

**British Settler Emigration in Print: Mainstream Models and Counter-Currents, 1832-
1877**

Submitted by Judith Isabel Piesse, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
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Abstract

During the nineteenth century an unprecedented number of emigrants left Britain, primarily for America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Recent historical scholarship has argued that these predominantly Victorian mass migrations belong to an even larger history of “Anglo” migration, characterized by its global reach and ideological investment in settlement. Situating my approach in relation to this wider framework, this thesis argues that Victorian periodicals played a key and overlooked role in both imagining and mediating the dramatic phenomenon of mass British settler emigration. As I argue in chapter 1, this is both owing to close historical and material links between settler emigration and the periodical press, and to the periodical’s deeper running capacities to register and moderate forms of modern motion. While most novels do little to engage with emigration, turning to periodicals brings to light a large range of distinct settler emigration texts and genres which typically work with cohesive spatio-temporal models to offset the destabilizing potentiality of emigrant mobility. Moreover, many now canonical texts originally published in periodicals can be situated alongside them; presenting opportunities to produce fresh readings of works by Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and others which I incorporate throughout.

My first three chapters focus on settler emigration genres which circulated across a range of mainstream, predominantly middle-class periodicals: texts about emigrant voyages, emigration-themed Christmas stories, and serialized novels about colonial settlement. I argue that these texts are cohesive and reassuring, and thus of a different character to the adventure stories often associated with Victorian empire. The second part of my thesis aims to capitalize on the diversity and range which is a key feature of Victorian periodicals by

turning to settler emigration texts that embody a feminized or radical perspective, and which often draw upon mainstream representations in order to challenge their dominant formations.

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