that exists between Richardson's racism and her feminism. In the last studies, we discover a willingness to examine how the consolidation of female identity in Richardson's writings depends upon the suppression of the identity of members of other races.

The account of race representation that Jean Radford includes in her book *Dorothy Richardson* (1991) is, at only a few paragraphs, the shortest of the studies that I survey. Radford limits her discussion to Miriam's personal attitudes toward the Jews. She claims that the anti-Semitic ideas of Jewish writer Otto Weininger "preoccupy Miriam at this point," and she cites Weininger's argument that "Jews are like women, 'lacking in personality' and individuality" (99-100). Radford accuses Miriam of "xenophobia" and justifies her accusation by referring to a passage in which Miriam describes Shatov's "Jewishness" as his "hidden flaw" (99). However, Radford does not clearly explain why Miriam should be labelled xenophobic, nor does she determine conclusively whether Miriam's characterization of Shatov's Jewishness as a "flaw" is indicative of anti-Semitic sentiments or has some other meaning. Radford finally retreats from such difficulties by claiming that the passage is "left for the reader to construe" (99).

Radford's discussion suffers from her marked tendency to simplify issues in order to emphasize Miriam's racism. Radford uses Weininger to establish a context for her exploration of Miriam's anti-Semitism but she ignores the significance of Weininger's argument that Jews are like women in that they both lack individuality, a conspicuous

oversight given that her study is a feminist reading of Miriam's aspiration to maintain her individualism in the face of the demands of British patriarchy. If Miriam identifies the Jew with a lack of individualism, what effect on her identity is produced by her relationship with Shatov? Does her rejection of Shatov—or her refusal to consider converting to his Judaism, a situation with quite different parameters than the first one—serve to underline her sense of herself as an individual woman? Because Radford understands Miriam's racism merely *as* racism, she is neither inclined nor prepared to examine how race operates in a complex manner to produce and stabilize Miriam's sense of identity.

Patricia Egger's engaging essay *Deaf Ears and Dark Continents* (1992) is the only study in this survey which does not deal with Richardson's fiction. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Richardson wrote several articles for the pioneering film journal *Close Up*. In 1928, Richardson reviewed her first talkie, an American film with a largely black cast entitled *Hearts in Dixie*. Richardson, an ardent supporter of the silent cinema, condemned the film; she particularly objected to the speaking voices of the black actors. Based on Richardson's review of the film, Egger reconstructs a "critical economy" in which Richardson associates sound with the "black body" that disrupts the pure "spectatorial pleasure" of the heretofore silent film (20). She claims that Richardson "blames" the new talkies for "releasing" sound, and therefore blackness, from an "appropriate position of subservience" (18). Richardson's conception of the silent film "might properly be coded white, for the silent film acquires its integrity through the simultaneous conflation and exclusion of...racial difference" (20).

Egger is attempting to prove that Richardson's criticism of the early cinema enacts "some of feminism's central gestures of exclusion and denial" (5-6). She points out that Richardson identified the "white" silent film with an "essentially feminine" perspective, one that is protected from racial impurity (11). In other words, Richardson envisioned the silent film as a secure bastion of white women's subjectivity. Egger interprets Richardson's attack on the mixing of sound and image in the talkie as a "veiled objection" to forms of racial "mixing" which might impinge upon her status as an independent white woman (19). By means of a textual strategy which excludes productions of racial Otherness from her writings, Richardson is able to create a secure "white" space within which she can write herself into her text. Unlike Radford, Egger considers Richardson's racial prejudices not only in absolute moral terms, but also as an articulation of power which positions both suppresser and suppressed in a dual subject relation.

Though Carol Watts devotes only a few pages to the examination of race in her book *Dorothy Richardson* (1995), her emphasis on the function of race in the consolidation of the European self furnishes some of the basic groundwork for my own study. Watts is the first Richardson scholar, so far as I have been able to determine, who acknowledges that Miriam's notions about race are influenced by the ideology of the imperialist nation state within which she resides. As Watts demonstrates, Miriam's contact with members of other races forces her to question the racial prejudices of the English middle-class, especially the common belief in English racial superiority. But if "Miriam's relationship with her Jewish friends...opens her eyes to her own cultural positioning, about which she feels an extreme ambivalence" (54),

there are moments, according to Watts, when “she is so fundamentally challenged by the kinds of Otherness she encounters in the public spaces of London that she takes an obstinate and prejudiced refuge in an imperializing and xenophobic Englishness” (52). Despite her often critical attitude of blatant racial prejudice, Miriam cannot simply disavow her mental and social affiliation with “the culture of [British] imperialism” (56). She is circumscribed by the same attitudes of “racial and class disgust” (52) which characterized all European encounters with other races during the period of high imperialism.

Watts pioneers the notion that Miriam “consolidates a sense of self-identity” (53) through her contact with a form of racial Otherness. For example, her encounter with an African dock worker causes Miriam to recoil in horror from this “absolute otherness” (53) and subsequently to seek a safer haven in a more recognizable “Englishness.” Watts observes that Miriam’s “new-woman discourse is inextricably that of the [imperial] centre” (56). Her exposure to Shatov’s foreignness and Jewishness serves “to underline her own English sense of self in absolute terms” (53). In effect, Miriam carries out her “intensely individualist search for autonomy as a new woman” in relation to a racial Other. What remains unclear is how the consolidation of one’s Englishness by means of othering mechanisms would translate, for a woman of the 1890s, into the “autonomy” of a “new woman”; certainly many other ‘racist’ women of that period neither desired nor achieved Miriam’s brand of feminist emancipation. It may be the case that Miriam locates the possibility of becoming an emancipated new woman within the relative tolerance and freedom of the English social structure, but Watts’s conflation of Englishness with autonomous feminine identity is not warranted in any event,

nor does she take into account how the “freedom” of English society is also problematized in the text. There is indeed a complexity to this issue that Watts has largely ignored.

Watts emphasizes that Miriam purchases her English sense of self by suppressing the identity of the racial Other, that is, by imagining the Other as “unknowable” and therefore a threat to stable definitions of identity. Interestingly, she implies that Miriam would like to identify with the state of Jewishness: “[t]he cosmopolitanism that Jewishness represents, a form of international culture beyond national boundaries, is clearly a condition [Miriam] desires” (53). But Watts argues that Miriam “cannot imagine such a culture outside the terms of imperialism itself” (53). Despite her attraction to Judaism, Miriam is ultimately unable to conceive of the Jewish people as anything more than Others, and so cannot extend an identification to the Jews.

In her essay *Dorothy Richardson and the Jew* (1996), Jacqueline Rose argues that the Jews generally occupy the position of the perennial outsider in *Pilgrimage*. Moreover, there is, according to Rose, a definite relation between the representation of Jews and the representation of women in *Pilgrimage*. By reading the respective representations of the women and the Jew in Richardson’s texts through a feminist vocabulary of exclusion, Rose is able to conclude that

as a woman, Miriam Henderson is presented to us as distanced, alien, estranged in herself, as something, we might say, of a Jew. Like being a Jew, being a woman can also be described as a state of non- or partial participation in the available or dominant cultures. Curse and privilege, this unsettled self-positioning, as Woolf expressed it,

can become alternately exclusion from, or belonging to, all possible worlds: “as a woman I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world.” (125)

However, Rose cautions against attempting to find “any too-easy metaphoric or troped identification between forms of outsidership, between—in this case—woman and Jew” (126). She points out that Shatov speaks in the same idiom that Richardson usually attributed to the patriarchy. Richardson believed that ‘masculine’ civilization categorizes and orders phenomena by means of propositional language; these “insignia of patriarchal language and culture...to which so much of modernist experimentation by women...comes as a response” are, through Shatov’s speech, “handed over to the Jewish conception of destiny” (126). If, as seems fairly certain, the woman and the Jew are somehow connected within *Deadlock*, it is not clear, Rose concludes, how we may characterize this relation in simple and unambiguous terms.

Indeed, Rose admits that any relation between women and Jews is complicated by Miriam’s tendency to consolidate her identity in opposition to the Jewish outsider. Exploring how a series of arguments between Miriam and Shatov parallels the early twentieth-century debate about the social position of the British Jews, Rose cites a passage in which Shatov and Miriam disagree over the ideal state of social life. While Miriam believes in the autonomy of the individual, Shatov argues that the “individual is meaningless” without the structure of “the race” for support (122). According to Rose, Shatov’s advocacy of the co-optation of women for race motherhood serves to enhance Miriam’s desire for female individualism: “[b]y having Miriam refuse to be a Jewish woman and mother, Richardson might seem merely to be adding

a powerful intensifier to the feminist issue of women's right to control or even refuse their reproductive role" (122). But in casting the dialogue between Shatov and Miriam in this way,

Richardson also runs Miriam's emancipation straight into some of the most vicious anti-Jewish representations of her time. Ironically, then, Shatov appeals to an ideology of racial exclusion which antisemitism reflected, appropriated, came at least halfway to meet; while Miriam rejects motherhood as race destiny, rejects eugenics, but in the language of antisemitism. (123)

Miriam's desire for emancipation is overlaid with the discourse of anti-Semitism. Indeed, it is Miriam's "antisemitism" which allows her to assert her independence against what are, for her, the profound limitations of patriarchal Jewish life. Rose suggests that Richardson "offers" feminism a kind of lesson, one which takes the form of a vision of how difficult it is to assert individual women's rights without suppressing "the particularities of cultures" and races (125).

In *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism* (1997), Kristin Bluemel provides a cursory examination of Miriam's anti-Semitism which touches on the complex relationship in *Pilgrimage* between race and feminine identity. Bluemel points out, as do other critics whom I survey here, that Miriam fears that she will be forced to adopt a constrained and suffocating way of life if she agrees to marry Shatov. Bluemel accounts for Miriam's rejection of Shatov by suggesting that her "anti-Semitic prejudice becomes the justification for a questionable policy of feminist self-preservation. Miriam displaces her anxieties about her relation to [Shatov] onto the fact of his Jewishness" (48). In other words, Bluemel

argues, somewhat like Watts and Rose previously, that Miriam's prejudice may be interpreted as a strategy for safeguarding her emancipation from traditional roles; her prejudice is motivated by her fear that the duties and restrictions of the Jewish wife will erode her freedom. However, Bluemel's essay differs significantly from the previous criticism with its assertion that Miriam's

prejudice does not take the forms of blatant anti-Semitic rhetoric common to early twentieth-century writing but rather resembles forms of orientalist thought. As such, this prejudice is as fundamental a part of Miriam's fascination with Michael as it is of her ultimate rejection of him. (183 n)

Bluemel is not downplaying the real need to interrogate prejudice in a writer's work, but she does perhaps solve one of the problems experienced by the other critics in this survey. These critics tend to regard Miriam's attitude towards members of other races merely as prejudice, a tendency which strikes me as a simplification of the situation. For example, though Watts argues that the source of Miriam's prejudice is the racial ideology of imperialism—an ideology from which she cannot simply extricate herself without ceasing to be an English woman—she can still confusedly ask “what does it mean to *exhibit* prejudice in this way?” (55). So far as I can determine, Bluemel is the first Richardson critic to begin to characterize prejudice by using the vocabulary of post-structuralist critiques of power. Even if she is not referring directly to Edward Said's well-known definition of “Orientalism” as a culturally produced discursive knowledge of “the Orient” which allows imperialist cultures to appropriate “Oriental” culture more effectively, it seems clear that Bluemel understands

prejudice as more than simply a mode of exclusion. In her account, prejudice becomes a “fascination” with other races, a form of knowledge which constructs the person of another race as an Other, as an outsider, as the stranger. From this perspective, Miriam’s prejudice is a means of knowing and controlling a threatening Jewishness.

Moreover, Bluemel is the only critic who focuses, if only partially, on Richardson’s representation of “the Jewess.” The other critics I survey refer exclusively to “the Jew,” a representation that I have assumed to be quasi-male. Ironically, these other critics, by ignoring the female Jew’s voice in this way, perform a fundamental act of textual violence of their own, for they effectively consign the female Jew to the silent margins of their accounts. However, it may be the case that the other critics are unwilling to explore how Richardson herself enacts a form of violence on the female Jew. Bluemel cites a passage in which Richardson refers to the female Jew in unmistakably orientalizing terms. Could it be that the other critics are unwilling to consider Richardson’s complex interaction with the female Jew because it is so evident that Richardson represents her through an orientalizing discourse that simultaneously appropriates and others her? What effect would such an interaction with the female Jew have on Richardson’s feminist project? Bluemel does not answer these questions, but, as I have already mentioned, she underlines the current need for a critical practice that will elaborate such concerns.

There are two major issues connected with Richardson’s representation of race that the critics of this survey do not adequately pursue. Some of the critics emphasize the need for a criticism which examines how attitudes about race in Richardson’s texts are influenced

by imperialism. However, these critics resist exploring her imperialist context thoroughly, with the result that they remain unable to provide a truly informed explanation of Richardson's complex representation of race. It is rather too simplistic to describe Richardson as naively prejudiced without considering how certain effects are accomplished through this "prejudice." As I pointed out earlier, Watts recognizes the necessity of exploring the complexity of Richardson's prejudice but does not herself attempt such a study. There appears to be an underlying assumption here that Richardson was a typical woman of her society and, as such, suffered from its characteristic racial prejudices, which she was unable to transcend. For this reason, the critics do not consider whether Richardson attempted to challenge imperialism and the same racial prejudices that she is accused of disseminating.

The critics also fail to develop a comprehensive theory of race representation. And yet, the development of such a theory is a necessary precursor to any serious examination of race in Richardson's work. Apart from Bluemel, the critics presuppose a simple construction of race which excludes gender differences and is, for this reason, usually assumed to be gendered male. The critics do not understand the significance of the representation of women of other races in Richardson's work. However, Miriam's attempt to consolidate her identity against the image of the racial Other may require an explanation primarily in terms of the Jewish woman. If Miriam is representing the Jewish woman as a surrogate for the kind of woman that she refuses to become, then, by repudiating the Jewish woman, she may be defining her own identity as an emancipated woman.

In what follows, I will discuss the representation of race in the context of early twentieth-century British imperialism. This discussion will provide a means of moving beyond the obvious deficiencies identified in the preceding analysis of the Richardson criticism. Indeed, the arguments of my thesis emerge entirely from the issues raised in the following discussion. Among the obstacles that confront a thesis which draws upon the criticism of British imperialism is the extreme difficulty of defining this complex and polymorphous phenomenon adequately. During the course of my research into the intersection of imperialism and race, I have found that this obstacle confounds other scholars. It is common to discuss imperialism in terms of only one of its several aspects. For example, Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel define “imperialism” in their introduction to *Western Women and Imperialism* as “a concept that signifies any form of dominance and subordination between nations, including the modern form of economic control” (2). It seems to me that such a definition is not only narrowly reductive but also potentially misleading. In her seminal essay *Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse*, Benita Parry charges the scholarly community with having failed “to engage with the range and effectivity of imperialism’s triumphalist address” (51).

Imperialism is one component in the development of the technological, cultural, and political apparatus of Europe and America since the sixteenth century. Several scholars point out, however, that European imperialism reached a peak of activity between the 1880s and the First World War.⁷ During this period, an underlying imperialist ideology provided justifications for the fundamental principles that were used by the proponents of European

empire to guide their activities.⁸ Patrick Brantlinger identifies what he considers to be the principles of imperialism in *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism*: the empire has the natural right to expand its colonial territories; the empire has the natural right to use military action to implement the annexation of territory or to decide foreign policy issues; the empire must always be supported with a militant and fanatical patriotism; the white European is racially superior to the non-white, non-European; the empire has the sacred duty to export a superior Western civilization to the non-civilized, non-Western world (8). Though these principles were often “bundle[d] together” in various forms that would “more or less cohere,” some principles might “also appear separately or in varying combinations, and with varying degrees of intensity” (7).

Imperialism was supported and disseminated by means of a range of imperialist discourses. These discourses organized the underlying concepts of the ideology and connected them with the acknowledged principles, objectives and knowledges of imperialism. Many critics of imperialism have defined these discourses, in the theoretical style of Michel Foucault, as the strategic deployments of imperial power and knowledge. The total idea of imperialism was contained within the imperialist discourses. To this extent, the deployment of these discourses made imperialism manifest. Parry provides an extensive catalogue of the various types of imperialist discourse, including the principles that were associated with each discourse:

a race/class/ethical discourse—Europe’s right and duty to appropriate the bounty of nature wasted by the natives to benefit its industrial classes and feed its hungry; a utilitarian discourse joined to a teleological one—Europe’s obligation to exploit the world’s natural and labour resources in the interests of promoting international progress; a racial/sexual discourse—the native’s unfitness for organizing a rational society and exercising self government because of their teeming sexual proclivities and unlicensed sexual performance...; a nationalist/utopian discourse—the divinely ordained task of Europeans to rule, guide and elevate backward people as a trust for civilization. (54)

Europeans, according to Parry, represented themselves in imperialist discourse “as possessing a knowledge and a moral authority that was [their] entitlement to exercise global power” (54). Indeed, the representation of the European was generally counterbalanced in imperialist discourse by the representation of the technologically, culturally and morally inferior foreigner.⁹ Such representations provided a justification for the imperialist ‘civilizing mission’ of imperialism: the moral obligation of the European nation states to civilize ‘backward’ peoples through the agency of good governance and educational reform.¹⁰ In European representations, the foreigner was unceremoniously shoved into the position of the uncivilized and unwashed, the role of the hopeless multitudes of the earth whom Europeans were duty-bound to redeem for civilization, by a judicious use of force if necessary. For most Europeans, this obligation was sufficient to vindicate the presence of European imperialism in the colonies.

Foreigners were always represented in imperialist discourse through a race construction, even when doing so involved racially differentiating groups with no visible marks of physical difference.¹¹ The moral, cultural, technological and intellectual inferiority

of the foreigner was ultimately attributed to the weakness of the foreigner's race, just as the European's superiority could be attributed to European racial strength. Imperialist discourse used a strategy of positional representation to insure that the racial supremacy of the European was always displayed in every account of an encounter with the foreigner. The racial fitness that Europeans attributed to themselves emerged precisely in fictionalized accounts of encounters with foreigners who occupy a position of inferiority against which this fitness is measured. Europeans used the racial representation of the foreigner to demarcate what Edward Said describes in *Orientalism* as "the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans" (7). Thus, the representation of the racially inferior foreigner bolstered the act of European self-representation.

Such representations do not constitute attempts to account for genuine differences between Europeans and foreigners. They served to construct a racial standard against which Europeans were able to justify their claim to a monopoly on moral civilization. The process of representation distorted the foreigner's original image. The foreigner was transformed into the Other, a representation which served as the object of European attempts to know, organize and exploit foreigners. As Said points out, the foreigner was "obliterate[d]...as a human being" (21) in nineteenth-century European representations. The Other is generally voiceless, the original voice of the foreigner having been erased during the production of the Other. Indeed, the Other is able to "speak" only when it uses the voice that is provided for it by the medium of its representation, such as when it mimics the voice of the European

imperialist. Regardless of the cultural and material circumstances of the foreigner, the Other is positioned in opposition to the European.

Another way to conceptualize the mutual positioning of the Europeans and the Other is in terms of the relationship between the centre and its margins. In her essay *Explanation and Culture: Marginalia*, Gayatri Spivak argues that binary oppositions are extrapolations of a fundamental centre/margin opposition. At the moment when the Other is produced, it is installed on a racialized margin. By positioning the Other at the margin, imperialist discourse creates that margin, defining in one gesture where it exists and how it is constituted. The creation of the margin, according to Spivak, provides “the condition of the possibility for centralization” (113). The production of the margin simultaneously defines the realm of the centre that will become the locus of European identity and activity. In the same way, the identification of the colony as politically marginal has the effect of centering the empire’s heartland.

The racial Otherness of the foreigner is not the only form of Otherness produced by imperialism, nor is it the only Other that is involved in the consolidation of European identity. It is possible, as Andrea Loewenstein attempts, to compile a catalogue of Others that includes “women, blacks, Indians, members of colonized nations, gays...that is, groups which are set aside in the cultural productions of white Western males as beings of an alien nature” (4). In *Orientalism Reconsidered*, Said suggests that the Victorians distinguished Otherness on the basis of “configurations of sexual, racial and political asymmetry underlying...western culture” (12). Not only were race, gender and class used as the basis for constructions of Otherness,

these modes of difference were connected and could be conflated within imperialist discourse; the racial Other was “routinely described as feminine” during the nineteenth century, and there was a “correspondence between suppressed Victorian sexuality at home” and imperialist “fantasies abroad” (12). Given that the primary imperialist subject of the nineteenth century was the white, middle-class male, it seems clear that this subject represented himself through the production of forms of racial, sexual and political Otherness which established what he was *not*.

Because the underlying concepts of imperialist ideology remained uninterrogated and unquestioned, there was almost no social, political or intellectual resistance of any significance to imperialism during the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century. Brantlinger stresses that “the majority of Victorian intellectuals and politicians, both early and late, expressed these ideas at one time or another, in varying combinations” (8). If it was possible for Europeans to disagree on the application or usefulness of the principles of imperialism, it was still the case that most Europeans generally assumed the fundamental concepts of the ideology without ever understanding their exact nature or significance. Indeed, imperialist ideology so dominated European thinking that critical approaches to imperialism unwittingly restated a version of this ideology. Parry writes that the imperialist “language of ascendancy” was spoken by both “spokesmen of empire” and their “critics” (54):

where the utterances of the first declaimed racial power, a conquering nation and a belligerent civilization, the apologias of the liberal anti-imperialists deplored the linguistic excesses of their opponents while conceding that because of its progressive

culture, the West was indeed able to offer the colonized the benefits of both its industrial skills and its moral and intellectual qualities. (54)

One of the reasons that imperialism could absorb dissenting opinions was that the concepts of imperialist ideology were flexible, fundamental and pervasive; they could be plausibly inserted into seemingly opposed arguments without resulting in an overt sense of contradiction. Brantlinger describes this formal flexibility as the “adaptable, shifting” nature of imperialist ideology: “its constituent parts, even though they are usually associated with varying brands of conservatism, could just as easily consort with liberal or even radical political attitudes toward domestic issues” (8). Under the imperialist system, the dialogue between social voices that either endorsed or disapproved of imperialism became instead a monologue which consistently enunciated the most persistent imperialist convictions. This “virtuoso” aptitude for regulating criticism is one obvious indication, according to Parry, of imperialism’s “hegemony” (54) over European society during the period between the 1880s and the First World War.

The dominance exercised by imperialism over British society at this time may explain why, as Brantlinger has observed, “almost no...work of British fiction written before World War I is critical of imperialism” (274). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said documents the extraordinarily popular narrative that took shape during the latter half of the nineteenth century around a constellation of imperialist texts: novels and stories of empire, the reports of missionaries, travel journalism, memoirs of exploration, military dispatches from the colonies and different forms of scholarship which included scientific, linguistic, historical, and

anthropological strands.¹² This narrative, based as it was “on the exhilaration and interest of adventure in the colonial world,” was blatantly imperialist in its assumptions and objectives, and so “far from casting doubt on the imperial undertaking, serve[d] to confirm and celebrate its success” (187).

A literary critique of empire becomes possible, according to Said, only with the appearance of a “modernist culture” which responds to the problems of maintaining the activities of an empire. He argues convincingly that “many of the most prominent characteristics of modernist culture include a response to the external pressures on culture from the *imperium*” (188). Long before the First World War, the triumphant European experience of imperial expansion and rule in the colonies had become overlaid with complex associations of pessimism, futility and impending doom. The empires that had reached their greatest extent during the last years of the nineteenth century entered a phase of instability and retreat during the early twentieth century as, writes Said, “more and more regions—from India to Africa to the Caribbean—challenge[d] the classical empires and their cultures” (190). For the first time, Said maintains, the investment in the colonial enterprise was widely perceived in Europe as a potentially dangerous liability; the anxieties that emerged out of the imperialist venture—concerns about uprisings of dangerous natives, or the threat of clashes with other powerful empires, or the loss of profitable colonial possessions, or increasing waves of foreign immigration—were registered in modernist writing as a threatening encroachment into the heartland of empire itself (187-190). In the modernist text, an unstable

colonial order that had always appeared, from a European perspective, to be consigned safely out there in the colonies now begins to assert itself within the centre of empire.

Said is attempting to show that modernism may be conveniently understood as a cultural response to the perception of a dangerous and inexorable pressure that was being exerted on European cultural stability from the outside.¹³ He points out that the foreign and the foreigner are represented in modernist texts in forms that are both exotic (“the wandering Jew Leopold Bloom”) and frightening (Mann’s “asiatic plague” from *Death in Venice*) (188). But the modernist text intimates that “instead of being *out there*, they [i.e. the foreigners] are *here*, as troubling as the primitive rhythms of the *Sacre du printemps* or the African icons in Picasso’s art” (188). What Said appears to be suggesting is that the representation of the foreigner in the modernist text denotes and allegorizes the complex instabilities that were being produced in European cultures as a consequence of the difficulties of maintaining the imperial dominions. By the early twentieth century, such instabilities had come to occupy most European cultural productions and “much complex and...antinomian cultural discussion” about European expansion in the non-European world “began to occur with noticeably greater frequency” (186). The presence of the foreigner in modernist texts is the artistic transcription of “a new presence in Europe” (188) that had become simply too difficult to ignore by the early the twentieth century.

Said argues, moreover, that modernism responds to the pressure of imperial anxiety through two seemingly opposed representational strategies. The modernist text becomes a simultaneous restatement and critique of the central principles and processes of imperialism.

Modernism mitigates the perceived threat to European empire by means of representations which strip the threat of its strange and dangerous character; to this extent, one may say that the modernist text reinforces the fundamental principles of imperialism.¹⁴ But the modernist text also acknowledges that this vague threat to the stability of imperialism is immanent and inevitable:

when European culture finally began to take due account of imperial “delusions and discoveries”...it did so not oppositionally but ironically, and with a desperate attempt at a new inclusiveness. It was as if having for centuries comprehended empire as a fact of national destiny to be either taken for granted or celebrated, consolidated, and enhanced, members of the dominant European cultures now began to look abroad with skepticism and confusion of people surprised, perhaps even shocked by what they saw. Cultural texts imported the foreign into Europe in ways that very clearly bear the mark of the imperial enterprise, of explorers and ethnographers, geologists and geographers, merchants and soldiers. At first they stimulated the interest of European audiences; by the beginning of the twentieth century, they were used to convey an ironic sense of how vulnerable Europe was, and how—in Conrad’s great phrase—“this also has been one of the dark places on the earth.” (189)

During the period preceding the emergence of modernism, the foreign is appropriated into European culture, according to Said, “in ways that very clearly bear the mark of the imperial enterprise.” In *Orientalism*, Said had previously argued that imperialist discourses appropriate the foreign and translate it into a “median category” that is neither wholly novel nor wholly knowable (58). The appropriation of the foreign is thus “a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things” (58). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said is attempting to demonstrate that modernism is still a facet of imperialism and tends to reproduce many of the assumptions of imperialism. The modernist art object

provides, in its incorporation of the foreign, a surrogate “for the once-possible synthesis of the world empires” (189). As the old empires enter a stage of crisis and the debate about challenges to colonial rule increasingly monopolizes the political discourse of the imperial heartland, the scene of the modernist text provides a setting—one that is viciously ironic—in which an “aesthetic” form of domination over the foreigner compensates for the dwindling “political domination” of the colonial order (190). However, modernism also includes an obvious critique of imperialism. Modernism, as Said aptly writes, “take[s] due account of imperial ‘delusions and discoveries.’” Said thus casts modernism in the role of imperialism’s judge, the agent and narrator of its final reckoning. To the extent that the modernist text narrates the advancing crisis of the age of imperial expansion, modernism becomes an attack on the assumed permanence of the imperial system.

The view of modernism as an ambivalent discourse which both attacks and reinforces imperialism is one that Parry has also explored in depth. The modernist text is positioned in such a way that it simultaneously “consolidate[s] and disown[s] imperialism’s ideological tenets and social aspirations” (55). Though the modernist text emerges from an imperialist context, the stylistic experiments of such texts, Parry argues, undermine this context. On the one hand, the modernist text becomes the “location of an internal interrogation” of the “values enunciated by imperialist discourse” (55). But on the other hand, the modernist text is never able to challenge imperialism as a “counter-discourse displacing imperialism’s dominative system” because it is unable to disengage from imperialism’s “cultural hegemony” (55) over the European social order.

Because Said does not devote significant attention to individual modernist texts, he is unable to account for obvious divergences from his model. It remains unclear how to justify his implicit assumption that the modernist movement as a whole was unified by its response to the growing crisis of European empire which followed the First World War. Can we legitimately say that Joyce, Conrad and Woolf all responded artistically to the crisis of imperialism with similar strategies and identical representations of foreignness? One of the central problems of modernist studies is the unfeasibility of connecting such radically differing literary and artistic experiments under the singular heading 'modernism.' To speak of modernism at all is to acknowledge that modernism was by no means a homogeneous movement, and the fact that writers like the ones listed above changed their styles and interests significantly over the years suggests that there were several modernisms with which a writer could be affiliated at different stages. However, despite such problems with the model of "modernism" which Said constructs, I suggest that, by locating Richardson's novel *Deadlock* within this model, it becomes possible to formulate several highly useful initial generalizations about her representation of other races.

Deadlock adheres closely to this model in several respects. One of the primary themes of the novel is the incursion of the foreigner into the centre of the imperial nation-state, represented by the city of London. In the narrative's assimilation of the foreigner, it may be possible to read the same ambivalent fascination with foreignness that Said attributes to the generic modernist text. Richardson is deeply concerned about the social consequences of the assimilation of foreign immigrants in London. How, she wonders, does the tension

aroused by the presence of new race groups affect the status quo in a city that is already torn along class and gender lines? The novel suggests that the social problems of an imperial system in a state of crisis are registered not through newspapers and conversations but in the growing likelihood of personal interactions with foreign immigrants in London. Intermittently strange and threatening, the spectacle of the foreigner walking the streets of London represents a threshold into post-imperial Europe.

Said's model also correctly predicts how *Deadlock* both celebrates the approach of the foreigner and asserts a form of dominance over the foreigner. By bringing the foreigner from the margins of the empire to the centre, the novel narrates a disruption of the hierarchies that consolidate the cultural positioning of the European through the production of racial Others; the resulting breakdown of ideological exclusions allows the narrative to expose how Others are *constructed* within imperialist ideology and for what purposes. On the other hand, *Deadlock* adopts the same strategies which are used by imperialist discourse to appropriate and transform the foreign person into the racial Other. Indeed, the novel's heroine depends on the production of a form of Otherness in order to consolidate her identity. If the novel narrates a collapse or, at least, a displacement of the imperialist ideology of the Other, it nevertheless strives to reaffirm this same ideology.

A particular passage from *Deadlock* functions as a microcosm of the novel and presents most of the issues which have just been raised. Because this passage is framed as a confrontation between the foreigner and the Englishman, it suggests how the novel as a whole organizes the incorporation of the foreigner. As Miriam and Shatov are walking down

a street, he begins to sing emphatically, presumably in his native Russian. When the couple passes in front of a group of loitering English workmen, Miriam fears that a racial confrontation will ensue:

‘Go ‘ome,’ she heard, away behind. . . ‘Blooming foreigner’; close by, the tall lean swarthy fellow, with the handsome grubby face. That he *must* have heard. She fancied his song recoiled, and wheeled sharply back, confronting the speaker, who has just spat into the middle of the pavement.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘he is a foreigner, and he is my friend. What do you *mean*?’ The man’s gazing face was broken up into embarrassed awkward youth. Mr Shatov was safely ahead. She waited, her eyes on the black-rimmed expressionless blue of the eyes staring from above a rising flush. In a moment she would say, ‘it is abominable and simply *disgraceful*,’ and sweep away and never come up this side of the road again. A little man was speaking at her side, his cap in his hand. They were all moving and staring. ‘Excuse me, miss,’ he began again in a quiet, thick, hurrying voice, as she turned to him. ‘Miss, we know the sight of you going up and down. Miss, he ain’t good enough forya.’ (137-138)

The confrontation between Miriam and the workers illustrates how a startled English society perceives the presence of the foreigner in its midst, and how it perceives itself in relation to the foreigner. When they insist that the “[b]looming foreigner...ain’t good enough” (138) for Miriam, the workers are demonstrating their belief that the English people are racially superior to foreigners. That the workers attribute racial superiority to themselves is implicit in their assumption that their group is entitled to decide that foreigners are not suitable companions for English girls. It is significant, then, that the spokesman for the group is described as “a swarthy fellow.” Does the workman’s dark skin tone indicate pointedly that his ancestry is not pure Anglo-Saxon, which Richardson equates in *Pilgrimage* with the

English? And if not, what does this say about the man's claim to the racial superiority of the purely English? The passage draws attention to the fabricated racial distinctions upon which English 'superiority' is founded.

The identification of Shatov as a "foreigner" invokes an asymmetrical binary hierarchy that favours the European. The pronouncement forcibly situates Shatov in the place of the stereotyped Other, an event which automatically positions the worker as the superior imperialist subject. Significantly, Miriam's denunciation of the worker's racial slur does little to alter the hierarchy invoked by the slur. Miriam speaks to the Englishman for Shatov, who may not even know that he has been the target of English prejudice. The passage symbolically consigns Shatov to the periphery of the exchange between Miriam and the workers.

In the remainder of my thesis, I show how *Deadlock* simultaneously challenges and endorses imperialism's assumptions about race. My purpose is to give a more detailed treatment of those race issues which have not been adequately researched in the Richardson criticism. In my first chapter, I demonstrate how Miriam deliberately tests the boundaries of imperialism's assumptions about race and, in the process, explodes the legitimacy of these assumptions. Miriam realizes that imperialist assumptions are fundamental to English society. I show that the advocates of European imperialism constructed a biology of race during the nineteenth century in order to legitimize imperialism. However, Miriam challenges the notion that there are legitimate scientific 'facts' of race. For example, she questions the validity of the race biology that was commonly attributed to Jews during that period. In a similar

manner, Miriam refutes British racial and national identity on the basis that it is a construction which is imposed by an imperialist society onto the individual. Miriam's reservations stem from her belief that a society guided by a strong racial and national ethos would only value women as mothers of the race. In such a society, British women would be forced to relinquish the feminine autonomy which they had secured through decades of social agitation in the cause of equal suffrage. Miriam reveals that the British define their racial and national 'superiority' through the use of representations that portray the Other as inferior. In particular, Miriam considers how Africans have been consistently represented in British cultural productions as insufficiently civilized. Such representations not only define British superiority but also justify the imperialist duty to promote the civilizing mission in Africa.

In my second chapter, I suggest that British writers in the 1920s were profoundly influenced by the worldview of imperialism. Despite her obvious challenge to the assumptions of imperialism, Miriam simultaneously reproduces certain imperialist assumptions about race. To begin with, she duplicates the stereotypes about Jews and Africans that were in common currency during the 1920s. Moreover, Miriam endorses the prevailing policies of imperialism with regard to race. I refer to criticism which argues that imperialism attempted to imprison foreigners within the fundamental ambivalence of their position. Like most members of the British empire, Miriam believes that foreigners coming to England must assimilate into English society. At the same time, she believes that foreigners are racially barred from assimilating. Finally, I survey recent scholarship on the involvement of the British feminist movement with imperialism. According to current interpretations, feminism's

goals of emancipation were generally gauged against the construction of the helpless native woman. I demonstrate how Miriam constructs the Jewish woman as the victim of an uncivilized domestic situation; she measures her own sense of emancipation against her construction of the helpless Jewish woman.

Writing almost fifteen years ago, Parry observed that “the literary-cultural establishment has declared the serious study of imperialism...off-limits” (51). Indeed, Spivak’s *Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* (1985) is considered a pioneering critique in a literary field that had been almost non-existent before her efforts. Imperialism still influences public thinking about ‘the developing world’ in several Western cultures. Before his state visit to the People’s Republic of China, President Clinton told his detractors that he would make every effort to advocate Western-style human rights reforms with the Chinese leadership. It has been the policy of the American government in recent years to promote the benefits of capitalism in China, for it is believed that if China ever adopts capitalism, a “trickle-down” democracy will inevitably follow. The assumptions behind such rhetoric—that capitalism is the most liberal form of social organization, that America has the duty to promote capitalism and democracy in ‘backward’ nations like China, that the dissemination of American cultural and intellectual ideas will only benefit those who receive such ideas—are essentially the same assumptions that impelled the expansionism of the great empires of the late nineteenth century. I wonder what assumptions about race lie hidden within President Clinton’s rhetoric about China?

The serious critique of imperialism was first considered as a possibility during the modernist period, and so it is not surprising that writers of the period inevitably and, for the most part, unwittingly restated the same ideas which they attempted to undermine. Because the radical possibility now exists to demarcate the scope of imperialist ideology and question the 'truth' of its concepts, even when, as the American example reveals, the critique is not always performed in practice, some scholars have found it useful to classify *Deadlock*'s stand on imperialism and race. But the significance of the novel is not its challenge to the legitimacy of imperialist race representation; though it was extraordinarily insightful for its time, nor is it the novel's acutely stereotypical representation of the foreigner. *Deadlock* is to this extent rather typical of its period. There are few modernist novels, however, which are able to articulate the issues that surround the British understanding of race during the 1920s with any greater clarity.

Chapter One

The Modernist Dilemma: *Deadlock*'s Ambiguous Critique of Imperialism

Deadlock incorporates images of slouching Jews in outlandish clothing, bestial African giants and impoverished Irish nationalists on the wrong side of the British authorities. Several of the typical racial stereotypes which flourished during the greatest phase of British imperialism are represented in the novel. Indeed, the novel functions somewhat like a survey of imperialism's key ideas and assumptions about race. But unlike the blatantly imperialist fictions of preceding decades, in which racial stereotypes were presented as the complete 'truth' about the foreigner, *Deadlock* investigates how representations of race emerge from imperialism's underlying racial ideology. The novel undermines race ideology by offering a vision in which stereotypes and scientific assumptions masquerade as the indisputable facts of race in the service of imperialism.

Imperialist ideology was able to absorb oppositional perspectives because its grounding concepts could be inserted into different arguments without resulting in a sense of contradiction. During the period when imperialism dominated European public opinion, it was exceedingly difficult to initiate a critique of imperialism without unwittingly bolstering imperialist assumptions. Said demonstrates that Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* explores contradictions in imperialism even as its putative 'critique' is absorbed back into an imperialist framework by the narrative (*Culture* xvi). However, a successful critique of

imperialism should be able to disrupt the boundaries and exclusions which maintain the stability of imperialist ideology. The critical novel must demystify that ideology by exposing what the ideology conceals in order to function. Such a novel might reveal how race is constructed in imperialist discourse or it might imply that a mandate to expand and rule over the colonies is not the natural right of empire.¹

The author of the critical novel may not intend to expose the hidden assumptions of imperialist race ideology. As numerous scholars observe, the pervasive critique of imperialism becomes possible with modernism largely because the modernist text is able to register the crisis of empire which begins to occur at some point after the First World War.² But what Said describes in *Culture and Imperialism* as the modernist text's celebration of the empire in crisis does not imply a deliberately critical stance toward imperialism on the part of its author. The critical stance of the modernist text may point rather to its author's awareness of the burgeoning instabilities of the imperialist system and to her aptitude for representing such instabilities in texts.

The case for *Deadlock* is more complex because Richardson leaves no obvious indications of her authorial intentions. It does seem possible to conclude, from the words of the main character, that the novel deliberately challenges masculine social dominance: "men invent systems of ethics...they have no individuality, only conformity or nonconformity to abstract systems; yet it was impossible to acknowledge the power of a woman without becoming a slave" (37). Miriam's typically cryptic remark suggests that men will remain dominant in English society until English women begin to assert their own perspective and

voice. I will argue in this chapter that *Deadlock* demystifies and disrupts imperialist ideas about race, but can we say that Richardson intends the novel to function in this manner? It may be more pragmatic to speak of the novel's demystification of ideas about race as an effect produced by the novel. Spivak writes that the "only way I can hope to suggest how the center itself is marginal is by not remaining outside in the margin and pointing my accusing finger at the center. I might do it rather by implicating myself in the center and sensing what politics make it marginal" (*Marginalia* 107). If I read this passage correctly, Spivak is suggesting that when the life at the margins is implicated in the centre, the rigid ideological distinctions between centre and margin, including the racial stereotypes founded on this distinction, are exposed as fabrications. One outcome of *Deadlock*'s fascination with the foreigner is that racial stereotypes marginalized in those texts that enthusiastically celebrate imperialism are here brought into close proximity with a representation of the imperial centre. *Deadlock*'s critique of imperialism may be understood as an effect of bringing the excluded foreigner close.

Miriam's meditation on the ramifications of Englishness constitutes the most overt of the several ways in which *Deadlock* formulates a critical stance that exposes imperialism's hidden assumptions about race. Responding to Shatov's perspective, as an outsider, on what constitutes the "best characteristics of your English civilization" (108), Miriam questions what it means to be English. After Shatov points out later in the passage that the English do not understand what distinguishes them from other Europeans because they "know nothing of any

other condition,” Miriam begins to perceive that there is a hidden basis to her English civilization:

‘...The idea of abstract justice is stronger in England than anywhere. But what you do not see is that in confessing ignorance of your law you pay it the highest possible tribute. You do not know what individual liberty is because you know nothing of any other condition. Ah you cannot conceive what strangeness and wonder there is for a Russian in this spectacle of a people so free that they hold their freedom as a matter of course.’

Decked. Distinguished. Marked among nations, for unconscious qualities. What *is* England? What do the qualities mean? (112-113)

These “qualities” of which the English are “unconscious” are neither laws nor general social tendencies: they are the fundamental “abstract ideas” and principles which govern English social life. As Shatov points out, these fundamental principles are held “as a matter of course” by the populace of England. Because they remain unquestioned and unexamined, the principles of English civilization are effectively hidden from social consciousness. Thus, when she ponders what Englishness is, Miriam finds that she does not know, that she can discover nothing tangible which she can use to answer her question “[w]hat *is* England?” Miriam is here articulating an awareness of what a modern reader might call the ideological underpinning of her social system.

When she becomes aware of this social foundation, Miriam is able to recognize her own fundamental difference from other members of English society. When Shatov speculates that in “the best English types” one may discern “the best characteristics of your English civilization,” Miriam replies that she “can *see* that; because I am neither English nor civilized”

(108). How we interpret her claim that she is “neither English nor civilized” depends entirely on how Miriam understands what it means to be English and civilized. What are the “characteristics” of “English civilization” which the “best English types” exemplify? I suggest that we should read this passage in terms of Miriam’s meditation on the meaning of Englishness. For unlike the best English types, Miriam is fully aware that there is an unconscious basis to being English. Miriam perceives that membership in English civilization entails being governed by an uninterrogated set of social assumptions and principles. She could not be English if being English requires the unconscious acceptance of the hidden assumptions of her society. Because she is aware of this unconscious basis, she is not herself “unconscious” and so is neither English nor civilized. Her denial signifies her refusal to uncritically adopt hidden social assumptions.

Miriam draws a connection in the next passage between these unexamined social assumptions and what I would describe as the ideology of imperialism. Here she expresses her inability to understand how Shatov is able to consistently extol the superior virtues and freedoms of English civilization when he also believes that the British empire is “grabbing diamond mines” (109). Unlike Shatov, Miriam is quite aware that there is an obvious contradiction between a nation’s militant and enterprising avarice abroad and its social tolerance at home. Thus, Shatov is cast as a critic of empire, but one in whose words it is possible to read an unconscious espousal of the fundamental imperialist assumptions. An unwittingly imperialist Shatov here reminds Miriam of the unconscious “English types” and prompts her to guess that the fundamental assumptions of English society are those which

pertain to the justification and prolongation of the British empire. Miriam perceives that England is above all a nation of imperialists: “[c]hampagne and grand pianos. Nice, jolly prejudiced simpletons; not even able to imagine that England ought not to have everything there was to be had, everywhere. Quite right, better for everybody” (109).

The phrase “[q]uite right, better for everybody” represents Miriam’s attempt to mime the voice of the English imperialist and it appears to denote the imperialist rationale for the expansion of empire: the empire has a mandate to accumulate new territories in order to bring the benefits of civilization to colonized regions and peoples; so imperialism is “better for everybody.” But the English imperialist is “not even able to imagine” that his rationale for the very existence of the empire is essentially a fabrication, a social manifestation of the underlying assumptions which justify imperial activities. He assumes that he has a natural right to “have everything there was to be had, everywhere.” Miriam’s reference to “[c]hampagne and grand pianos” implies that the vast wealth of the home country has been amassed from the proceeds of imperialist enterprise; the Englishman’s bullyish approbation of imperialism as an undertaking which benefits all people in the empire effaces the dark truth of empire: imperialism bestows advantages on the privileged few by means of the great expense wrung from the colonized many.

Imperialist ideas about race were naturalized as scientific truths during the late nineteenth century and were disseminated within discourses and texts of colonialism, anthropology and medicine.³ These ideas were not perceived as racial prejudice; it was almost unanimously assumed that concepts of race were infallibly accurate and self-evidently

legitimate. It remains unclear, however, what Miriam is indicating with her description of the English imperialist as “prejudiced.” When Shatov initiates a discussion about the “class prejudice” of the English in a later passage, Miriam refers simply to “English prejudices” as if taking care not to limit the discussion to one form of prejudice (151).⁴ I will assume that Miriam is likewise speaking in the present passage of prejudice(s) that would be associated with the English imperialist. I argue that “prejudice” in this instance may be understood primarily as racial prejudice. Could Miriam’s reference to the prejudiced Englishman be read as an indication, even if unwitting, that imperialist ideas about race are assumptions rather than scientific facts? I hope to provide an answer to this question by returning to the later discussion between Miriam and Shatov about prejudice. Shatov says to her that “you have immensely these prejudices” (150-151); and when Miriam counters that she does not possess such prejudices, Shatov informs her that, on the contrary, these prejudices “are so far in you unconscious” (151). Even if there is no direct connection between the two forms of prejudice, it seems likely that the race-based prejudice of the imperialist is also of an “unconscious” nature. Indeed, Miriam appears to use “prejudice” as a concrete example of the unconscious assumptions that underpin English society. Imperialist ideas about race appear in this passage not as scientific facts but as arbitrary assumptions that govern social thinking by remaining uninterrogated and unconscious.

Miriam seizes on the plight of the Jews in Europe as an historical instance of the effects on non-Europeans of the unconscious application of European prejudices. She wonders why, given Shatov’s cosmopolitanism, he “could not be content to be European”

(168). But upon reflection it becomes painfully clear to her that Shatov could never be a “European” because he is a representative of a people who have been rendered permanently outcast within Europe:

She glanced remorsefully across at him and recognized with a sharp pang of pity, in his own eyes, the well-known eyes wide open towards the darkness where she sat invisible, the look he had described . . . *wehmutig*; in spite of his sheltered happy prosperous youth it was there; he *belonged* to those millions whose sufferings he had revealed to her, a shadow lying for ever across the bright unseeing confidence of Europe, hopeless. (168)

Miriam alludes to the Jewish experience as an internal community in Europe, one that has been historically inscribed with separation and difference since the early Middle Ages. In *Difference and Pathology*, Sander Gilman writes that “Jews assumed the status of the proverbial leper during the Middle Ages. Like lepers, they were marked with inherent signs of their difference as well as those signs (such as the Jew’s hat) imposed by the state; they were confined in closed places” (151). Jews “began to integrate themselves into the body politic” (153) from the eighteenth century onward but were still believed to be the origin of pernicious social problems from prostitution to usury to plague, beliefs which were often used by the European nation states to justify the discrimination and social hatred that continued to be directed against the Jews. During the early twentieth century, the social circumstances of the Jews would have appeared to some Europeans as the final proof of the falsity of European imperial triumphalism. Miriam captures this abject falsity with her remark; for during a moment in history when Europeans have declared themselves to be the sole purveyors of the

light of civilization, the Jews appear to stand outside the circle of that civilized light as if they are “a shadow lying for ever across the bright unseeing confidence of Europe.” The Jews are not receiving the putative benefits which imperialism claims to render to all non-Europeans. But, as Miriam suggests, Europeans remain confident (of the stability of empire? of European culture and progress?) despite the failure of imperialism to fulfill its declared goals. Europeans refuse to recognize the violence of imperialist contacts with non-Europeans; they are “unseeing” when it comes to the deprivation of the Jews.

By describing the Jews as a dark area covering and seemingly infecting an illuminated Europe, Miriam duplicates one of the traditional representations of the Jews in European writing: through images of darkness and blight. Gilman demonstrates that Jews have been associated with illness and madness throughout the history of their contact with Europeans. Jews were assumed to be carriers of various illnesses, and some of Europe’s worst epidemics were blamed on them; for example, the Jews were believed to have “caused the plague by poisoning wells” (151). However, Miriam’s reproduction of this stereotype appears in this instance to be consciously and fundamentally ironic. The “hopeless” Jews cast a pall which implicitly berates the triumphant light of Europe and dares it to see the “sufferings” in its midst.

Racial stereotypes are prominently displayed in *Deadlock*, though I will suggest here how the incorporation of stereotypes often functions in the novel to expose the constructedness of racial ideologies. Within one such passage where stereotypes are displayed, Miriam and Shatov enter what appears to be a typical German restaurant: “little

square wooden-legged tables, with table-covers of red and blue chequered cotton; pewter flagons, foreigners, Germans, sturdy confident Germans sitting about. It was Germany” (126). Miriam has pined for Germany since the year she spent in that country during her youth. Now that she is again surrounded by what she perceives as a German environment, she luxuriates in being able to “sit and hear the deep German voices all round her and take in, without observation, kindly German forms” (126). It comes as a shock to her when she is told that the restaurant is filled with Jews:

‘Just as we crossed the frontier, one big fat German roused up and said in an *immense* rolling voice, “Hier kann man wenigstens vernunftiges *Bier* haben!”’

‘Ssh! They will hear.’

‘What then? They are here nearly all Jews.’

‘Jews? But they are nearly all *fair*!’

‘There may be a few Germans. But many Jews are fair. But you have not told me what you think of this story.’

‘Oh, I can *see* that man and hear his voice.’ . . . Nearly all the people in the room were dark. It was the man sitting near, with the large fresh fair German face, who had made her imagine the room was full of Germans. But there were no hooked noses; no one in the least like Shylock. What *were* Jews? How did he know the room was full of them? Why did the idea cast a chill on the things she had brought in with her? (127)

We may surmise that the basis of Miriam’s ideas about Jews is a ‘schema’ which defines racial characteristics in terms of biological differences. According to the schema, Jews resemble the image of Shakespeare’s villain Shylock: in appearance they are “dark” rather than “fair” and they generally possess “hooked noses” but not, it seems, “large fresh” faces like those of the Germans. That Miriam understands race through a schema of biological

characteristics demonstrates a basic aspect of imperialism's racial ideology: its relentless emphasis on race biology. During the nineteenth century, Europeans constructed a biology of race that was used to promote the goals of imperialism. Because race biology was anchored in various discourses of a scientific nature that inscribed racial characteristics into a notion of Darwinian heredity, race became an effective tool for establishing hierarchies among different groups. Brantlinger writes that "Darwinism lent scientific status to the view that there were higher and lower races, progressive and nonprogressive ones, and that the lower races ought to be governed by—or even completely supplanted by—civilized, progressive races like the British" (*Rule* 187). Similarly, Gilman demonstrates that Europeans created a fantasy race biology during the nineteenth century which attributed hugely accentuated genitalia to African women (85-88). Accentuated genitals were taken as evidence of dangerously magnified sexual appetites. On the basis of this imagined African 'body,' African women were determined to be sexually superior and morally inferior to Europeans. When used in this manner, biological models provided the justification for imperialism: it could be argued that imperialism was necessary in order to put Europeans into a position to save African women from their own lusts. Race biology, according to Gilman, was crucial for the definition of the racial characteristics of the Jews: "European biology...served to reify accepted attitudes toward all marginal groups, especially the Jews" (161).

When she perceives that the "Jews" around her "are nearly all *fair*" and, as such, do not conform to her stereotyped notions of Jewish biology, Miriam is forced to interrogate her

cherished ideas about Jews and, indirectly, about race. In her question “[w]hat *were* Jews?” it is possible to read Miriam’s acknowledgment that her ideas about Jews are little more than assumptions without a legitimate basis. Behind this question, however, it seems possible to posit other questions. For if the scientific facts of race biology are invalid, how are *we* to distinguish ourselves from *them*? What is the true mark of Jewish uniqueness or, for that matter, of English uniqueness? I suspect that Miriam’s question expresses the confusion and disarray that results when ‘stable’ boundaries are finally dissolved. This may explain why she appears unwilling to completely renounce her heretofore unconscious assumptions regarding racial differences; she seems to become more comfortable when she sees that most of the Jews around her are reassuringly “dark,” as if her assumptions about Jewish biology are given more validity by this perception.

Shatov’s semi-mystical belief in the existence of “the race” and his sensitivity to issues which surround the race provide a background against which Miriam is able to recognize and develop her own thoughts about race in a systematic way. Miriam maintains that she perceives “the English” not in a collective sense but as a mass of autonomous individuals; Shatov’s world, on the other hand, is inhabited not by individuals but by racial collectives. Just as he describes himself as a member of the Jewish race, Shatov implicitly identifies Miriam as a member of the English race.⁵ Shatov’s opposition to Miriam is dialectical: he challenges her to consider the predominance of racial obligations over the interests of individuals who inhabit the race. Miriam ‘discovers’ the race through her discussions with Shatov:

‘...I would call myself rather one who believes in the *race*.’

‘*What race?* The race is nothing without individuals.’

‘What is an individual without the race?’

‘An individual, with a consciousness; or a soul, whatever you like to call it. The race, apart from individuals, is nothing at all.’

‘You have introduced here several immense questions. There is the question as to whether a human being isolated from his fellows would retain any human characteristics. Your great Buckle considered this in relation to the problem of heredity. But aside from this, has the race not a soul and an individuality? Greater than that of its single parts?’

‘Certainly not. The biggest thing a race does is to produce a few big individualities.’

‘The biggest thing that a race does is that it *goes on*. Individuals perish.’
(150)

Through this manner of statement and questioning, Shatov draws Miriam into considering the assumptions that make her ideas about race possible. He is immediately able to perceive that Miriam’s ideas presuppose a significant ideological context that she does not acknowledge, and perhaps does not entirely recognize; he points out that her arguments usually, if unwittingly, introduce a biology of race on which they are dependent. Though Miriam would appear in this passage to entirely reject the notion of a biology of race characteristics, she invokes a debate about “whether a human being isolated from his fellows would retain any human characteristics.”

The idea of the race and, in particular, of the Jewish race, is connected in Shatov’s rhetoric with Zionism and the idea of the nation. Shatov predicts that the increasing waves of Jewish immigration to England will result in a surge of racial prejudice directed against the Jews; but he greets the notion of an anti-Semitic future for England with a feeling of hope because he believes that this circumstance will mark the “beginning of Jewish nationality,” and

indeed, his visit to London has “reawakened all the Zionist” in him (168).⁶ Shatov perceives in Zionism an alternative to life in Europe as one of the “suffering millions” of Jews who have been made the object of racial stereotyping and prejudice, and who are without real hope of finding congenial surroundings. The “Zionist Movement” functions similarly to race in Shatov’s rhetoric; like the race, the nation is a collective which imposes certain abstract goals onto the individual member:

‘The greatest ideas are always simple; though not in their resultants. This dream, however, has always been present with Jews.’

‘Of course. The Zionist Movement, coming now, when it is most wanted, is not altogether Herzl. It’s that strange thing, the thing that makes you stare, in history. A sort of shape . . .’

‘It is the collective pressure of life; an unseen movement. But, if you feel this, what now becomes of your individualism? Eh?’ He chuckled his delight. Passing so easily and leisurely to personal things.

‘Oh, the shape doesn’t affect the *individual*, in himself. There’s something behind all those outside things that goes on independently of them, something much more wonderful.’

‘You are wrong. What you call the shape, affects most profoundly every individual, in spite of himself.’ (169)

What Shatov refers to here as the “collective” aspect of social life bears a striking resemblance to his notion of the race; and given that, as Miriam elsewhere remarks, he perceives “people only as members of nations, grouped together with all their circumstances” (151), we might also say that Shatov is here invoking the idea of the national collective. Under the singular heading of “the collective,” Shatov conflates the concepts of race and nation. To this extent, Shatov mirrors the common nationalist rhetoric of the period.

According to Kwame Appiah, the nation was perceived by the Victorians as a “natural entity” (282) and was contrasted with the political and geographical entity of the state. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the influence of race biology subtly altered this construction of the national collective. Because the “natural in human beings” was increasingly understood in terms of a biology of racial characteristics, the nation became, in effect, synonymous with the race: “the nation comes more and more to be identified as a biological unit, defined by the shared essence that flows from a common descent” (282).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans had endowed the concepts of race and nation with a permanence that far exceeded the individual. Membership in the glorious nation state and the proud race connected the individual with a sense of identity and place. In his essay on the convergence of nationalism and imperialism in the texts of literary modernism, Seamus Deane writes that imperialism “drew heavily on nineteenth-century nationalism for ideological resource and sustenance” (362). The imperialist countries of Europe created “nationalist ideologies” which were then “exported to their empires through various educational agencies...that had as their aim the replication throughout the world of the homegrown national ethos” (362). So intractable was the connection between nationalism and imperialism that even non-European nationalist movements consolidated their resistance to the European empires by adapting the core ideas of the imperialist national and racial ideologies for their own purposes.⁷

Nationalism's opposition to imperialism is, in some perspectives, nothing more than a continuation of imperialism by other means. It secedes from imperialism in its earlier form in order to rejoin it more enthusiastically in its later form. In effect, most critiques of nationalism claim that, as an ideology, it merely reproduces the very discourses by which it had been subjected. It asserts its presence and identity through precisely those categories that had been denied them—through race, essence, destiny, language, history—merely adapting these categories to its own purposes. (360)

Shatov's belief in Jewish racial and national distinctiveness echoes British rhetoric about the Jews in the years leading up to the Balfour Declaration. British writers and politicians declared the Jews to be racially distinct and argued that the proper place for the Jews could only be in a Jewish homeland. The concept of a Jewish nation, according to Loewenstein, offered "a means of diverting the cursed and infectious New Testament Jews from Britain" (22). The British advocacy of Jewish racial and national identity served to promote imperial interests, given that its ultimate goal was the segregation of the Jews in the far reaches of the colonial realm.

Like Shatov, Miriam believes that the racial collective and the national collective are the same entity. Indeed, she opposes Shatov's views about nationalism with the same objection which she raised to his ideas about race: both the race and the nation correspond to an outward structure which is imposed onto the individual; but for precisely this reason, neither race nor nation determine personal characteristics. At certain moments, Miriam seems to believe that neither the race nor the nation exists apart from the individuals who inhabit these collectives. I have already cited Miriam's belief that "[t]he race is nothing without

individuals.” The same may be said, so far as Miriam is concerned, for the nation, which to her is little more than a label for an assembly of autonomous individuals.

With her belief that race and nation do not determine personal characteristics, Miriam articulates a radical challenge to imperialist racial and national ideology. As Appiah shows, “most educated Victorians” believed by the mid-century that “we could divide human beings into a small number of groups...in such a way that all members of these races shared certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they did not share with members of any other race” (276). In the encounter between the European and the native in imperialist texts of the nineteenth century, it is always the native’s race which determines his or her moral character and baser weaknesses. Natives are redeemed from the inherent failings of their non-European race only when they accept the “national ethos” (Deane 362) of the imperial country and imbibe its civilization, tradition, language and religion. When she supports the individual over the race and the nation, Miriam implies that neither race nor nation can serve as a source of identity. While it remains unclear whether she understands the scope of her attack, Miriam opens the possibility that the race and the nation are actually concepts, not scientific fact or material reality.

Miriam’s disavowal of racial and national identity seems to be motivated specifically by her abhorrence of the ideal of British race motherhood. Miriam informs Shatov that she would “rather kill [herself] than serve [the race’s] purposes” (152). She identifies these racial “purposes” with “the instincts of self-preservation and reproduction” (152). Miriam believes that individuals are continually being manipulated by their reproductive instincts into

preserving the race. From Shatov's perspective, women bear the primary responsibility for the "persistence" of races (220). The reproductive capacity of its women propels the race into the future. The role of the race mother is one, however, which Miriam absolutely rejects for herself:

'...But tell me, do you not consider that wife and mother is the highest position of woman?'

'It is neither high nor low. It may be anything. If you define life for women, as husbands and children, it means that you have no consciousness at all where women are concerned.'

'There is the evidence of women themselves. The majority find their whole life in these things.'

'That is a description, from outside, by men. When women use it they do not know what they say.' (222)

In *White Women's Burden*, Antoinette Burton demonstrates that nineteenth-century British nationalist and imperialist rhetoric invariably connected the status of women with the issues of "race preservation, racial purity, and racial motherhood" (138). Such rhetoric denounced the movement to obtain women's emancipation from most traditional roles: "[o]ne of the most damaging attacks made against the case for female emancipation was that it would enervate the race...Such diatribes had credibility in late nineteenth-century Britain, when fears of racial deterioration and national decline were considerable" (138). Feminists responded to such attacks with firm "assurances that not all women would necessarily choose public life and that those who did would not neglect their domestic duties" (138). In Miriam's opinion, all women who celebrate race motherhood are terribly confused: "they do not know what they

say.” Miriam rejects arguments that women should refrain from emancipation so as not to risk national losses of racial strength; she is a woman who will not exchange her individualism for British race identity.

Miriam is understandably skeptical about English racial and national identity when she feels that collective structures efface her individualism. But this is still a strange refusal. As Shatov points out, “[i]t is certainly England’s highest attainment that the rights of the individual are sacred here” (150). Moreover, Miriam acknowledges that English society is the source of her individualism. This contradiction underscores how Miriam espouses the views of her society more than she realizes. She recognizes that her conversations with Shatov are helping her to “see...England from his point of view” (151). When Shatov persuades her—as I have previously shown—that she actually possesses the typical prejudices of English society, Miriam then realizes in a flash of insight that she has always been unconsciously influenced by her English racial and national identity. She believes that such an identification could potentially threaten her individualism. But, unlike other English people, she is able to safeguard her “freedom” because her association with Shatov permits her to be conscious of how her English identity influences her perceptions:

...English prejudices. He saw them as clearly as he saw that she was not beautiful. And gently, as if they were charming as well as funny to him. Their removal would come; through a painless association. For a while she would remain as she was. But even seeing England from his point of view, was being changed; a little. The past, up to the last few moments, was a life she had lived without knowing that it was a life lived in special circumstances and from certain points of view. Now, perhaps moving away from it, these circumstances and points of view suddenly became a possession,

full of fascinating interest. But she had lived blissfully. Something here and there in his talk *threatened* happiness.

He seemed to see people only as members of nations, grouped together with all their circumstances. Perhaps everything could be explained in this way. . . . All her meaning for him was her English heredity, a thing she seemed to think the finest luck in the world, and her free English environment, the result of it; things she had known nothing about till he came, smiling at her ignorance of them, and declaring the ignorance to be the best testimony. That was it; he gave her her nationality and surroundings, the fact of being England to him made everything easy. There was no need to do or be anything, individual. It was too easy. It must be demoralizing . . . just sitting there basking in being English . . . some *fraud* in it. . . . But the pity she found herself suddenly feeling for all English people who had not intelligent foreign friends gave her courage to go on. (151-152)

When Miriam is forced to admit that she possesses the characteristic prejudices of the English, she realizes that, in fact, she unwittingly embraces the English nationalist ethos, and so has “lived without knowing that it was a life lived in special circumstances and from certain points of view.” Because Shatov “see[s] people only as members of nations,” her perception of the English and herself from his “point of view” allows Miriam to become conscious of her identification with “her nationality and surroundings.” She now recognizes that her assumptions and prejudices about other races derive directly from this identification. In other words, when Miriam perceives herself from Shatov’s perspective, as an “immensely” prejudiced English woman, she realizes that, much like him, she habitually understands social relationships in nationalist and racial terms.⁸

Nevertheless, Miriam’s meditation on the nature of the English ‘race’ explores the contingent and fabricated nature of racial identity in ways that Shatov would not be able to understand. Before meeting Shatov, Miriam had never thought to examine the nature of her

assumptions about race and racial difference. Indeed, she had “known nothing about [them] till [Shatov] came, smiling at her ignorance of them, and declaring the ignorance to be the best testimony.” That Shatov is thoroughly implicated in Miriam’s movement toward conscious recognition of her English identity appears to underscore how race and racial difference are not absolute properties of a group but are rather effects that are produced as a consequence of relationships between groups. Miriam’s curious assertion that Shatov has literally supplied her with “her nationality and surroundings” could imply that English national and racial identity is enabled only through the relationship with the foreigner. Does the English person need the image of the foreigner in order to be able to define his or her identity as English? Given that, when she becomes aware of her personal prejudices, Miriam discovers that she possesses a specifically English identity, it may be the case that prejudice is what makes Miriam’s identity possible; and if English prejudices, directed towards groups of foreigners, are the primary means by which the English differentiate themselves as a collective, this would appear to explain why Miriam describes her English identity as having “some *fraud* in it.” Miriam seems to recognize that English national and racial identity is dependent on the foreigner.

Miriam demonstrates that she is herself dependent upon a member of another race when she at one point challenges English stereotypes about women. After Shatov pronounces a derogatory opinion about women and claims that his opinion is a “matter of ascertained fact,” Miriam counters that “facts” are actually “invented by people who start with their conclusions arranged beforehand” (214). In effect, Miriam is suggesting that English ideas

about women, even if they have been accepted as “ascertained fact” by men, are stereotypes that are “invented” to support unspecified objectives. Imperialist discourses disseminate these assumptions in English society: “[i]t was history, literature, the way of stating records, reports, stories, the whole method of statement of things from the beginning that was on a false foundation” (218).

English men produce stereotypes of women because they have a vested interest in imagining women to be fundamentally “inferior beings” (216). Men fantasize that women are unable to “reach the highest places in civilization” (216) in order to augment male superiority over women and to justify the subordinate position of women in English society. This position is entrenched by the arguments of reform-minded men like Thomas Henry Huxley that “women should be given every possible kind of advantage, educational or otherwise” (216). It is precisely these “women’s rights people” who have created the worst representations of women:

Because they think women have been “subject” in the past. Women never have been subject. Never can be. The proof of this is the way men have always been puzzled and everlastingly trying fresh theories; founded *on* the very small experience of women any man is capable of having. Disabilities, imposed by law, are a stupid insult to women, but have never touched them as individuals. In the long run they injure only men. For they keep back the civilization of the outside world, which is the only thing men can make. It is not everything. It is a sort of result, poor and shaky because the real inside civilization of women, the one thing that has been in them from the first and is not in the natural man, not made by “things,” is kept out of it. Women do not need civilization. It is apt to bore them. *But* it can never rise above their level. They keep it back. That does not matter, to themselves. But it matters to men. And if they want their old civilization to be anything but a dreary-weary puzzle, they must leave off imagining themselves a race of gods fighting against chaos, and thinking of

women as part of the chaos they have to civilize. There isn't any "chaos." Never has been. It's the principal masculine illusion. It is not a truth to say that women must be civilized. (218-219).

It seems significant that, though her subject is the situation of women, Miriam reiterates essentially the same arguments that she had previously used to repudiate English racial and national identity; that is, men attempt to "impose" their "civilization" onto women, but "civilization" is only an idea of a collective and, as such, has no power to influence women "as individuals." Moreover, the effort to civilize women largely parallels the great work of imperialism with regard to other races: the project to civilize the non-European world. Indeed, Miriam's claim that men imagine "women as part of the chaos they have to civilize" is a remarkable, if imperfect, precursor to the idea, found in current criticism of imperialist discourse, that nineteenth-century Europeans justified imperialist expansionism through their assumption that the foreigner needed the benefits of civilization that an imperialist administration would bring.

Significantly, Miriam finds that she is able to challenge the effort to civilize women only because of a curious form of assistance rendered to her by an African dock worker sitting nearby. Miriam is so "appalled by the presence of a negro" (217) that she is unable to concentrate; but it is this disruption which allows her to evade the 'masculine' speech into which she had fallen. Without this evasion, she would have continued to argue with Shatov about useless concepts rather than fundamentals of being. Miriam explains this event as follows: "thoughts flowed more easily, with surprising ease, as if given, waiting, ready to be

scanned and stated, when one's eyes ceased to look outwards" (219). The man's "appalling presence" forces her thoughts inward to her core feminine self, from whence she is able to articulate the 'truth' of being. Miriam is characterizing femininity as a disregard for male thought processes, a state of deeper consciousness that deliberately turns away from the outer consciousness of the men's world.

Miriam suggests that her attack on the campaign to civilize women has also been a victory for the African dock worker: "[h]e might have his thoughts, might even look them, from the utmost abyss of crude male life, but he had helped her, and his blind unconscious outlines shared the unknown glory" (219). With her recognition that the African worker "might have his thoughts...from the utmost abyss of crude male life," Miriam considers whether he is similar to the men of English society, men whose thoughts always conform to the abstract ideas contained in male discourse. However, her description of the African man as "blind" and "unconscious" strongly indicates that he is, like Miriam and other women, oriented toward his deeper conscious self, away from the outer world of male ideas. We may reasonably draw two conclusions from the preceding comments. First, Miriam is suggesting that women and foreigners are tentatively connected, that both are opponents of the cultural power of English men. Second, Miriam recognizes that, as is the case with women, the foreigner has traditionally been represented in English discourse as the product of an absolute lack of civilization. When she remarks that the worker shares "the unknown glory," Miriam confirms that she was also speaking for him and that her attack on the English portrayal of the 'uncivilized' Other benefits both of them. Thus, Miriam overturns the foundational beliefs

of the 'civilizing mission.' Her comments are an implicit criticism of British imperialism in Africa. In the final chapter, I will present the corollary of this argument: by speaking for the African man, Miriam silences and 'colonizes' him.⁹

Miriam's interest in unveiling the intimate connection between the subordination of foreigners and the subordination of women reflects one of the central motives behind her opposition to imperialist race ideology: her fear of losing the privileges garnered through fifty years of struggle for women's emancipation. Miriam recognizes that Shatov's belief in the race is an expression of his desire to be enveloped within a "shape" greater than himself. For Shatov, "the race is sacred" and has "purposes" which guide individual choice (152). What Miriam fears most about the race, however, is the autocracy of racial purposes. She informs Shatov of her belief that the "sacred race plays tricks on human beings, using them for its own sacred purposes and giving them an unreal sense of mattering" (152). A society that is dominated by race would perceive Miriam only as a mother; her personal accomplishments would be of no importance. Miriam tries to escape the race precisely because she is an independent woman who has purchased her independence through work and pain. To this extent, it is significant that some of the foremost challenges to imperialist race ideology were contributed by other modernist women writers. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* performs a critique of imperialism that is similar in many respects to the one we find in *Deadlock*. Indeed, *Mrs. Dalloway* shows that women and foreigners are subordinated by the same imperialist law.¹⁰ Having fought hard for a measure of autonomy, early twentieth-century

women were unwilling to surrender their new independence to grand structures—like race and nation—which could promise only a collective sense of belonging.

Chapter Two

Miriam, Woman, Other: *Deadlock* and the Stereotypes of Race

Miriam Henderson regards herself as an outsider in British society, endowed with insights into the workings of social power and control that are foreclosed to better socialized citizens. Such insights allow her to partially distance herself from the imperial social context, enough to be able to discern with some objectivity how imperialism and its assumptions structure her own thinking. Despite her often radically critical stance toward imperialism, however, Miriam's outlook is fundamentally that of the subject of an imperialist culture. Indeed, Miriam typically reproduces many of the common imperialist ideas and stereotypes about race.

The notion that a novel could question racial stereotypes in one passage and take them for granted in another passage might seem absurd. That such arrangements occur in novels of the early twentieth century is not in question, but there is some controversy about their origin. Much of this debate has polarized around the texts of Joseph Conrad. Said argues that Conrad reproduces imperialist assumptions because "he writes as a man whose *Western* view of the non-Western world is so ingrained as to blind him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations" (*Culture* xviii). It is not a contradiction that Conrad was "progressive when it came to rendering fearlessly and pessimistically the self-confirming, self-deluding corruption of overseas domination" but at the same time "deeply reactionary when

it came to conceding that Africa or South America could ever have had an independent history or culture” (xviii). Arguing against this perspective, Brantlinger writes that “the notion that Conrad was consciously anti-imperialist but unconsciously or carelessly employed the racist terminology current in his day will not stand up” (*Rule* 263). Conrad is quite conscious when he reproduces imperialist assumptions; he understands that his novels are ambiguous and “stresses that ambiguity” (263) at every moment.

The explanation for *Deadlock*'s simultaneous reproduction and critique of imperialism which I have adopted in this chapter is an outgrowth of the school of thought represented primarily by Said and Parry: British writers of the early twentieth century were never conscious of the total effect of imperialist race ideology on their assumptions and could not always distinguish when and how they mimicked this ideology; the core concepts of imperialist ideology were flexible and fundamental enough that they could appear within putative critiques of imperialism. It is not absurd to say that Richardson attacked racial assumptions and yet reproduced similar assumptions without perceiving the contradiction in what she was attempting.

Deadlock duplicates common assumptions and stereotypes associated with other races. Curiously, these constructions are typically found in passages where imperialist concepts are being interrogated and challenged. It seems possible to interpret such instances as confirmation that the novel's critique of imperialism is partially responsible for its reinforcement of imperialism. But as I suggested in an earlier chapter, it may simultaneously be the case that the critique of imperialism in the novel is enabled precisely by the disrupting

appearance of the foreigner. The presence of the foreigner may actually foster the repudiation of the stereotype under the sign of which he or she is brought into the novel. Certainly the most noticeable of such passages is that in which Miriam encounters an African person for the first time in her life:

They had tea in a small dark room behind a little shop. It was close packed with an odorous dampness. Miriam sat frozen, appalled by the presence of a negro. He sat near by, huge, bent, snorting and devouring, with a huge black bottle at his side. Mr Shatov's presence was shorn of its alien quality. He was an Englishman in the fact that he and she could *not* sit eating in the neighborhood of this marshy jungle. But they were, they had. They would have. Once away from this awful place she would never think of it again. Yet the man had hands and needs and feelings. Perhaps he could sing. He was at a disadvantage an outcast. There was something that ought to be said to him. She could not think what it was. In his oppressive presence it was impossible to think at all. Every time she sipped her bitter tea, it seemed that before she should have replaced her cup, vengeance would have sprung from the dark corner...

While she had pursued her thoughts, advantage had fallen to the black form in the corner. It was as if the black face grinned, crushing her thread of thought. (217)

I will attempt to position this passage in the context of the prevailing nineteenth-century ideas about African biology and character. It is, of course, possible to surmise simply from the presence of excesses and embellishments in this description that some distortion is taking place; the emphasis on the African man's physical characteristics is particularly significant. The man's blackness—a blackness which extends even to the “black bottle” at his side—is his defining characteristic, and toward the end of the passage he is reduced to a “black form” in a “dark” corner. In *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, Christine Bolt maintains that

nineteenth-century British society understood Africans in terms of the symbolism associated with the colour black, which evoked connotations of “sin and treachery, ugliness, filth and degradation” (131). The moral value of blackness alone was believed to be sufficient to define the racial differences of Africans.

The emphasis in the passage on the African dock worker’s enormous size—a feature which is again extended to his “huge” bottle—and on his “bent, snorting and devouring” form hints at a sub-human, almost animalistic quality in his physiology. Evolutionary theory, according to Brantlinger, legitimized views of Africans as savages who were one step above animality: “[t]he theory that man evolved through distinct social stages—from savagery to barbarism to civilization—led to a self-congratulatory anthropology that actively promoted belief in the inferiority—indeed, the bestiality—of the African” (*Victorians* 184). But it appeared to some writers that Africans had remained behind in an evolutionary past. Africans were for this reason often described as the evolutionary ‘missing link’ which bridged the ancestral apes with civilized men. Robert Burton was a chief proponent of the idea that Africans were not full human beings: “Burton depicted the Negro facial angle in terms of ‘quasi-gorillahood’, and believed that Negroes would not eat ape on account of its likeness to themselves” (Bolt 134). Burton also believed that Africans, like animals, smelled “rank” (134). We may observe a version of this idea in *Deadlock* when the man’s corner is described as “odorous.”

In keeping with the putative savagery of their nature, Africans were believed, according to Bolt, to be the “slaves of impulse, infantile passion and instinct” (137). Burton,

as usual a vigorous spokesperson for innate African savagery, thought that the main occupations of Africans centered on rudimentary activities like “singing” and “eating” (Bolt 137). The emphasis in *Deadlock* on the savagery of the African man’s eating habits—he is “devouring” some unnamed foodstuffs—may reflect the common tendency to associate Africans with such activities. However, because the man provokes a measure of horror in Miriam, it is possible that her focus on his savage feasting resonates with the peculiar fear of the cannibal which disturbs Victorian portrayals of Africans. Brantlinger maintains that many writers of imperialist narratives were obsessed with accounts of cannibalism, a strange fascination given that cannibalism aroused a maximum of disgust: “cannibalism represented the nadir of savagery, more extreme even than slavery” (*Victorians* 184).

It is significant that the African man is described as “snorting” but makes no other sounds. The narrative gives him no speaking part, no means of proclaiming his own history. Miriam wonders if he has feelings but she does not encourage him to voice them. She thinks that “something...ought to be said to him” but then refrains from conversing with him. Instead, as I demonstrate in my first chapter, she presumes to speak for the man when she attacks the civilizing mission of British imperialism, partially for his benefit. It may be that *Deadlock* participates in what Brantlinger describes as the tendency of colonial narratives to mute the voice of the native or endow the native with the voice of the imperialist: “Victorian imperialism both created and was in part created by a growing monopoly on discourse...Africans were stripped of articulation: the Bible might be translated into numerous African languages, but the colonizers rarely translated in the other direction” (*Victorians*

198).¹ *Deadlock* silences the African man in two ways: the narrative effaces his voice *and* substitutes Miriam's own voice in its place.

The stereotyping which is associated in *Deadlock* with the representation of Jews is rather less obtrusive. I suggest in my first chapter that Miriam questions the assumptions about Jewish appearance which she has derived from literary images. When she tries to perceive Shatov objectively, Miriam concludes that his Jewishness is not readily visible in his appearance:

Looking at him with the eyes of her friends Miriam saw the Russian, standing free, beyond Europe, from the stigma of 'foreigner.' Many people would think, as she had in the beginning, that he was an intellectual Frenchman, different from the usual 'Frenchman'; a big-minded cosmopolitan at any rate; a proud possession. The mysterious fact of Jewishness could remain in the background . . . the hidden flaw . . . as there was always a hidden flaw in all her possessions. (193)

But Miriam's assertion that Shatov's Jewishness remains "hidden" under his exterior is belied when she compares him to a "strange beautiful Old Testament figure in modern clothes" and chooses such words as "beautifully moulded Hebrew head" to describe his profile (169). Miriam is fascinated with Shatov's Jewish strangeness; what attracts her about him is his mark of difference, his aspect of not being English. She feels it "a privilege to have converse with any one so utterly strange and far away from...English life" (149). Her descriptions of Shatov consistently stress those details which particularly correspond with the stereotypical image of the dark and wealthy Jew: his pointed "black beard," "brown eyes" and "richly-dented

black hair,” and his “little short coat” and “gold watch-chain across the blackness of his waistcoat” (24).²

Shatov’s mystical beliefs about “the race” may reflect the influence of a different Jewish stereotype. Shatov’s ideas about race have a context in nineteenth-century science, particularly Darwinian heredity; he tells Miriam that the “conclusions of Darwin” are the “alphabet of biology” (112). Nevertheless, Shatov overlays the science of race biology with mystical concepts. He believes that the race is a “sacred” entity which possesses a “soul” (150-152). For Shatov, race biology implicitly merges into a mystical “unseen movement of life” (169). Gilman shows that Eastern Jews like Shatov were an exotic addition to Western Europe in the late nineteenth century, having begun to appear in great numbers “following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and the resulting forced immigration” (154). An aura of mysticism had become “inherent in the image of the Eastern Jew” (155) by the end of the nineteenth century.

Aspects of the political rhetoric of British imperialism have been incorporated into *Deadlock*, in particular within the dialogue between Miriam and Shatov about the status of the growing Jewish community in Britain. Loewenstein observes that the Jews had found in England an hospitable refuge from persecution since the seventeenth century, but the price exacted for such tolerance was conformity to the moral and social practices of bourgeois English society. The Jews reasoned that they would be ‘tolerated’ in English society only when “they could become assimilated enough not to stand out in a crowd, rich enough to provide the larger community with badly needed services, and quiet enough not to assert their

rights” (19). After Shatov’s first meeting with English Jews, he and Miriam discuss the Jewish community. The ensuing dialogue recapitulates the debate about assimilation in terms of those issues current during the early twentieth century:

‘Did you talk to them about Zionism?’

‘It is useless to talk to these people whose first pride is that they are *British*.’

‘But they’re *not*.’

‘You should tell them so. They will tell you they are British of the Jewish persuasion. Ah, it has revolted me to hear them talk of this war, the British Empire, and the subject races.’

‘I know; disgusting; but very British. But the British Empire has done a good deal for the Jews and I suppose the Jews feel loyal.’

‘That is true. But what they do not see is that they are not, and never can be, British; that the British do not accept them as such.’

‘That’s true, I know; the general attitude; but there are no disabilities. The Jews are free in England.’

‘They’re free; to the honour of England in all history. But they are nevertheless Jews and not Englishmen. Those Jews who deny, or try to ignore, this have ceased to be Jews without becoming Englishmen. The toleration of Jews, moreover, will last only so long as the English remain in ignorance of the immense and increasing power and influence of the Jew in this country. Once that is generally recognized, even England will have its anti-Semitic movement.’

‘*Never*. England can assimilate anything. Look at the races that have been built into us in the past.’

‘No nation can assimilate the Jew.’

‘What about intermarriages?’

‘That is the minority.’

‘If it was right to make a refuge for the Jews here, it is still right and England will never regret it.’

‘Believe me it is not so simple. Remember that British Jewry is perpetually and increasingly reinforced by immigration from those countries where Jews are segregated and ever more terribly persecuted. At present there is England, both for the Jewish speculator and the refugee pauper. But for those who look at *facts*, the end of this possibility is in sight. The time for the closing of this last door is approaching.’

‘I don’t believe England will ever do it. How can they? Where will the Jews go? It’s impossible to think of. It will be the end of England if we begin that sort of thing.’ (167-168)

As a partisan of the principles of race biology, Shatov believes that the Jews cannot be assimilated into English society.³ They will always remain “Jews and not Englishmen.” Miriam’s attitude to these issues is more complex and contradictory. She agrees with Shatov that the British Jews’s laudatory attitude toward the colonial activities of the empire is “disgusting,” but she is obviously proud of the empire’s liberal treatment of the Jews: “the British Empire has done a good deal for the Jews and I suppose the Jews feel loyal.” Her conception of racial tolerance both implies and requires the social assimilation of the foreign immigrant: “the Jews are free in England” only because they have ultimately been “built into” English society. And yet, she believes that the Jews are isolated on the margin of English society by racial differences which cannot be bridged. She feels that even the assimilated bourgeois Jews are not actually British.

During the early twentieth century, the British liberal toleration of the foreigner recreated the apparatus of imperialism’s civilizing mission within the heart of the empire.⁴ Foreigners were allowed to live without persecution in England, but only after they had been properly Anglicized. But if the ‘uncivilized’ foreigner in the colonies could be instilled with a semblance of the British way of life through sufficient diligence and discipline, it was nevertheless assumed that the foreigner would not in this way literally become British. The science of nineteenth-century race biology helped to create absolute and unalterable divisions

between Europeans and the subject races of the empire. There was contradiction, then, in the British politics of racial toleration and assimilation: as Loewenstein demonstrates, the Jews in England were enjoined to assimilate into the community around them while nevertheless being “viewed as racially unable to do so” (21).

In *The British and the Shoah*, Tony Kushner attempts to dispel the “somewhat cosy image of the British state as being immune to racism and of society as a whole welcoming the oppressed and persecuted” (5). Like Loewenstein, he argues that British “minorities” were “urged to assimilate but at the same time denied free access to the resources of society through discrimination” (5). In effect, the strangeness of the foreigner was mitigated and governed within an ambivalent system which emphasized the overwhelming need for assimilation without really providing for its attainment. Similarly, Homi Bhabha observes that the foreigners who appear in British colonialist narratives “mimic” English morals and manners without succeeding in being assimilated into English ways of life. The partially civilized foreigner is the “effect of a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized, is *emphatically* not to be English” (*Mimicry* 128). In these narratives, the foreigner is given an ambivalent position, one requiring that the attempt to mimic English life repeatedly be made. Imperialism’s irresistible power is located precisely in the impossibility of civilizing the foreigner. Because there is a continuing need for the activity of the civilizing mission, imperialism’s expansion and continuity is thereby guaranteed.

From this perspective, Miriam’s remarks about assimilation are an endorsement of British imperial rule over foreign peoples. Like most informed British citizens of the early

twentieth century, Miriam espouses the liberal belief that the British empire is obliged to act as a refuge for persecuted groups like Jews. She sees the empire as a civil society in which the world's different races can blend together in harmony, as indicated by her proud injunction to Shatov to look "at the races that have been built into us in the past." The British empire is the world's melting pot, endowed with the capability to "assimilate anything." Despite apparent altruism, such beliefs were the cornerstone of British imperialism and provided the necessary justification for the continuing appropriation of foreign nations into the empire. Indeed, Miriam implicitly endorses the tacit method of the imperialist civilizing mission; she seems to accept the ambivalent positioning of the foreigner in English society: while she thinks that foreigners must assimilate into English society, she believes that they are racially barred from becoming English.

For much of the history of the British empire, women reformers and feminists were among the major advocates and agents of the civilizing mission, in particular as it affected the situation of native women.⁵ Scholars are beginning to explore how the women's emancipation movement became intimately involved with imperialism through the agenda of native women's welfare and reform.⁶ The goals of emancipation were partially measured against assumptions about British racial and national superiority which became visible in the empire's civilizing mission. As I pointed out in the first chapter, Miriam disavows mainstream British feminism and accuses feminists of surrendering to the national demand that women devote their lives to the perpetuation of the Anglo-Saxon race. Like other feminists, however, Miriam is seeking emancipation for herself from traditional female roles, and she

does possess a strong proprietary attitude with regard to other women. All women, she believes, should be seeking emancipation in a similar manner to herself. Does Miriam's unwitting advocacy of the civilizing mission indicate that her own goals of emancipation are dependent upon imperialist racial and national ideology?

Before I explore this question, I will need to summarize some of the arguments put forward in recent scholarship on the connection between British feminism and imperialism's civilizing mission. Burton observes that British feminists in the period before the First World War generally shared "a sense of national and racial superiority based on Britain's imperial status" (137). Indeed, from their perspective, "empire was an integral and enabling part of 'the woman question'" (139). The ideology of the feminist movement was based on moral responsibility and required lost souls to whom moral reform could be imparted. The figure of the native woman was pressed into service as a primary recipient of feminist ministrations: "many middle-class British feminists viewed the women of the East not as equals but as unfortunates in need of saving by their British feminist 'sisters'" (137). Feminists imagined native women as "helpless colonial subjects" in order to "gauge their own progress" toward emancipation in relation to non-progressive natives (137).⁷ Thus, British feminists gained a sense of their own 'progress' precisely through contact with native women whom they deemed to be less progressive and less civilized. In *Allegories of Empire*, Jenny Sharpe shows how nineteenth-century feminists used British racial superiority as an argument to promote women's emancipation. Reformers working in India assumed that native women were the helpless victims of institutionalized rape at the hands of their barbarous husbands.

They also believed that the model of the progressive British woman would spur natives of both sexes to improve the lives of native women. The crux of the argument is that British women will be an effective example for natives only when they are emancipated from their own domestic slavery.

Miriam reproduces the spirit of these arguments through her own involvement with the figure of the 'unfortunate' Jewish woman, whom she imagines as the prisoner of a racial patriarchy which divests her of basic rights to self-determination. When Shatov proposes marriage, Miriam becomes preoccupied with the lifestyle of the Jewish wife. She at no point considers converting to Judaism herself; in fact, we learn at the end of the novel that it is Shatov who is willing to renounce his Jewishness for Miriam's sake. However, she goes to visit an English woman who had previously married a Jewish man named Bergstein, and, when asked if she desires to learn about becoming Jewish, Miriam replies that she had "heard you had done so; and wondered, how it was possible, for an Englishwoman" (227). Miriam's explanation of her motive for the interview betrays her more than simple curiosity about Bergstein's situation. She is fascinated and even somewhat dumbfounded that a 'free' English woman would willingly submit herself to what Miriam can only perceive as the domestic enslavement of the Jewish wife:

Had she anticipated, before she married, what it would be, however she might fortify herself with scorn, to breathe always the atmosphere of the Jewish religious and social oblivion of women? Had she had any experience of Jewesses, their sultry conscious femininity, their dreadful acceptance of being admitted to a synagogue on sufferance, crowded away upstairs in a stuffy gallery, while the men downstairs, bathed in light,

draped in the symbolic shawl, thanked God aloud for making them men and not women? Had she thought what it must be to have always at her side a Jewish consciousness, unconscious of her actuality, believing in its own positive existence, seeing her as human only in her consecration to relationships? (224-225)

Sharpe demonstrates how the rhetoric of several nineteenth-century British women reformers was obsessed with the “miserable existence” of native women who were forced to “enter arranged marriages at an early age and spend the rest of their lives in seclusion” (95). Miriam’s emphasis on the image of “Jewesses...crowded away upstairs in a stuffy gallery” strongly reflects the influence of this stereotype. She again superimposes this stereotype onto the figure of the Jewish woman when she remarks elsewhere in the novel that “Jewish girls married at eighteen, or never. At twenty-one they were old maids” (194). Finally, Miriam’s allusion to the “sultry conscious femininity” of the Jewish women represents a different aspect of feminism’s stereotype of the helpless native wife: her reduction to the role of provider for her husband’s sexual needs.

Miriam determinedly seizes upon those details of Bergstein’s attire and surroundings which appear to indicate the wretchedness of her situation. For example, she notices that Bergstein is wearing what is properly “the party dress of a middle-aged spinster schoolmistress” (225). From the style of the dress, Miriam surmises that Bergstein has been beaten down by the experience of Jewishness. Miriam uses such impressions to construct an image of Bergstein as a circumscribed woman, one who is resigned to the captivity of the Jewish wife and is thus ignorant of the prospects that English society could offer her. Miriam

implicitly measures the progress of her own emancipation from traditional women's roles in relation to this image of Bergstein's domestic confinement:

She had moved. The light fell on her. She was about *forty*. She had come forth, so late, from the secret numbness of her successful independent life, and had not found what she came to seek. She was still alone in her circling day. At the period of evening dress she put on a heavy gold bracelet, ugly, a heavy ugly shape. Her face was pinched and drawn; before her lay the ordeal of belated motherhood. (228-229)

Miriam imagines that Bergstein had been both a "successful" and "independent" woman before marriage, one who had entered marriage hoping to find her bliss, only to discover how the Jewish wife is sequestered in the home. Bergstein is now faced only with the "ordeal of belated motherhood" because she possesses no other value than her capacity to reproduce in the service of her husband's race. Miriam revels in Bergstein's misfortunes, for they provide her with a reason to celebrate her own timely escape from a similar fate. She perceives the superiority of her position as an emancipated British woman when she reflects on Bergstein's limited life. To this extent, Miriam invokes imperialist assumptions about the racial inferiority of natives and their domestic situations in order to increase the merit of her quest for emancipation.

Richardson scholars have generally ignored the significance of the discrepancy which exists between the date of the setting of *Pilgrimage* and the date when the novels were written. Though *Deadlock* was written in the early 1920s, the novel is set during the late 1890s. This situation has crucial significance for the topic of my essay. For how should we

interpret Miriam's assumptions about race? Are they representative of British perceptions of race during the 1890s or do they better reflect perceptions of the 1920s? According to Burton, British feminists before the First World War were trapped by imperialist assumptions which they were unable to escape. But, as I suggested in the first chapter, Miriam does challenge imperialism in various ways. Miriam is not truly representative of the late nineteenth-century emancipated woman. Richardson has grafted the context of the 1920s onto her heroine of the past, allowing Miriam to be conscious of her racial assumptions in a way that would not have been possible at that time. *Deadlock* ultimately reveals how a pioneering writer of the early 1920s could still be profoundly influenced by imperialism even as she was breaking away from its worldview. Like Miriam herself, Richardson could only perceive imperialism and its assumptions from the inside.

Conclusion

I began this project with a theoretical discussion of the influence of imperialism on race representation in modernist British literature written after the First World War. British literature responds to the crisis of imperialism following the war with a new ambivalence in its representations of race. Post-war modernist literature reinforces imperialism's racial ideology but often in ways which challenge its fundamental assumptions. One problem with this model is that it fails to account for other degrees of response to the crisis of imperialism because it implicitly assumes that most texts produced at this time used similar approaches to race. Because my project focuses on a single literary text written immediately after the war, I have, for practical purposes, assumed that the representation of race in post-war literature was largely homogeneous.

However, there were rapid changes in the status of imperialism following the war. In *The Liquidation of the British Empire*, C.E. Carrington writes that “[i]t was in the 1920s that anti-imperialism was put forward as a constructive principle by effective and organized political parties, and that the first crisis concerning imperialism arose in British India” (39). By the end of the 1930s, anti-imperialist sentiments had brought the British empire to the brink of collapse: demands for the extension of colonial self-government accumulated during the post-war period and prepared the way for the partition of the British empire that began in the 1940s. On the other hand, Carrington points out that the anti-imperialist movement did

not always benefit native peoples, especially during the early years of imperial partition. When self-government was extended to Southern Rhodesia in 1923, “[v]otes for the African masses were not discussed, not claimed, and apparently not wanted; the question simply did not arise” (42).

As the example of Rhodesian “self-government” implies, early challenges to imperialism did not automatically result in the repudiation of imperialist ideas about race.¹ Nevertheless, in the years leading up to the Second World War, imperialist assumptions about race were subject to repeated attack and revision. In *Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture*, Donna Haraway argues that a series of “national and international, technological, laboratory, clinical, field, political, economic, and cultural transformations” (324) which took place at some point prior to the Second World War collectively reshaped the dominant racial discourses of the West around 1940. Haraway does not discount the influence of media attention on the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany, but she suggests that this influence is one of many in a grand paradigm shift which occurs at the beginning of the Second World War. During the interval between 1900 and 1940, race was believed to be “real and fundamental” in both science and popular culture; but after 1940, race was understood as “an illusory object constructed by bad science,” though concepts of race remained “prominent in many domains of culture, social science, and politics” (237). The idea that different populations progress “in stages from primitive to civilized” was replaced with the notion that every human being belongs to the “universal family of man” (237).

Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture deals with the United States and does not describe the situation in the British empire; but the essay does demonstrate that the racial ideology of the early twentieth century shifted dramatically around the beginning of the Second World War as a result of anomalies that accumulated throughout the previous decades. By implication, what I have referred to as the 'crisis of imperialism' was actually a series of separate changes that occurred continuously during the interval between the two World Wars.

As the preceding analysis indicates, a truly comprehensive study of race representation in the literature of the period during which British imperialism began to unravel would survey a range of texts published between 1918 and 1939. Moreover, such a study would not be limited strictly to the texts of high modernism. The twelve volumes of Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, published between 1915 and 1938, are almost ideal for this purpose: the first volume of the sequence was written only a few years after the zenith of the British empire had passed, while the final volume to be published in her lifetime was completed only a few years before the empire's racial ideology was largely superseded by a different paradigm. One significant question that would need to be addressed is whether Richardson's treatment of race becomes increasingly anti-imperialist toward the end of the 1930s. Does she become more conscious of her own assumptions about race, and does she forego the use of stereotypes in later volumes? I suggest that future scholars will need to focus on such questions in order to establish how Richardson's representation of race changes over the years.

Endnotes

Introduction

¹ We may observe the same lack of engagement with issues of race, and related issues like imperialism and colonialism in the criticism that has accumulated around other notable modernist women authors. Imperialism and race are central aspects of several of the novels of Virginia Woolf, in particular *The Voyage Out* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. However, despite Woolf's enormous critical popularity—I estimate that the number of Woolf citations in the MLA bibliography exceeds Richardson citations by a factor of about fifty—I have discovered only fifteen accounts that examine issues of empire and race in Woolf's fiction and essays.

² Patrick Brantlinger, Edward Said and Benita Parry are among the better known proponents of this idea.

³ Other modernist writers exhibit essentially the same ambivalent duality in their usage of imperialist racial ideology. Seamus Deane writes in *Imperialism/Nationalism* that “Conrad subverts and reproduces imperialism” (356). My research suggests that Virginia Woolf performs a similar subversion and reproduction of imperialist race representation. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the problem of representing the foreigner becomes a central concern, though the foreign person is not incorporated into the novel ‘physically’ but rather through memories and hearsay.

⁴ Richardson was at work on a thirteenth volume when she died. This volume was published posthumously as *March Moonlight* in 1967.

⁵ I will demonstrate in upcoming sections of this chapter and in later chapters how nations and groups of foreigners were perceived in imperialistic British society in distinctly racial terms: for example, Africans, Jews, and the Irish were all perceived as other races.

⁶ Of the five studies included in this survey, two are short essays that deal almost exclusively with race issues, and three are books that devote no more than a few paragraphs or pages to such issues. None of the critics is able to engage all aspects of race in Richardson's fiction, nor does any critic exhaust all that may be said about race in *Deadlock*,

the novel that is the focus of all but one of the critics.

⁷ In *Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent*, Patrick Brantlinger points out that the imperialist “scramble for Africa” begins around 1884 and continues until the first years of the twentieth century (175). Mervat Hatem writes in *Through Each Other's Eyes* that the period of 1882-1920 in Egypt “witnessed the development of a heavy-handed imperial system” (36).

⁸ I am making a distinction here between an underlying set of ideological concepts and the principles that were derived from these concepts. Europeans neither questioned nor fully examined the concepts of imperialist ideology but were familiar with the guiding principles of imperialism. Raymond Williams observes that one of the basic concepts of imperialist ideology is a “limitless and conquering expansionism” (quoted in Parry 54). In *The Culture of Time and Space*, Stephen Kern argues that the principle of imperialist expansion was justified by the underlying concept that nations, like biological organisms, needed room in which to grow. Imperialism was understood as “a continuation of human embryological development” (234).

⁹ On the other hand, it was generally believed that the foreigner possessed superior sexual capacity and potency, a feature which corresponded with his or her lack of European morality.

¹⁰ In a similar vein, Homi Bhabha writes in *The Other Question* that the “objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (23). The ‘civilizing mission’ derived from the underlying idea that human beings are progressing away from a primordial animal state.

¹¹ German anthropologists during the Nazi regime attributed a kind of racial stupidity to “the Slav.” In the *Anti-Semitism of Tolerance*, Bill Williams observes that the Victorians attributed the racial characteristics of “vice” and “barbarity” to the Irish (75).

¹² My list is an enlargement upon Said’s more succinct description of the imperial narrative; he writes that this narrative included “not only the novel of frank exoticism and confident empire, but travel narratives, works of colonial exploration and scholarship, memoirs,

experience and expertise” (187).

¹³ Said does not mean to foreclose other interpretations of modernism. He does want to show, however, that the interpretation of modernism as a response to imperial crisis has not been adequately explored.

¹⁴ As R. Granofsky points out, one could argue that the British novel “has always functioned as a safety valve to maintain ruling class interests” (personal communication).

Chapter One

¹ For a similar view of the function of the critique of imperialist ideology in fiction, see Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire*, (8-11).

² I refer to the studies which underline the importance of modernism in the critique of imperialism in the introduction to this thesis. See Brantlinger (*Rule*), Deane, Parry, Said (*Culture*).

³ For a study of the medicalization of racial ideas in relation to Africans, see Gilman (76-108). For a general history of the discourses which underwrote imperialist ideas about Africa, see Brantlinger, *Victorians and Africans*. For an anthropological view of the construction of race under imperialism, see Stoler. For information on the biologization of race, see Kwame Anthony Appiah.

⁴ In her study of Richardson, Watts assumes that Miriam is here speaking of racial prejudice (54). It may be that she identifies the prejudice in this passage as racial prejudice because the preceding discussion between Shatov and Miriam is about race.

⁵ In other volumes of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam identifies an English heredity with “Anglo-Saxon” race; for example, see *The Tunnel* (252). Appiah describes how the British had identified the “Anglo-Saxon” as the most superior of all the races of mankind by the mid-nineteenth century:

those who insisted that all human beings had the same rights largely acknowledged that nonwhite people lacked either the intelligence or the vigor of the white race:

among which the highest, it was widely agreed, was the Indo-European stock from which the Germanic peoples emerged. In England and North America, there was a further narrowing of focus: the Anglo-Saxons were the favored offshoot of the Germanic stock. (280)

⁶ Shatov is not as prophetic as he might appear. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 identified Palestine, then a British colonial possession, as the homeland of the Jews. Because *Deadlock* was written in 1921, Richardson knew how the sequence of events which she posits in the novel would eventually turn out.

⁷ Deane discusses the Irish nationalist movement of the early twentieth century. The other significant non-European nationalist movements of this period included a fledgling Indian nationalism, a rising Chinese nationalism, Egyptian nationalism and, of course, Zionist nationalism.

⁸ I should emphasize that Shatov himself possesses numerous prejudices. He describes “the Pole” as “the most treacherous fellow in Europe” (76).

⁹ When she suggests that Shatov regards her as “an emancipated slave, with traditions of slavery from memory and the form of a slave as an everlasting heritage” (219), it seems likely that Miriam is again speaking for the African worker at the same time. Miriam implicitly believes that women have not been enslaved except in men’s imaginations; it is possible that she intends to say something similar here about the worker.

¹⁰ I am referring specifically to the passage in which Dr. Bradshaw describes “Conversion”:

But Proportion has a sister, less smiling, more formidable, a Goddess even now engaged—in the heat and sands of India, the mud and swamp of Africa, the purlieus of London, wherever in short the climate or the devil tempts men to fall from the true belief which is her own—is seen now engaged in dashing down shrines, smashing idols, and setting up in their place her own stern countenance. Conversion is her name and she feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace. (100)

It seems clear that “Conversion” is associated with the ‘civilizing mission’; but it is also active in London, where it connotes the conversion of women to the opinions of their husbands:

“Lady Bradshaw. Fifteen years ago she had gone under. It was nothing you could put your finger on; there had been no scene, no snap; only the slow sinking, water-logged, of her will into his” (100). Conversion appears to be the process by which white, middle-class English males secured their hegemony over the imperial system and its subjects: foreigners, women, the lower classes. Conversion is thus similar to what Miriam describes as men “imagining themselves a race of gods fighting against chaos, and thinking of women as part of the chaos they have to civilize” (219).

Chapter Two

¹ Numerous theorists of colonial discourse have also described the silencing of the native in the texts of imperialism. Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak?* is the best known proponent of this view. It is difficult to judge how to interpret Spivak’s writings about the silenced colonial because she so rarely provides an adequate set of examples to support her theoretical positions.

² Of course, it is extremely likely that Shatov’s appearance and his personal character are modeled significantly on Benjamin Grad, Richardson’s own Russian Jewish lover of the 1890s. For a discussion of this relationship, see Gloria Fromm’s celebrated biography on Richardson.

³ Curiously, Shatov makes use of a common Jewish stereotype. There was a rich and established Jewish community in England during the early twentieth century. However, the idea that Jews influenced decisions in Whitehall through their control of the national purse strings (a common argument in most attacks directed at the Jewish community) was obviously a fantasy. To this extent, Shatov’s claim that the Jewish community wields “immense and increasing power and influence” in England reproduces some of the common assumptions of anti-Jewish rhetoric.

⁴ As Bill Williams observes, “the informal mechanisms of liberal toleration remain the quintessential means by which British society accommodates ethnic minorities: the central driving force of British racism” (94). Stoler writes that “liberalism, that quintessential inclusionary philosophy of the European bourgeoisie, had written into it a politics of exclusion based on race” (131).

⁵ In *Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies*, Barbara Ramasack demonstrates conclusively that women were involved for most of the last century of imperial rule in educational, missionary and reform activities directed to the uplift of native women in India. Also see Rosemary George, *Homes in the Empire, Empires in the Home*.

⁶ Burton writes that acknowledging “the impact of empire on the British women’s movement is one of the most urgent projects of late twentieth-century Western feminism” (137).

⁷ The following is a less abbreviated version of this argument, in the same essay by Burton:

Progress...did not, could not exist in a vacuum. It had necessarily to function in comparison to something else, something less well developed and, ultimately, less “civilized.” For British feminists of the period that point of comparison was the woman of the East. She was a pivotal reference in arguments for female emancipation and she became the embodiment of personal, social, and political subjection in a decaying civilization—the very symbol, in short, of what British feminists were struggling to progress away *from* in their own struggle for liberation. (150)

Laura Ann Stoler phrases essentially the same argument somewhat differently: “as much as the a rhetoric of a master race in peril forced middle-class women in Britain to accept limits put on their civil rights, this same rhetoric of racial superiority served British women...to clarify their selfhood and assert their independence” (132).

Conclusion

¹ Significantly, though Carrington is writing during the 1960s, he still believes that imperialism was a “philanthropic” enterprise because it brought “civilization” to the “primitive” Africans (31-37).

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