

# *David Copperfield:* Colonial Dissemination of Self (1)

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**Keywords:** colonial encounter, English identity, humanism

**Abstract:** The first part of this essay examines Dickens's journalism and *A Child's History of England* written in the years around 1850, and investigates how he constructed a national identity for England as a civiliser and advocate of humanity through contact with different peoples and cultures. It also examines the way in which he tried to propagate English norms and identity through his involvement in philanthropic activities and dissemination of his writings.

## Introduction

This essay aims to look at the formation of an English identity for Dickens and that of a middle-class identity for David in *David Copperfield*. An English identity and a middle-class identity, however, did not represent two separate entities, but were virtually the same in the Victorian era, because the powerful articulator of an English national identity of the period was the middle class. It was the class which provided the norm for the whole of Britain and the empire. To examine the process of Dickens's and David's establishment of identity is, therefore, to examine the way in which

the middle-class norms and identity are propagated throughout the empire. During the middle years of his career, Dickens was more conscious of his national identity than before and tried to define “Englishness” in his writings. It was also the period in which he tried to define his role as a writer in society from a global perspective, being increasingly conscious of his “power.” In the first part of this essay I will examine the way in which Dickens constructed a national identity in his journalism and *A Child’s History of England*, written in the years around 1850, and also how he tried to disseminate an English identity through his involvement in philanthropic activities and his writings. The second part will be a discussion on *David Copperfield*, in which I will analyse how David’s middle-class identity is constructed, and how it is propagated throughout the empire. Though simple identification of Charles Dickens and David Copperfield cannot be made, it is possible to find some reflection of the author’s self in David’s psyche. Dickens’s idea on the role and responsibility of a writer in society is especially important when we consider how David as a writer contributes to empire-building in the novel.

The word “identity” is derived from Latin *idem*, which means “sameness.” The notion of “sameness” arises when one encounters someone different. Identity is not now held to exist on its own but in relation with the Other, because in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis the establishment of subjectivity depends upon the child’s ability to recognise the Other and to differentiate itself from the Other. In considering various kinds of identity in this essay, I will also draw on Homi K. Bhabha’s framework of colonial relations and identity. Though for David the Others are not people of different races or cultures but those of different classes, it is possible to find some elements of “colonial encounter” in his encounter with the Other, because in the novel the relationships between people of different classes are often translated into the terms of those between different races. If, as Bhabha supposes, “[w]hat is

‘English’ . . . is determined by its belatedness” (“Signs” 107) as a consequence of contact with alien culture, then David’s middle-class identity can also be defined as a belated effect which emerges as a consequence of contact with alien people.

The notion of “sameness” simultaneously implies that there is a group of people among whom some common traits or features are shared. Both national and class identities are communal identities which are constructed collaboratively by the members of the same communities. The construction of a communal identity is a continual process of differentiating the Other and consolidating a sense of solidarity among the members. In each part of this essay this process of defining both differences and sameness will be examined.

In his foreword to Franz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, when he draws upon a Lacanian mirror-image of the relationship between self and the Other, Bhabha shows that the identities and the positionings of the coloniser and the colonised exist not in unitary and stable terms, but in binary and dynamic terms. His framework is useful, because it considers the coloniser’s identity as no less complex than the colonised—unstable, split and fractured in the presence of the colonised. In his words, “the colonizer is himself caught in the ambivalence of paranoid identification, alternating between fantasies of megalomania and persecution” (“Foreword” xxi). In the following discussion I wish to investigate the “fantasies of megalomania and persecution” in the middle years of Dickens’s life and in *David Copperfield* and show the complexities of “colonial” identity for both Dickens and David.

## I

In the years around the middle of the nineteenth century when *David Copperfield* was written, various kinds of shows and exhibitions were held

in London, in which exotic artefacts and people were brought from the remotest parts of the world to the heart of the metropolis and exhibited to thousands of Londoners. The surge of the exhibitions of the Africans and other races which had started with that of the “Hottentot Venus” in 1810 was at its height in the mid-century. The American Indians, the Bushmen, and the Kaffirs were successively shown at the Egyptian Hall and other places in London from 1843 to 1850. Those natives were normally a group of men, women, and sometimes children, who demonstrated dances and sham-fights or enacted a wedding, a hunt, or a military expedition in their tribal costumes (Altick 268-87). The great success of John Banvard’s Panorama of the Mississippi exhibited in the Egyptian Hall in 1848 gave a fresh impetus to the London entertainment industry, and panoramas in motion which depicted the scenery in various parts of the world and gave the viewers an illusion of world travel became popular after that (Altick 198-210). Above all, the Great Exhibition in 1851, “the exhibition of exhibitions” (Altick 456), offered people the best opportunity to see not only artefacts from around the world but also the natives from many countries who often accompanied the exhibits. “The Crystal Palace,” Richard D. Altick says, “was a better vehicle for vicarious travel than any number of panoramas” (457). These shows and exhibitions were considered to be more for the education than for the entertainment of people, as in them they could see and learn about the world and its peoples.

Dickens showed a great interest in such events and wrote several articles based on his visits to them. In “The Chinese Junk” he wrote about his impression on visiting the *Keying*, a Chinese junk which had sailed from Hong Kong with a crew of thirty Chinese and arrived in the East India Docks in late March, 1848. “The American Panorama” is about Banvard’s Panorama of the Mississippi, and “Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller” is based on his experience of visiting various Panoramas including Banvard’s, S. C. Brees’s “Colonial Panorama” of New Zealand,

Bonomi, Fahey and Warren's Nile Panorama, and the "Overland Route to India" Panorama. In "The Great Exhibition and the Little One," which was written collaboratively with R. H. Horne, his impression of the Great Exhibition is compared with that of the Chinese Collection, which had started in 1842 in a two-story pagoda built at Hyde Park Corner. Lastly, "The Noble Savage" is written based on his memory of visiting various shows of natives from the early 1840s to 1850.

Through contact with the Other, the English people's pride in their racial superiority was reinforced. Altick has written, "In the aggregate, the displays of savages appealed to what was becoming a more and more openly and aggressively displayed aspect of the English character, its complacent assumption of racial supremacy" (279). According to Reginald Horsman, it was at this time when an emotional tide of racial theory which affirmed the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race began to permeate among people. Anglo-Saxonism, which had been in large part nonracial in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, assumed a strong racial cast by the middle of the nineteenth century, backed up by the increasing power of Great Britain and the United States. The ethnologists in the 1820s and 1830s insisted on inherent and unchangeable differences between races and established theories that explained the "superiority" of the Anglo-Saxons and the "inferiority" of other races. In the 1840s, the able spokesmen of the new racial doctrines, including Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Arnold, Benjamin Disraeli, and Charles Kingsley, reiterated the idea of the greatness of the Anglo-Saxons and of their missions to fulfill as the civilisers of the world (Horsman 387-410).<sup>1</sup>

Dickens's national identity and idea of "Englishness" also seems to have been shaped through the encounter with the Other, such as the Ojibbeway Indians, the Bushmen, and the Zulu Kaffirs. His essay, "The Noble Savage" is full of racist expressions of contempt for and abhorrence of those "savages." The Ojibbeway Indians are, in his view, "mere animals" and

“wretched creatures, very low in the scale and very poorly formed” (561). The Bushmen are ugly people with “straddled legs,” “odious eyes,” and “brutal hand[s]”(561), and the Zulu Kaffirs are, according to him, “much better shaped than such of their predecessors” but still the race of low intellect and have, he says, “no moral feelings of any kind, sort, or description” (562). To sum up, “savages” are “howling, whistling, clucking, stamping, jumping, tearing” (560) creatures who are the epitome of what the Englishmen are not: Dickens assertively says, “we have assuredly nothing of the Zulu Kaffir left” (564). The “savageness” of the natives had awakened his pride in civilised England and her people. In “Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller,” after observing “the various stages of civilisation”(204) in his travel on the banks of the Mississippi by the means of panoramas, Mr. Booley, a fictitious character, concludes, “Civilisation . . . was, on the whole, with all its blemishes, a more imposing sight, and a far better thing to stand by” (205). The contact with the “inferior” Others certainly inflated Dickens’s complacent idea of the greatness of the Anglo-Saxons. At the end of the chapter on King Alfred the Great in *A Child’s History of England*, we can find his clearest and most patriotic assertion of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race:

[T]he English-Saxon character . . . has been the greatest character among the nations of the earth. Wherever the descendants of the Saxon race have gone, have sailed, or otherwise made their way, even to the remotest regions of the world, they have been patient, persevering, never to be broken in spirit, never to be turned aside from enterprises on which they have resolved. In Europe, Asia, Africa, America, the whole world over; in the desert, in the forest, on the sea; scorched by a burning sun, or frozen by ice that never melts; the Saxon blood remains unchanged. Wheresoever that race goes, there, law, and industry, and safety for life and property, and all the

great results of steady perseverance, are certain to arise. (148-49)

The coloniser's identity, however, is not so simple as it seems to be. Erik H. Erikson contends that the oppressor projects his "negative identity," that is, an identity which is "most undesirable or dangerous and yet also . . . most real" (174), onto the oppressed, and that that projection "makes him feel superior but also, in a brittle way, whole" (304). What Dickens saw in the "savages" is the projection of self, the negative identity of himself and of the whole Anglo-Saxon race, which had had to be suppressed as "undesirable or dangerous." The contradictory self-images of the Anglo-Saxons as savages and as the civilisers of the world are hard to reconcile with each other in Dickens's narrative of the history of England. Compared to the description of the indigenous Britons or the later invader, the Danes, the Saxons are described as less "savage." It seems that Dickens tries to de-emphasise the fact that the Saxons were also "savages" at the beginning of the history. He never uses the word "savage" to describe them, while it appears again and again in the description of the Britons, as in: "the savage Islanders knew nothing of the rest of the world" (129), and "the savage Britons grew into a wild bold people; almost savage, still . . . but hardy, brave, and strong" (130). Though Dickens is very careful not to describe the brutal and savage side of the Saxons, he still cannot deny that they had some qualities of "savages" in the old days. They were "greedy eaters and great drinkers, and their feasts were often of a noisy and drunken kind"(148) and had a custom of "giving men the names of animals, as Horse, Wolf, Bear, Hound," just as "[t]he Indians of North America,—a very inferior people to the Saxons, though—do the same to this day" (140). The savageness of the Saxons is something that seems to have latently existed in Dickens's inner self as well. In a letter to his friend, Thomas Beard, on March 22, 1847, he has written:

Here's weather! All the Savage (I am sure in some former state of existence I was a slap-up Chief: a little Buffalo or a Great Bear or something of that sort) stirs within me, and impels me to go and look out for cottages on banks of Thameses. (*Letters* 5: 39)

Though having started their history as “savages,” the Anglo-Saxons are different from other savages in Dickens's view. The crucial quality that separates the Anglo-Saxon race from other races on the earth is, according to him, their ability to “progress.” If the savages represent their negative identity, a people of civilisation and progress represent their positive identity. The complacent awareness that they were living in the age of progress was shared by the mid-Victorian people, and Dickens was one of the most powerful spokesmen who celebrated the progress of their age. They were living, borrowing the words of Mr. Booley, “in the eternal current of progress setting across this globe in one unchangeable direction, like the unseen agency that points the needle to the Pole” (“Some Account” 205). American Indians, however, were left out of this universal process of progress. They were living in a perpetual stoppage, in which there was no impetus to innovation or progress:

[T]he Chiefs . . . only dance the dances of their fathers, and will never have a new figure for a new tune, and the Medicine men . . . know no Medicine but what was Medicine a hundred years ago. (“Some Account” 205)

The stoppage of the non-West is contrasted with the progress of the West also in two other essays, “The Chinese Junk” and “The Great Exhibition and the Little One.” In the latter essay the Chinese are “a people who came to a dead stop” (322), and for whom “[a]s the Past was, so the Present is, and so the Future shall be” (322-23), whereas the English are a people



living in “the moving world” (322).

It is, however, in the narrative of the English history, which should be the history of the progress of civilisation, that Dickens unwittingly reveals the most savage aspect of the Anglo-Saxon race. As Walter Benjamin puts it, “There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (248), and *A Child’s History of England* may be one of the best examples which show how civilisation and barbarism are in close proximity with each other. In spite of the complacent celebration of “the English-Saxon character” in the beginning of the narrative, what follows is the history of successive brutal wars, murders, tortures, executions, and massacres. Except for a very few kings or queens like King Alfred and Henry the Fifth, there seems to be none that illustrates “the greatest among the nations of the earth.” The following passage, which concerns the executions of the rebels under the reign of James the Second, is one example among many which describe gruesome executions:

Their bodies were mangled, steeped in caldrons of boiling pitch and tar, and hung up by the roadsides, in the streets, over the very churches. The sight and smell of heads and limbs, the hissing and bubbling of the infernal caldrons, and the tears and terrors of the people, were dreadful beyond all description. (522)

It might be argued that Dickens believed the contemporary Anglo-Saxonist myth of the so-called “Norman-yoke,” and that what he describes here and elsewhere in the history is the suffering of the English under the brutal reign of the Norman tyrants; however, in his narrative, common people are sometimes as brutal and atrocious as kings and queens. The positive identity of the Anglo-Saxons is hard to retain, and it is their negative identity that connects the English to the “savage” natives. In “The Noble Savage” Dickens projects the most undesirable identity of the English onto

the natives:

The noble savage sets a king to reign over him, to whom he submits his life and limbs without a murmur or question, and whose whole life is passed chin deep in a lake of blood; but who, after killing incessantly, is in his turn killed by his relations and friends, the moment a grey hair appears on his head. All the noble savage's wars with his fellow-savages . . . are wars of extermination. (562)

The bloody “wars of extermination” are what Dickens describes again and again in *A Child's History of England*. In spite of Dickens's strong disclaimer that “we have assuredly nothing of the Zulu Kaffir left”(564), the “cruel, false, thievish, murderous” (560) natives are the perfect mirror-image of the Anglo-Saxons.

Bhabha's discussion on the colonial discourse of the stereotype is useful in examining Dickens's attitude towards the “savage” natives further. In “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism,” Bhabha argues that stereotype is “an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power” (66), in which otherness is “at once an object of desire and derision” (67). In colonial stereotypes he sees the same psychological mechanism of fetishism. It is the process of normalising difference by substituting what is unfamiliar and disquieting (sexual/racial difference) with what is familiar and accepted (fetish object/stereotype). Behind this normalising process, there is the fear of loss—a child's fear of castration in fetishism and the colonial subject's fear of losing racial purity or cultural ascendancy (Bhabha 74-75; Childs and Williams 126-27). Bhabha also argues that in the stereotype there is pleasure in “seeing” and in the narcissistic and aggressive identification with the Other as in the Lacanian “imaginary” relation on the mirror stage: “in the identification of the Imaginary relation there is always the alienating other (or mirror) which

crucially returns its image to the subject” (81). Summing up his discussion, he writes:

Stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminatory practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjection, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, over-determination, guilt, aggressivity. (81-82)

Dickens’s attitude towards the natives is marked by ambivalence; he was repulsed by, but at the same time strongly attracted to and fascinated by the “savage” natives. The fact that he went to see almost every exhibition of “savages” shows how deeply fascinated he was with them. He writes, “is it idiosyncratic in me to abhor, detest, abominate, and abjure him?” (“The Noble Savage” 561), but this very expression of morbid hatred conversely reveals his strong attachment to it. The perverse pleasure of seeing the “savages” is the pleasure of seeing the mirror-image of both himself and the whole Anglo-Saxon race. By calling them “savages,” he normalises the disquieting differences between them and the English, and behind this process of normalisation, there is the fear of losing the fantasy of pure origin and of racial and cultural superiority of the English. The really disquieting thing, however, is that savageness and civilisation are not entities which can be neatly categorised. They do not represent the opposite ends of the continuum of development but are inextricably bound to each other. As Dickens’s narrative of English history unwittingly reveals, it is in the civilising process itself that the most savage aspects of human beings manifest themselves—or he might have recognised this very well, for, in his plan of the topics for the future issues of his periodical, *Household Words*, he wrote: “A history of Savages, showing the singular respects in which all savages are like each other; and those in which civilised men, under

circumstances of difficulty, soonest become like savages” (Forster 2: 63). The unconscious anxiety stemming from this recognition of the savageness of civilisation results in the strong drive towards the expulsion of the natives. He says at the beginning of “The Noble Savage,” “I call a savage a something highly desirable to be civilised off the face of the earth” (560), and concludes it, saying, “[the savage] passes away before an immeasurably better and higher power than ever ran wild in any earthly woods, and the world will be all the better when his place knows him no more” (565). The fantasy of genocide appears also in “Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller.” When he sees “the fast-declining Indians” in his imaginary travel in the Mississippi, Mr. Booley thinks, they “must be surely and inevitably swept from the earth, whether they be Choctawas, Mandans, Britons, Austrians, or Chinese” (205). The “savage” natives are the scapegoats who have to bear the burden of the guilt of civilisation. Bhabha says, “In the act of disavowal and fixation the colonial subject is returned to the narcissism of the Imaginary and its identification of an ideal ego that is white and whole” (“The Other Question” 76). By expelling the natives, Dickens is able to return to the narcissistic identification with the ideal self-image of the Anglo-Saxons as civilisers and the happy illusion of their superiority. We can see the dramatisation of “the impossible desire for a pure, undifferentiated origin” (“The Other Question” 81) of the English in his fantasy of ethnic cleansing.

## II

Along with the self-image as civilisers, there is an equally powerful positive self-image which constitutes a national identity in Dickens’s writings, that is, the English as advocates and propagators of humanity and brotherhood. In “Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller,” after travelling around the world by the means of the panoramas, Mr. Booley

makes a speech at a club called “the Social Oysters:”

“Some of the best results of actual travel are suggested by such means to those whose lot is to stay at home. New worlds open out to them, beyond their little worlds, and widen their range of reflection, information, sympathy, and interest. The more man knows of man, the better for the common brotherhood among us all.” (211)

This appeal for “the common brotherhood” seems to be incongruous with the most inhuman fantasy of genocide. Apparently, “common brotherhood” is not actually common but only valid “among us,” that is, among the English. Other races are totally excluded from this circle—erased and nullified from the beginning. It is noteworthy that the notion of “common brotherhood” appears after Mr. Booley’s colonial encounter with various races such as the American Indians, Maoris, Arabs and Turks in his imaginary world travel. What his experience of his travel has taught him is that there exists great diversity among the peoples on the earth; however, those diversities and differences are obscured by this sweeping notion of “commonness.” “Common brotherhood,” a tricky device which covers differences, is built on what Tony Davies calls “the myth of essential and universal Man:”

essential, because humanity—human-ness—is the inseparable and central essence, the defining quality, of human beings; universal, because that essential humanity is shared by all human beings, of whatever time or place. (24)

Brotherhood and humanity were the supreme ideals for the post-Enlightenment Europeans. Charles Taylor argues that “a moral imperative to reduce suffering” was one thing the Enlightenment has bequeathed to the

modern society (394). The objects of what Taylor calls “the ideal of universal benevolence” (395), however, were often limited to the whites, and it has been argued that even in a philanthropic activity such as the anti-slavery movement, which Taylor cites as an example of the “universal benevolence,” the English saw themselves as superior to those whose cause they were fighting for.<sup>2</sup> The contradiction in the notion of “universal” humanity is highlighted when a particularity such as race becomes an issue.

Man of humanity—this seems to have been Dickens’s own ideal self-image as a writer. In his plan for *Household Words*, he planned to create a character, “a certain Shadow,” “a kind of semi-omniscient, omnipresent, intangible Shadow” (Forster 2: 63), which “will represent common-sense and humanity” (64). “The Shadow” is his creative spirit, ubiquitous and all-seeing, which is similar to the “good spirit” in *Dombey and Son*, “who would take the house-tops off . . . and show a Christian people what dark shapes issue from amidst their homes” (738). In his invocation to the spirit, Dickens expresses his belief that a creative writer is able to make people “apply themselves, like creatures of one common origin, owing one duty to the Father of one family, and tending to one common end, to make the world a better place” (738-39). Here again appears an appeal built on the notion of commonness, and Dickens defines a creative writer as a person who unifies people by making their invisible sufferings and miseries visible and rousing their sympathy.

Dickens tried to realise his ideal of humanity, philanthropy, and common brotherhood not only in his imaginative world but in his real life. Margaret Oliphant wrote in her article contributed to *Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1855, “he has assumed a leader’s place not only in literature, but in the world, in morals, in philanthropy, in questions of social interest” (329). According to Peter Ackroyd, it has been calculated from Dickens’s bank statements that in the late 1840s he gave grants to thirteen hospitals and made forty-three donations to benevolent funds (561). One of the philanthropic projects in

which he showed a particularly great fervour in this period was the establishment of the Home for the Fallen Woman, which was initiated by Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts. It was a refuge for former prostitutes which aimed to give education for their reformation. He found a proper house for it, wrote an appeal to former prostitutes to come to visit the house, visited the prisons in order to look for candidates, and made rules and regulations for the home. In the appeal which he sent to Miss Coutts on October 27, 1847, he expressed his absolute sympathy for fallen women, who were “[s]hunned by decent people, marked out from all other kinds of women as [they] walk along, avoided by the very children, hunted by the police, imprisoned, and only set free to be imprisoned over and over again” (“An Appeal to Fallen Women” 698)—the very picture of Martha Endel in *David Copperfield*. He actively involved himself in philanthropic activities that promoted colonisation as well. In the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, colonisation was considered to be one of the ways to solve the problem of poverty and overpopulation in Britain, and many philanthropic organisations participated in the schemes to send the poor working classes and paupers to colonies, the most famous of which was the “Darkest England” scheme led by the Salvation Army in the 1890s.<sup>3</sup> Dickens showed a great interest in Caroline Chisholm’s “Family Colonisation Loan Society,” which was established to promote emigration of the poor who were starving in England to the colonies by loans of money without interest, and assisted her activity by writing an article, “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters,” which introduced the society. He was also active in promoting Miss Coutts’s project of sending former prostitutes to Australia to enable them to make a new start (Ackroyd 617-18; Forster 2: 92). It was not only prostitutes who were sent to Australia. *Households Words* published articles about pauper boys and juvenile delinquents at the Ragged Schools, who, after having received an education there, emigrated to Australia.<sup>4</sup> According to Ackroyd, Dickens paid for a shoe-black boy to be taken into a ragged

school. Dickens then assisted the boy to emigrate to Australia (562).

A man of humanity—this was not only Dickens’s own self-image but also an image which his contemporary readers had created for him. Charles Eliot Norton, an American scholar, for example, wrote in 1868:

No one thinks first of Mr Dickens as a writer. He is at once, through his books, a friend. . . . [I]t is not in his purely literary character that he has done most for us, it is as a man of the largest humanity, who has simply used literature as the means by which to bring himself into relation with his fellow-men, and to inspire them with something of his own sweetness, kindness, charity, and good-will. (qtd. in Collins 1)

Norton’s description of Dickens corresponds exactly with what Dickens aspired to be, as is expressed in his invocation to the “good spirit” in *Dombey and Son*. Here we can see a reciprocal process between the writer and his readers in creating Charles Dickens, “a man of the largest humanity.”

The creation of Dickens’s identity is at the same time the creation of an English identity. In the review of *David Copperfield* which appeared in 1850 in *Fraser’s Magazine*, the reviewer says that Dickens “has done more . . . for the promotion of peace and goodwill between man and man, class and class, nation and nation, than all the congresses under the sun” (“Charles Dickens and *David Copperfield*” 245), and that “Boz, and men like Boz, are true humanizers, and therefore the true pacificators, of the world” who “sweep away the prejudices of class and caste, and disclose the common ground of humanity which lies beneath factitious, social, and national systems” (245). Citing this passage, Mary Poovey argues that “this ‘humanity’ could be mobilized only because (and to the extent that) it was not actually ‘common’ but specifically English” (109), and that the writer’s



role was considered to define and celebrate a national identity to “make all Englishmen like each other—or, more precisely, like the literary man” (110). In Norton’s article cited above this ideological process of creating a national identity after the image of the literary man is even clearer. Dickens’s literature “inspire[d] them with something *of his own* sweetness, kindness, charity, and goodwill” [Italics, mine]. John Cordy Jeaffreson, in a similar vein, wrote in 1858:

Directly we examine our relations with him, we are positively alarmed at the sway he has held over us,—how we have been in his hands only plastic clay that he has fashioned—to all the honour it was capable of. (380)

Dickens had once written to Emile de la Rue in a letter of December 4, 1853, talking about his editing work of *Household Words*: “I diffuse myself with infinite pains through *Household Words*, and leave very few papers indeed, untouched” (*Letters* 7: 220). He regarded his writings as the means to diffuse himself. The writer’s self was a model, a sort of Platonic idea, after whose image all Englishmen were created. An English identity as derived from a nation of humanity was constructed through diffusion of the humane writer’s self.

In the review in *Fraser’s Magazine* cited above, the reviewer considered that a creative writer was a humaniser and pacificator “of the world,” and that his influence could be propagated beyond the national boundary. If England could be constructed after the creative writer’s image, then the whole empire could be constructed after the image of England. England—a nation of humanity—was the model for the empire. In a speech delivered to celebrate the establishment of the Metropolitan Sanitary Association on February 6, 1850, Dickens urged the need to improve the sanitary condition of the metropolis and said, “the capital should set an example of humanity

and justice to the whole empire” (*The Speeches* 106). Conversely, his words could imply that the whole empire should follow the example of “humanity and justice” which was set by the capital of England. The empire is a replica of England according to this logic.

An example that illustrates the process of creating the empire after the image of England can be found in the propaganda articles Dickens edited and published for the promotion of emigration in *Household Words* in the early 1850s. In these articles Australia is presented as an earthly paradise where outcasts, outlaws, and the poor in England could find peace and prosper. For instance, in an article which introduced emigrants’ letters, a convict writes to his wife at home, “Dear Wife this is a fine Country and a beautiful climate it is like a perpetual Summer . . . . [T]his is just the country where we can end our days in peace and contentment when we meet” (“A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters” 24). The colony, however, is described not only as an earthly paradise but also as the place where, as in England, Smiles’s ethos of self-help and self-discipline was important. It was only those who had the strong will to work who could succeed. One of the stories of successful settlers is concluded as follows: “Fair words and hard work will carry you through; it’s better to say *come* than *go*, if you want work done in the Colony” (“Father Gabriel’s Story” 90). Australia was a replicated England, but sometimes even more English, or more precisely, closer to the ideal picture of the good old days of England. In an article entitled “Pictures of Life in Australia,” describing the people going to church on Sunday, the writer says “with national pride,” that “the old-fashioned Sunday scenes and manners of England” are revived in the young colonies (307). In the same article he also describes one family of settlers as “a primitive people,—the germs . . . of the class of English yeomanry, too often unable to flourish in their own native land, ingrafted and revived in a foreign distant shore” (308).

The propagation of humanity and civilisation, however, presupposed the

absence of other races. In “The Noble Savage,” Dickens wrote, “[the savage’s] absence is a blessed relief and an indispensable preparation for the sowing of the very first seeds of any influence that can exalt humanity” (560). Humanity was possible only at the price of sacrificing the natives, the scapegoats of the guilt of civilisation, who had been exterminated in his imagination from the beginning. Aborigines seldom appear in the propaganda articles of emigration in *Household Words*, and if they appear, it is just to be killed by the white settlers.<sup>5</sup> The image of “savages,” which Dickens dismissed for the moment, however, was to continue haunting and threatening his imaginative world until the end of his career.

In the next part I will discuss the formation of a middle-class identity, the core of an English identity, for David in *David Copperfield*, whom Dickens claimed as “some portion of himself” and his “favourite child” (47).

## Notes

- 1 L. P. Curtis Jr. gives a neat definition of Anglo-Saxonism. According to him, it contained most or all of the following propositions: 1. There was “an identifiable and historically authenticated race or people known as the Anglo-Saxons.” 2. Anglo-Saxon societies had enjoyed civil and religious liberties more than any other societies on the earth. 3. They possessed virtues and talents which made them superior to any other racial or cultural group. 4. Such specifically Anglo-Saxon attributes as love of freedom and respect for law were transmissible from one generation to another. 5. There was a possibility of racial deterioration through the pressure of highly industrialised society or blood mixture with other races (11-12).
- 2 For example, see Catherine Hall’s discussion about the anti-slavery movement in Jamaica in the 1830s and 1840s in *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, pp.205-54.
- 3 See *In Darkest England and the Way Out: Report of the Committee*. The “Darkest England” scheme started in response to the appeal made in *In the Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) by William Booth, the General Superintendent of the Salvation Army.
- 4 See “The Devil’s Acre,” and “The Power of Small Beginnings.”

- 5 See, for example, "An Exploring Adventure" and "Two Letters from Australia." In these articles the author describes his adventures and fighting in the frontier of the Bush, in which he killed many Aborigines.

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## 梗概

『デイヴィッド・コッパフィールド』：作家の植民地的自己拡散（1）

玉井史絵

本論（前半、後半からなる前半部分）では、『デイヴィッド・コッパフィールド』が書かれた1850年前後のディケンズの雑誌記事や『子供のための英国史』を中心とする著作を検討することにより、ディケンズにおいていかに国家アイデンティティーが形成されたかを考察した。この時期のイギリスでは様々な民族のショーや、パノラマ、万国博覧会といった催し物が行われ、イギリス国民が「他者」と出会う機会を提供した。またこの頃はアングロ・サクソン至上主義が台頭してきた時期でもあり、ディケンズも彼の著作の中で、進歩とヒューマニズムを代表する民族としてのイギリス人のアイデンティティーを確立していった。しかし「自己」と「他者」とは不可分一体のものであり、ディケンズが「野蛮」だとした他民族がアングロ・サクソン民族という自己の中に潜むものであるということは『子供のための英国史』に表われている。文明の民族としての自己の像は保ちがたく、その不安定さゆえにディケンズは他者を民族浄化の幻想の中で排斥し、イギリス人の中での兄弟愛とヒューマニズムを前面に押し出していった。

ヒューマニズムはディケンズの理想であり、「ヒューマニズムの作家」という自画像を彼は著作の中だけではなく実際の生活の中でも、慈善活動に積極的に参加することによって証明した。それは彼の自画像であるばかりではなく、読者が描いた彼の像でもあり、作家と読者は一体となって「ヒューマ

ニズムの作家ディケンズ」を創造していったのであった。作家とはこの時代、国家アイデンティティーの創造者であり、ディケンズは国民に模倣すべき雛型を、著作と実生活両方を通じて示していったのである。作家が国民への雛型であるとするならば、イギリスは植民地の雛形であった。植民地が本国を模倣として作られていく過程は、ディケンズの編纂した雑誌『ハウスホルド・ワーズ』のオーストラリア移民の記事にも表われている。

イギリスは彼らのヒューマニズムと文明を植民地にもたらそうとしたが、それは「野蛮な」現地民族の消滅を前提としていた。ヒューマニズムは原住民の犠牲の下でのみ、成立し得たのであった。

次章以下では、ヴィクトリア朝時代の国家アイデンティティーの中核である中産階級のアイデンティティー確立の過程を『デイヴィッド・コッパフィールド』に見ていく。