

Economic Expansion and Geographical Affect in Mid-Nineteenth-Century British
Fiction

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Abstract

In the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century Britain was engaged in rapid, pervasive, and often violent processes of economic expansion. Work to date in Victorian Studies has tended to address this expansion as a phenomenon best understood with regard to the growth of the British Empire, often drawing attention to the way in which metropolitan literature worked at home to support and sustain the exertion of imperial power abroad. While this work has drawn significant links between culture and imperialism, however, recent historical studies suggest there is more to be done on the genuinely global as opposed to colonial scope of British expansion, in a manner that recognises the complex, unevenly developed way in which this expansion took shape. By reading fiction written by a wide range of authors, including Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Harriet Martineau, and G. W. M. Reynolds, I argue that mid-Victorian literature registers the excitement, anxiety, and uncertainty felt by various individuals, communities and groups in Britain as the world changed and expanded around them. I use the term “geographical affect” in order to register how the literature I consider plotted the different ways in which people felt as they were variously impacted by increasingly world level market forces, lengthening commodity chains and pressures to think about where they might invest their labour and capital. This study argues that by giving shape to different perspectival scales, from the local, through to the regional, national, imperial, and global the authors pose key questions regarding what it feels like to live in an increasingly globalised world: How and where do people form bonds of social affiliation and loyalty in periods of expanding market forces? Where does one call home? How does one think about the objects that characterise the fabric of everyday life

when so many goods are imported from other communities and countries? The first half of this thesis examines the geographical affect of industrial and metropolitan fiction, while in the second half the focus falls on rural, regional, and provincial narratives. The aim of my study is to demonstrate the ways in which authors depicted communities of different sizes and in different locations as experiencing and responding to globalised market forces in such a way that draws attention to the unsettling effects that they had on communal relations and identities.

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Introduction

In 1776 in *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith set out his ideas of how local market relations could be expanded across the globe in order to increase levels of productivity and profitability. Thinking first on a local scale, Smith presents the image of a small village and examines the relations that exist between the different members of a mutually trading community:

It is the maxim of every prudent master of a family never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. The tailor does not attempt to make his own shoes, but buys them of the shoemaker. The shoemaker does not attempt to make his own clothes, but employs a tailor. The farmer attempts to make neither the one nor the other, but employs those different artificers. All of them find it in their interest to employ their whole industry in a way which they have some advantage over their neighbours, and to purchase with a part of its produce, or what is the same thing, with the price of a part of it, whatever else they have occasion for (400).

In this description of local trading between neighbours the division of labour is neatly separated between different members of the community so that each person could produce what best serves their skills. Smith provides an image of market trading that rationalises production in order to benefit the interests of all those taking part in the networks of exchange; harmonious village relations are maintained by each person contributing their goods to their neighbours and, in return, they are able to profit from the works of other people living in the same community. As such, the tailor, the shoemaker, and the farmer are set up to enact the ways in which a self-interested division of labour could guarantee a productive and agreeable communal life.

From this clearly laid out exchange between people living in a local community, Smith goes on to explain how the international economy could be thought of as populated by similar neighbourly relations:

What is prudence in the conduct of every private family can scarce be the folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry employed in a way which we have some advantage (400).

Smith's depiction of an international trading community is embedded in images of the daily life of a local village. The juxtaposition of these images, the local neighbourhood village and the internationally connected trading world, is dependent on a simultaneous contraction and expansion of scale; the village can be exploded to cover the globe, while transnational connections can be shrunk into relations between neighbours. The ease with which these images are evoked is dependent on an understanding of a frictionless expansion of social and economic scales. For Smith, the benefits that these connections would bring to both individuals and societies are sufficient to justify the ever-expanding horizons of free trade market relations. Connections between countries, and the subsequent notions of scale that these evoke, are mapped out in a linear and seemingly horizontal plane. According to Smith, if all nations carry out "advantageous employment" and partake in exchange and trade with other nations there should be no reasons for obstacles or barriers to obstruct the relations between the 'global village' that he envisions (400).

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century it may have seemed to some that Smith's understanding of a globally trading world was close to

fruition. Prior to the opening of the Great Exhibition in 1851 Prince Albert exclaimed in the Consort's Speech that his contemporary society was defined by the "*realisation of the unity of mankind*. Not a unity which breaks down the limits and levels the peculiar characteristics of the different nations of the earth, but rather a unity, the *result and product* of those very national varieties and antagonistic qualities" (qtd. in Mundhenk and Fletcher 280). Although this is a compelling account of nineteenth-century expansion and global harmony, such a narrative was underpinned by powerful, pervasive, and often violent processes of economic and territorial control. This thesis examines how mid-Victorian writers of fiction presented responses to the complicated economic connections and the uneven processes of expansion that supported the extension of markets across the world. Unlike Adam Smith's imagining of a smooth, frictionless ever-expanding horizon of profit, what characterises the fiction examined in this thesis is a focus on competing feelings of excitement and anxiety as people reflected on their place in the changing and expanding world around them. The aim of my study is to demonstrate the ways in which nineteenth-century authors depicted communities of different sizes and in different locations as experiencing and responding to globalised market forces in such a way that draws attention to the unsettling effects that processes of expansion had on communal relations and identities.

Through examining fiction written by a wide range of Victorian authors, including Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, G. W. M. Reynolds, and Harriet Martineau, I argue that mid-Victorian fiction registers both the pressures and the opportunities arising from extending market exchanges. Although the literature included in this thesis was written in different genres, published in different forms, and intended for different

readerships, all the narratives share a preoccupation with the ways in which individuals and social groups responded to the new economic and material connections that were being forged between communities. This study questions how authors depicted the various ways in which extending markets altered people's perspectives on the world around them. It is my contention that ideas concerning Britain's contribution to a global marketplace were not only confined to economic treaties or trade agreements as set out by financiers and officials in Whitehall, but also featured in how people responded to the changes taking place in the fabrics of their everyday lives. The readings in each of the chapters in this thesis interrogate how mid-nineteenth-century authors identified and depicted global market expansions as being registered by local communities in Britain. How did it feel to have a large part of your daily life – the food you ate, the goods you used, and the newspapers you read – dependent on and implicated with communities spread across the globe? And, vice versa, how did knowing that the commodities you had created, or the produce yielded from your land, were being used by those you did not know alter the way you felt about your labour? I argue that these questions form the crux of how Victorian authors approached responses to expanding marketplaces. Identity, affect, and social affiliation no longer resided solely in the local neighbourhood communities, but drew on multiple and, at times, competing sources of influence and control that spread across the globe.

With the increased material and market connections between different communities came a complication of how geographically demarcated areas were understood in relation to one another. I use the term 'geographical affect' to refer to the manner in which Victorian authors plotted the different ways people in different types of imagined communities across Britain felt themselves

to be impacted by lengthening commodity chains and expanding marketplaces. The fiction included in this study covers narratives set in a range of different geographic locations, from villages in south Wales, to northern industrial cities, to provincial English towns, to metropolitan communities. Uniting all of these narratives is the concern with how individuals and social groups meditated on how and where they thought about home and how, in the face of increasing and expanding connectivity, people thought through what it meant to move away or remain at home. In order to express these responses, the authors examined in this thesis draw on different scalar categories – local, regional, national, imperial, and global – so as to articulate how different people positioned themselves in the context of globally expanding marketplaces.¹ Unlike Adam Smith's explanation of transnational trade that envisioned global connections to expand seamlessly outwards, the geographical affect of the fiction in this study concertina these different scalar categories in on one another so as to express the complex relationships between British communities and the expanding and changing world.

Throughout this thesis I am concerned with unpicking the ways in which scalar categories of identity and affiliation are depicted as being profoundly non-fixed and constantly changing and updating in response to new economic and material connections. It is my contention that in nineteenth-century fiction scalar categories and geographical descriptors are heuristic. By this I refer to the ways that they feature as a product of people's attempts to understand the different and uneven impacts of globalisation. There is not one clear way to map these scalar categories in relation to one another; for example, an understanding of locality in a rural village is very different from the locality of a metropolitan

¹ Throughout out this thesis I use the term 'scalar' to refer to the ways that authors present different scales of perspective alongside one another.

community. But it is exactly this complication between different scalar categories that makes it such a rich and fruitful line of enquiry to studies of nineteenth-century expansion. A study of scale, and the geographical affects different scales produce, provides a fresh approach to understandings of different ways in which market and material changes were plotted in Victorian fiction.

As such, one of the main contributions that this thesis makes to contemporary Victorian studies is the light it sheds on the various ways in which nineteenth-century prose fiction registered global encounters. The Victorian novel has often been understood as a cultural form that registers aspects of British imperialism.² Such readings tend to take shape around the structures of coloniser and colonised or the core and the periphery. While these structures are at times present in Victorian literature, and this study does highlight instances when expansion is thought through in terms of imperial control, they are accompanied by other scalar perspectives on the world. Through thinking about the ways in which markets also functioned to connect Britain to other countries across the globe, my thesis opens up more capacious readings of the complex interactions between the Victorians and the world. I argue that mid-nineteenth-century fiction can then be understood as less concerned with holding “the category of the global at bay by reinventing and focusing detail-rapt attention upon the *national*” (Buzard *Disorienting Fiction* 51), as some recent critics have suggested, and more focused on attempting to articulate the matrix of influences and desires shaped by expanding economic connections.

This introduction serves to establish a historical and theoretical framework that will help to set up the readings of geographical affect and scalar

² See Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* for a discussion of the relationship between the novel and imperial control. Said is discussed later in this introduction.

perspectives that follow in the four chapters of this study. The majority of this introduction is concerned with recent critical debates surrounding Victorian expansion. I address the ways in which historians have argued for more focus to be paid to economic expansion, rather than solely focusing on the territorial growth of the British Empire. I then go on to discuss how in the past decade literary studies have witnessed a global and spatial turn in works on nineteenth-century fiction. This introduction concludes with an explanation of how my study contributes to these debates, the main research questions defining my methodology, and a brief chapter outline.

Nineteenth-Century Expansion and Victorian Literature

Over the course of the nineteenth century Britain was engaged in processes of expansion that forged commercial, financial, imperial, cultural, and social connections across the globe. Recent historians, such as John Darwin, C. A. Bayly, James Belich, P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, and Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, have called for greater critical attention to be paid to complexities and inconsistencies that characterised nineteenth-century expansion. Rather than focusing solely on the territorial gains made by the British Empire, these historians all consider the multiple social, cultural, and economic imperatives driving and sustaining the expansion of global markets. My argument concerning the geographical affect of mid-Victorian fiction heeds these economic historians. I understand the complicated scalar perspectives that feature in nineteenth-century novels, serialisations, and short stories as shaped by such uneven and complicated processes of expansion.

In the concluding chapter to their work on British imperialism between 1688 and 2000 the historians P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins argue that

globalisation needs to be understood as a cultural as well as an economic phenomenon:

[Globalisation] has affected cultural life and ideas just as much as state structures, and state structures just as much as economic development. In the case of Britain, the historical record suggests that nation-building and the expansion of global economic and cultural networks were almost dialectically connected (666).

Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to both the ways that Victorian expansion was justified and explained not only by the pursuit of economic and territorial gain, but also by compelling narratives of the extension of social and cultural networks. James Belich elaborates this idea in *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and Rise of the Angloworld*. Belich asserts that studies of British expansion need to move away from the assumption that “given the adequate [market] information, modern humans will rationally pursue profit” (96). Instead, he proposes that, “rational-choice theory needs to be joined by the social and cultural history of economics” (97). Both of these views feed into a recent interest in studies of nineteenth-century expansion that move beyond the assumption that global markets were structured solely around economic imperatives. By opening up readings of expansion to encompass both social and cultural formations, these historians enable a far more intricate and nuanced reading of the motivations and anxieties driving nineteenth-century global relations.

This thesis seeks to deepen and broaden understandings of how the complicated factors driving expansion and were registered by people living across Britain. It interrogates how people living in different parts of the nation

understood the various impacts of lengthening commodity chains and extending communication networks to affect the fabric of their daily lives. As such, this study demands a reassessment of how British expansion operated and how it incorporated different social groups into its processes. In his extensive study on Victorian expansion, *The Empire Project*, John Darwin signals that British expansion should be understood as “unfinished, untidy, a mass of contradictions, aspirations and anomalies” (xi). Instead of seeing British global encounters as constituting only what was marked red on the map, Darwin suggests that historians should take into account the multiple and sometimes competing range of interests that led British influence and rule across the world. He explains that, “British expansion was driven not by official designs but by chaotic pluralism of British interests at home and of their agents and allies abroad” (3). It is this idea of Victorian expansion as characterised by a “chaotic pluralism” that led Darwin to use the term ‘British Modern World System’ to refer to the full range of interests driving processes of expansion.³ He argues that the British World was part of a “larger conglomerate” of possessions and connections:

[...] British expansion had no master-plan. It had almost always been true that colonial schemes and their commercial equivalents were devised not by governments but by private enthusiasts in search of wealth, virtue, or religious redemption. [...]

This is a useful corrective to paying too much attention to the mood of the ‘policy-makers’, to invoking too often the cool rationality (or constant viewpoint) of the ‘official mind’, or to being over-impressed by the so-called ‘reluctance’ of British imperialism. [...] The result (by the

³ Darwin takes his understanding of the British Modern World System from Immanuel Wallerstein’s work *The Modern-World System*. For a discussion of how World System theories have informed recent literary studies see *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World –Literature* by Warwick Research Collective.

mid-nineteenth century) was an empire of beachheads and bridgeheads, half-conquered tracts, half-settled interiors, mission stations and whaling-stations, barracks and cantonments, treaty ports on the up [...] and treaty ports with no future (3).

Despite the seemingly random and chaotic nature of its expansion, Darwin asserts that out of this a system emerged. This system was comprised of imperial, financial, commercial, and communicative inter-dependence between different nations spanning across the globe. This understanding of Britain's role in nineteenth-century global modernity allows a more detailed reading of Britain's relation to the rest of the world, not only the Empire: "British connections' were dynamic not static. Their strength and solidity at any particular time were powerfully (perhaps decisively) shaped by the play of economic and geopolitical forces at the global not just imperial level" (7).

For the purpose of this current study, however, what is of particular interest is Darwin's reading of how these connections were registered by people living in Britain. He asserts that by the mid-nineteenth century

[...] a much greater constituency saw Britain's fate as tied up with overseas interests [...]. How far these different conceptions and connections of empire helped to 'constitute' British society is indeed a moot point. It can hardly be doubted that the sense of being part of a larger political world extending far beyond Britain was very widely diffused. [...] Entrenched vested interests, often commanding a loud public voice, could play upon this awareness of a 'greater' Britain on whose power and prestige 'little' England depended. But they could not assume a broad public sympathy for all types of empire and on every occasion. [...] If Britain was 'constituted' by its empire we should have to consider how far its 'constitution' was shaped by flows of migration (and their return), a sense of pan-British identity, the appeal of free trade (as a

source of cheap overseas food), and the claims of evangelical Christianity on the conscience and purse of domestic society, as well as by the vicarious pleasures of lording over 'lesser breeds without the law' (15).

Here, Darwin highlights the complicated range of influences that Britons drew on when constructing ideas of their place in the world. It was not simply a case that only those who had financial or commercial investments abroad were aware of the geopolitical changes taking place across the globe, but that everyone who was in some way exposed to narratives of Britain's global and economic relationships felt their presence. As Darwin highlights, ideas of Britain's engagement with the rest of the world were implicated in the movements and flows of peoples and commodities, the lure of expanding free trade connections, and ideas of a "pan-British identity" (15). Relationships between Britain, its Empire, and the rest of the globe, therefore, were far from stable and drew together a diverse range of people with different motivations and ambitions.

Underlying this understanding of expansion is the notion that globalised modernity was something that, in different ways, affected all people. Like Darwin, C. A. Bayly explains in *The Birth of the Modern World* that the processes of modernity were not overseen by a master-plan, as such, but came out of a series of different events, changes, and connections that encouraged communities across the globe to imagine themselves as contributing to and taking part in the same globalised networks of communication and exchange. He explains on the first page of his study that in between the years 1789 and 1914 "world events became more interconnected and interdependent, so forms of human action adjusted to each other and came to resemble each other

across the world” (1). The connections that opened up between different countries as a result of increased exchange of material and information resulted in not only a greater communication with other societies, but also a change in how countries understood themselves in relation to the rest of the world. As Bayly explains, world events in this period need to be understood not as isolated incidents but as responding to, and coming out of, other events taking place across the globe. In this period of ‘the birth of the modern world’ it is no longer tenable to write an American or a European history of the nineteenth century; instead, all “local, national, or regional histories must, in important ways [...], be global histories” (2). The approach to history in *The Birth of the Modern World*, then, rests on the scalar perspective that pays attention to the diverse ways that countries across the globe responded to one another. He argues that modernity was not something that was experienced in a specific location that then filtered out to the peripheries; it took place across the world simultaneously and in doing so drew together diverse communities into networks of communication, interaction, and exchange.

But, for Bayly, modernity does not only refer to the ways in which nations traded and interacted with one another; it also refers to the ways in which individuals and social groups within these countries felt about their place in the world: “an essential part of being modern is thinking you are modern. Modernity is an aspiration to be ‘up with the times’” (10). This capacious understanding of modernity highlights the ways in which people did not necessarily need to be the wealthiest in society in order to experience what it feels like to be modern. Although this broad definition of ‘being modern’ could be applied to any number of historical periods, Bayly goes on to describe why it has particular relevance to the years between 1789 and 1914:

At one level, then, the nineteenth century was the age of modernity precisely because a considerable number of the thinkers, statesmen, and scientists who dominated the ordering of society believed it to be so. It was also a modern age because poorer and subordinate people around the world thought that they could improve their status and life-chances by adopting badges of this mythical modernity, whether these were fob watches, umbrellas, or new religious texts (10-11).

According to Bayly, the desire to be modern or to be 'up with the times' was part of what "created new demands for labour, and sent merchant men across the oceans in search of luxuries", which, in turn, led to "more aggressive states [...] taking] advantage of these changes and began to link the industrious revolutions together across the world with armed shipping and monopoly companies" (6). But what is of greatest importance in Bayly's work to my thesis is his understanding of the feelings that these changes prompted:

People's horizons of desire changed, because information about the ideals and life-styles of ruling groups were circulating faster.

[...] These social and economic changes were uneven and unsettling. They opened up differentials between groups and different societies. They spawned lust for wealth, envy, and distrust of neighbours. [...] The turmoil was worldwide (6).

In the phrase 'horizons of desire' Bayly alludes to what I place as central to my reading of nineteenth-century fiction: the scalar and affective responses to modernity. It is not simply that new economic and commercial connections changed the ways people communicated, but that they changed the way in which people felt about their place in the world. In particular it is the disjunction

that Bayly sets up between the expanding 'horizons of desire' and the 'distrust of neighbours' that speaks to the ways in which I examine the new patterns of social affiliation associated with global marketplaces and economic expansion.

Both John Darwin's *The Empire Project* and C. A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World* share a focus on the different ways in which people's lives across the globe were becoming increasingly dependent on and interconnected with one another over the course of the nineteenth century. Although they differ in certain respects in their lines of enquiry, Darwin focuses on the British Modern World System, while Bayly provides a more capacious reading of global modernity, they both highlight the ways in which economic and market expansions were accompanied by many diverse and complicated factors and desires that drove nineteenth-century expansion across the globe. They depart from readings of Victorian expansion as being a unilateral or hegemonic process and instead unpick the ways in which it was dependent on numerous cultural and social formations. Readings of Victorian expansion are subsequently opened up to factors that move beyond the economic orthodoxy of seeing markets expanding only in accordance with the rational actions of exchange in return for profit. My argument concerning the representation of economic expansion and geographical affect heeds the works of both Bayly and Darwin and their arguments for greater attention to be paid to the diverse ways that Victorian expansion spread across the globe.

It is important to note, however, that recent economic historical studies, like those by Belich, Darwin, and Bayly, do not dispute the power, violence, or pervasiveness of imperial control, but rather they argue that it needs to be recognised as taking place alongside economic expansions. Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson note that,

Although imperial power has long been recognised as crucial to the mobilisation and distribution of material resources, there is a growing consciousness of how economics, like any other form of human activity, is culturally influenced. We therefore need a merging of cultural and economic histories – a recognition of culture as the matrix in which economic life occurs (14).

All of the historical studies discussed thus far draw attention to the new ways that economic expansions changed the manner in which people felt about the world around them; or, as Bayly puts it, the ways in which “people’s horizons of desires changed” as a result of increased global connectivity and communication (6). But, how can understandings of the macroscale global sweeps of economic expansion be reconciled with the local experiences of different individuals and social groups? It is the contention of this thesis that mid-Victorian authors plotted connections between local British communities and the rest of the world in such a way that meditates on this question. In order to think through the interactions between these competing perspectives, the global and the local, I argue that it is necessary to employ a reading that highlights the complex scales of reference. Studies of scale have increased in recent years in fields of human geography and politics.⁴ Thinking about how scale can be used as a way through which to read nineteenth-century economic expansion, it is helpful to turn to critiques of twentieth and twenty-first-century globalisation. Although focusing on different formations of globalised connections, the works of human geographers and political theorists can shed

⁴ For more information on scale in human geography and politics see Kevin R. Cox’s special edition of *Political Geography* 17 (1998). In particular, see Katherine T. Jones’s article ‘Scale as Epistemology’ from this journal.

much light on how the impact of uneven processes of expansion in the nineteenth-century were registered by different people living in Britain.

Doreen Massey's study 'A Global Sense of Place' from *Space, Place, and Gender* addresses many of the topics and concerns that are pivotal to my thesis. Massey identifies that in twentieth and twenty-first-century society's increasingly globalised ways of living there is a need to think about the global and the local simultaneously. She recognises that it is only when we complicate the ways in which we approach a "global sense of local, a global sense of place" that we can think more fully about the "power-geometry" of contemporary society (156, 149). She notes that twenty-first-century society is often defined by a sense of "speeding up and spreading out" (146). Massey explains that "[o]ne of the results of this is an increasing uncertainty about what we mean by 'places' and how we relate to them. How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing can we retain any sense of a local place and particularities?" (146). In response to the uncertainties associated with globalisation Massey sets out a manifesto to re-think how we approach categories of space, place, and belonging in contemporary society:

Can't we rethink our sense of place? Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-closing and defensive, but outward-looking? A sense of place which is adequate to this era of time-space compression? To begin with, there are some questions to be asked about time-space compression itself. Who is it that experiences it, and how? Do we all benefit and suffer from it in the same way? (147).

In order to answer these questions Massey argues that we need to recognise that "there are real relations with real content – economic, political, cultural – between any local place and the wider world in which [they are] set" (152).

Massey explains how terms such as the 'global community' and the 'global village' voice the anxiety associated with this explosion of scale and represent an attempt to register it on a local level. In order to account for these shifts in perspective more fully she calls for a reconsideration of place, a shift in the scale, so that the local and the global can be understood simultaneously: "a global sense of local, a global sense of place" (156).

The way in which Massey suggests that we should read these flows is through a reading of 'power-geometry':

Now I want to make one simple point here, and that is about what one might call the power-geometry of it all; the power-geometry of time-space compression. For different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. [...] Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it (149).

It is exactly this reading of different social relations in response to globalised flows that I want to think about in relation to the depiction of processes of expansion in Victorian fiction. By paying attention to the 'power-geometry' associated with the nineteenth-century global marketplaces it is possible to consider the nuanced ways in which Victorian authors depicted the categories of the local, the regional, the national, and the global as interacting with one another and how different people evoke these scalar categories in order to attempt to understand the uneven processes of globalisation. In the same way that Massey identifies in today's society that "different social groups have

distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility” (149), it is my contention that nineteenth-century authors depicted different characters as experiencing similar products of a power-geometry of global capitalism.

I suggest that authors such as Dickens, Gaskell, Brontë, Eliot, Reynolds, and Martineau employed scalar perspectives in order to consider what Massey terms as the ‘power-geometry’ of life in nineteenth-century Britain. My reading of scales in fiction, however, aims to highlight how in the mid-Victorian literary imagination the different ways in which people are placed in relation to the ‘flows and interconnections’ of market expansions prompts a complicated array of scalar perspectives; not only the local and the global, but also the regional, the national, and the imperial. In each case these alternating or contrasting perspectives are evoked so as to meditate on the different ways in which economic expansion was experienced differently. It is not a case of simply jumping from the global to the local and back again, but of bringing different scalar categories into play. This, then, complicates readings of Victorian fiction that have seen it as a cultural form structured around the idea that the British Empire, and the rest of the world more generally, was simply going on outside of the British Victorian’s range of interest. I suggest that something far more nuanced is at play in nineteenth-century fiction.

As such, this thesis contributes to a growing field of research in Victorian studies that addresses how world or ‘macroscalar’ understandings of modernity can be advanced in literary studies. In the introduction to 2011 edition of *The Yearbook of English Studies* Pablo Mukherjee notes that,

[...] after almost three decades of near-absolute condemnation of any systematic or macroscalar conceptualizing moves in favour of the ‘fractured’, the ‘hybrid’, and the ‘particular’, the humanities in the first

decade of the twenty-first century (a period – not coincidentally – marked by acute global financial, political, and environmental crises) seems to have remembered the art of making expansive theoretical gestures. At a banal level this is signalled by the rapid proliferation of the appellation ‘world’ on the spines of hefty academic tomes (as in ‘world literature’, ‘world history’, ‘world environment’, and so on). But it would not be inaccurate to say that, from literary and cultural studies to history (both ancient and modern) and geography, the conceptual presence of modern and contemporary imperialism as a globally entrenched but uneven system has been growing in stature (2).

The historical studies considered in the proceeding paragraphs could be categorised under what Mukherjee terms as the ‘hefty academic’ works on world histories. But, he also signals the conceptual changes that arise from this focus on ‘world’ perspectives and how literary critics have used this to approach issues of unevenness in Victorian economic expansion. By pulling together the scalar approach of Massey’s understanding of the ‘power-geometry’ of contemporary globalisation and Mukherjee’s focus on the globally entrenched unevenness of systems of expansion, it is possible to advance a new reading of the ways in which Victorian authors evoked connections between Britain and the rest of the globe in their works.

My argument that there is an important relationship between nineteenth-century culture and the wider world inevitably draws many sources of inspiration from Edward Said and his seminal work *Culture and Imperialism*. In the introduction to this work Said asks what “is the connection between the pursuit of national imperial aims and the general national culture?”(13). Using *Dombey and Son* as an example Said explains that,

To lose sight of or ignore the national and international context of, say, Dickens's representation of Victorian businessmen, and to focus only on the internal coherence of their roles in his novels is to miss an essential connection between his fiction and its historical world. And understanding that connection does not reduce or diminish the novels' value as works of art: on the contrary, because of their *worldliness*, because of their complex affiliations with their real setting, they are *more* valuable as works of art (13).

In acknowledging the multiple and diverse ways in which British imperial and economic expansion was experienced and practiced it becomes possible to reassess some of Said's claims in light of contemporary scholarship. This in no way means to refute the link Said posits between culture and imperialism, but to suggest that historical advances in understandings of the British World system and globalisation can offer a different angle to some of the readings offered in Said's work. Said suggests that, "[w]henver a cultural form or discourse aspired to wholeness or totality, most European writers, thinkers, politicians, and mercantilists tended to think in global terms" (126). I agree that global terms are present and play an important part of the Victorian fiction included in this study, but so too are local, regional, and national terms. It is the ways in which these different categories of identity and affiliation are presented in literary works, the ways in which they are folded in on one another and set against one another, that a new understanding of the 'worldliness' of Victorian literary culture can be advanced.

As stated, Victorian studies have recently addressed the different ways in which expansion was registered – this has mainly featured in studies of cosmopolitanism and the global circulation of commodities, capital, people, and information. Although these studies have been a welcome contribution to our

understanding of the broader interactions between Britain and the rest of the globe, interactions that move beyond a coloniser/colonised binary, it is my contention that there is still work to be done to address the range of reactions. This is where my study of scalar perspective and geographical affect contributes to these debates: it demonstrates the complexity of responses to economic expansion. It is the aim of my thesis to highlight the ways in which these different processes or experiences of globalised modernity overlap and interact with one another. In my choice of fiction I demonstrate how different scalar and spatial categories are drawn on in the same narratives so as to plot the different ways that expanding economic connections affected different individuals and social groups. In order to set up how the readings in the chapters that follow contribute to these debates it is fruitful, however, to provide an outline of how these topics have featured in Victorian studies in recent years.

The first of the recent global turns in Victorian studies I address is that of cosmopolitanism. Amanda Anderson suggests that in mid-Victorian fiction authors use cosmopolitanism in order to denote a “reflective distance from one’s original or primary cultural affiliations, a broad understanding of other cultures and customs, and a belief in universal humanity” (63). She argues that in the literature of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, John Stuart Mill, and Oscar Wilde cosmopolitanism features as a way through which to question “what it means to cultivate a distanced relationship toward one’s self, [and] one’s community” (4). Tanya Agatholoeceous suggests that cosmopolitan realism in nineteenth-century metropolitan fiction is an attempt to make “sense of human community designed to give shape and meaning to the inconceivable complexity of the modern world: a world made newly visible by the alienating forces of imperialism, capitalism, and technology” (*Urban Realism and the*

Cosmopolitan Imagination xi).⁵ Similarly, in 'Victorian Cosmopolitanisms', a special edition of *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Tanya Agatholoeous and Jason R. Rudy define cosmopolitanism more broadly as "an ethos that attempts to encompass all humanity while remaining attentive to the pitfalls of humanism" (390). While these studies have done much to highlight the ways in which Victorian authors attempted to negotiate their position to the world around them, for the most part these critics have focused on the 'ethos' of cosmopolitanism rather than the effects of geo-political and material changes taking place in their contemporary society.⁶

Many of the authors included in this study cross-over with those readings in Anderson and Agatholoeous's works – authors such as Dickens, Brontë, and Eliot – however, my readings of the global aspects of these works rests more firmly on the material changes experienced by different people living in Britain. I argue that these authors not only provide meditations on the ways in which people understood cultural affiliations to be shifting, but that these considerations were accompanied by portrayals of the material changes that took place in people's everyday lives and how this affected their perspectival scales of reference. In recent years there has been increased levels of interest in how circulations of capital, commodities, people, and ideas shaped by expanding marketplaces are featured in Victorian fiction. These studies frequently draw on recent theoretical debates in fields of human geography on mobilities and space and place in order to address the complicated ways in which the extending connections are featured in mid-Victorian fiction.

⁵ Agatholoeous work on urban realism and cosmopolitanism is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

⁶ For more discussions of nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism see James Buzard *Disorienting Fiction* and "The Country and the Plague": Anticulture and Autoethnography in Dickens's 1850s', John McBratney 'Reluctant Cosmopolitanisms in Dickens's *Great Expectations*' and Lauren Goodlad 'Cosmopolitanism's Actually Existing Beyond; Toward a Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic'.

In 2006 Elaine Freedgood published *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*. In this work Freedgood argues that for too long critics have overlooked the historical significance of the plethora of things that crowd the pages of Victorian novels. Taking three objects as the starting point for her study – mahogany furniture in *Jane Eyre*, ‘Negro head’ tobacco in *Great Expectations*, and calico curtains in *Mary Barton* – Freedgood advances a metonymic rather than a metaphorical reading of things in nineteenth century fiction. She explains that a metonymic reading means that “the object is investigated in terms of its own properties and history and then refigured alongside and athwart the novel’s manifest or dominant narrative – the one that concerns its subjects” (12). In so doing *The Ideas in Things* reveals the many ways in which nineteenth-century domesticity was inherently bound up in the wider global world. Such an unearthing of the often silent connections with other nations is valuable in establishing a critical framework in which to think about the global landscape of Victorian fiction. However, for the present study, there are a number of shortfalls in taking a strictly metonymic reading as advanced by Freedgood; it leaves little room for considering the feelings or the imaginative responses that the presence of such goods may prompt in the characters.

Thinking about the ways in which similar commodities could be seen to effect the imagination of the mid-Victorians Catherine Waters argues in *Commodity Culture in Dickens’s Household Words* that, “[c]ommodities not only cross thresholds between the marketplace and the home, but state borders, and in an era of imperialism and international competition, they are freighted with national significance” (102). Waters examines the various ways in which *Household Words* features articles that centre around or include details on the ‘lives’ of goods circulating in the global marketplace: “Uncovering the traces of

imperial awareness to be found in foreign goods, *Household Words* helped to make some of the gains and losses of empire imaginable for its mid-Victorian readers” (124). The way in which commodities such as needles, tobacco, and goods on display in the Great Exhibition reveal the connections that Britain shared with the rest of the world is through the stories they tell to the reader:

[...] in *Household Words* these worldly goods are given a narrative form in which the movement of commodities becomes a form of sociability between peoples and nations. As foreign goods are shown to get together in *Household Words*, they display a vibrant transnational dynamic that raises questions about the effects of imperialism, and about the relationship between people and things in the formation of national and cosmopolitan identities (103).

Unlike Freedgood who traces the silent presence of worldly goods in Victorian novels, Waters examines the explicit ways in which Dickens and his writers construct narratives around the movement and circulations of goods and capital in order to construct an interconnected imagining of the globe. The ‘form of sociability’ that Waters identifies as being produced by exchanges of commodities aligns itself to Adam Smith’s imagining of a global marketplace as detailed at the start of this introduction. This provides an integral context for many of the readings that follow in this thesis; the tension I read as existing between the exchanges of commodities as presented as a ‘form of sociability’ and the feelings that this prompted in localised communities.⁷

By thinking about the different ways in which movement, migration, and circulation of goods, capital, and people were featured in mid-Victorian fiction this thesis draws considerable influence from studies on these subjects

⁷ For more discussions of how material objects feature in Victorian fiction see John Plotz *Portable Property*. See also Hannah Lewis-Bill’s PhD thesis on Dickens, China, and tea.

published in the past decade. In different ways critics such as Richard Menke, Jonathan Grossman, Charlotte Mathieson, and Jude Piesse have written on this topic and the manner in which movement in many different forms was featured in nineteenth-century literary and print culture. Jude Piesse argues in her 2015 monograph *British Settler Emigration in Print, 1832-1877* that there are inherent “multifaceted intertwinements between periodicals, motion, and migration” (21). For Piesse the narratives featured in a range of mid-century periodicals reveal the Victorians’ imaginative engagement with a ‘world on the move’. Periodicals were able to feature mass settlement in a way that made it coherent and, as Piesse explains, “moderate its disruptive potential” (2). The manner in which global movements were registered in the periodical press highlights how settler expansion was explained to Victorian readers in a way that appeared to bring far-flung nations across the globe closer to home.

Also published in 2015, Charlotte Mathieson’s study *Mobility in the Victorian Novel: Placing the Nation* suggests that the transport revolution of the early decades of the nineteenth century served to simultaneously bring “together the place of the nation, while [also] opening up the world beyond as more readily and quickly within reach” (1) and in doing so “played out the inherent contradictions and discrepancies of capitalism in its spatial organisation” (9). Explaining how this focus on mobility enables a reading of both national and global spaces, Mathieson explains that,

In the Victorian novel, mobility plays a central role in exploring the changing relationship between nation-place and global space: the movement of people and things around the nation and into the wider world opens up new perspectives on the place of the nation and its location within a changing global order (2).

In a similar manner to Benedict Anderson's assertion in *Imagined Communities* that extending print networks helped to facilitate the idea of a unified national community, Mathieson claims that such an

[...] idea of the nation as a community imaginatively unified through networks of print was thus accompanied by the production of the nation as a unified *space*, in which regulated, systematised networks of mobility reordered the nation place into a conceptually homogenised unit (5).

What sets Mathieson's study apart from earlier readings on nineteenth-century transport networks, and what makes it of particular relevance to this current study, is her focus on the phenomenological effects of travel, or what she terms as "embodied mobility" (15): "Throughout a multiplicity of mobile practices novelists repeatedly foreground the corporeality of mobility, exploring how bodies are changed through and by travel, and they explore the implications of this for the production of space through mobility" (16). Although this thesis is not specifically concerned with the bodily effects of movement, Mathieson's study does open up room to debate the ways in which people's experiences of the world around them were changing as a result of the new networks of mobility.⁸

Focusing on a different aspect of Victorian global interactions, Richard Menke highlights how these material changes took place at the same time as "an emergent 'culture of information'" (5). In *Telegraphic Realism* Menke argues that the Victorian novel needs to be read in relation "to the growing importance

⁸ See also Ruth Livesy on the stage coach in *Jane Eyre* and Jonathan Grossman's study on public transport in the novels of Charles Dickens. These studies discuss the ways in which the proliferation of public transport in the nineteenth century altered the ways through which people thought about ideas of localism. Livesy, in particular, discusses how the railway did not immediately replace older modes of transport such as the stagecoach, but that these two forms of transportation existed alongside one another.

of the large-scale production and rapid circulation of information in the nineteenth-century – a culture that both reflected and inspired the creation of new media” (5). Although these technological developments differ somewhat from the movements of people, commodities, and capital that feature in other critical studies on Victorian global expansion, Menke’s work does much to highlight the ways in which people did not need to move themselves to feel the impacts of expanding connections. The proliferation of technologies in the nineteenth century that enabled the greater communication and spread of information between communities across the globe opened up the ways in which people thought about their place in the world in relation to other places.

Underlying each of these studies on nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism and globalisation is a concern with how spaces and places were experienced, understood, and represented: whether it was the speed that individuals could travel across the country on the new railway network, or receiving news from relatives that had emigrated to the other side of the world, the geographical distances between places appeared to be shrinking. As Mr Micawber explains before his emigration to Australia in *David Copperfield*, “‘It is merely crossing,’ said Mr Micawber, trifling with his eye-glass, ‘merely crossing. The distance is quite imaginary’” (787). It has often been claimed that capitalist modernity and global marketplaces are defined by the “highly developed, differentiated and dynamic new landscape” of “steam engines, automatic factories, railroads, [and] vast new industrial zones” (Berman 17). It is helpful to consider how contemporary understandings of globalisation can be used to unpick the intricacies of nineteenth-century experiences of space, place, and mobility. I suggest that scalar readings can alter how we understand nineteenth-century engagements with market forces. It is not simply the understanding of the space

around them, but also how they imagine the connections with other spaces and places. It is through scale and geographical affect that this study puts forward a new reading of how expanding markets influenced these changes.

Over the past two decades studies of space and place have featured in works in a diverse range of subjects. Since the work of geographer Henri Lefebvre in the twentieth century, cultural theorists and geographers have examined how space and place are socially produced: Lefebvre proposed that geographical space is not a container in which social relations occur, but rather space is produced through social relations.⁹ On a recent study on the theme of place the geographer Tim Cresswell explains that as a result of works by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau a new understanding of place has been established: “Places are never finished but always the result of processes and practices [...] Place, then, needs to be understood as an embodied relationship with this world. Places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never ‘finished’ but are constantly being performed” (68-69). This interest in space and place has dramatically altered the ways in which literary criticism has approached the locations and settings of fiction. Following Franco Moretti’s ground-breaking study on mappings of the realist novel in *Graphs Maps Trees*, published in 2005, there has been a recent turn in Victorian studies to consider how notions of space and place altered during the course of the nineteenth-century and the extent to which this is reflected in the literature of the period.

Writing in the chapter ‘Space, Mobility, and the Novel: ‘The Spirit of Place is a Great Reality’’, featured in the collection *Adventures in Realism*, Josephine McDonagh notes that “[t]he conventions for representing place in narrative fiction, through depictions of distinctive landscapes, customs, and dialects, have

⁹ For more information see Henri Lefebvre *The Production of Space, Critique of Everyday Life*, and *Rhythmanalysis*. See also Michel de Certeau *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

their roots in fictional form of the national tale, as well as folkloric and anthropological writings” (50). McDonagh explains that alongside increased levels of emigration, the Reform Act redrawing voting constituencies, and the Poor Law redefining parish relief, ideas of place and belonging became prevalent concerns in Victorian realist fiction.

This convergence of historical factors – the emergence of the realist novel with its preoccupations with place and the dramatic increase in population mobility – suggests that the ‘sense of place’ produced by narrative fiction may have had a heightened role in mediating, or even making, readers’ relationships with the world (51).

This thesis sets out to consider what role that may have been.

It is my contention that British fiction written in the middle decades of the nineteenth century did not present a sense of place or a sense of communal identity within a specific place as rooted, bounded, or solid. Instead, in the diverse range of novels, short stories, and serialisations included in this study we see Victorian authors as imagining places and communities as being influenced and informed by flows, circulations, and networks that increasingly connected people’s lives to the lives of people living elsewhere. These topics have recently gained momentum in fields of human geography, and it is the advances made by geographers such as Doreen Massey and Tim Cresswell on mobilities and global spaces in contemporary society that inform my readings of the Victorian fiction. These studies on twentieth-century concerns regarding the complications of living in an increasingly globalised world supposedly characterised by time-space compression share many of the concerns voiced in

Victorian fiction.¹⁰ In a 2010 progress report on the ‘mobilities turn’ in fields of human geography Tim Cresswell explains that, “mobilities research thinks about a variety of things that move include humans, ideas, and objects. It is particularly interested in how these things move in interconnected ways and how one may enable or hinder another” (552). It is exactly this approach to movement and connections that features in my readings of the depiction of responses to processes of expansion in Victorian fiction.

Seen together, these recent works in fields of both historical and literary research have identified the complicated and multifaceted characteristics of Victorian global expansion. What this study sets out to examine is how mid-Victorian authors articulated the different responses to these changes. By examining the geographical affect of these works it becomes apparent that writers expressed both the pressures and the opportunities associated with economic expansions. The different ways in which authors plot the extending connections between communities reveal how people’s understanding of their place in the world shifted according to expanding market and material connections. My studies of geographical affect and scalar perspectives are informed by a number of different factors –cosmopolitanism, globalisation, and imperialism – that all contribute to how the Victorians understood the world around them. Until now studies on depictions of Victorian expansion in nineteenth-century literature have tended to focus on one aspect of expansion. In my study I attempt to bring the multifaceted motives driving expansion across the globe. By focusing on how different British communities were imagined to respond to these expansions it becomes possible to put forward a more rounded view of global encounters in Victorian fiction.

¹⁰ For more information on recent works on mobility studies see John Urry *Mobilities* and Margaret Grieco and John Urry (editors) *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society*.

Methodology and Research Questions

Having outlined the various critical debates to which this thesis contributes, it is useful at this point to lay out the key methodological decisions and research questions that define my study. As stated, there are a number of ways that this study differs from critical works on Victorian expansion that have come before; I understand these differences to be aligned around the choice of authors included in each chapter and the focus on affect and scalar perspectives. When setting out the research for this thesis I was eager to demonstrate the extent to which the preoccupation with expanding market connections and commodity chains were registered in a wide range of Victorian fiction. One of the main purposes of this study is to show that concerns and excitements associated with Britain's economic expansion across the globe were not confined to fiction set in the metropole or in communities across the Empire. Instead, I want to open up readings of Victorian economic expansion so as to interrogate the ways in which people from different sized communities, located in different geographical locations with contrasting spatial identities, and occupying different labouring and class positions felt about how economic expansions effected their lives. As such, it was necessary to draw on a wide range of literary sources. Some of the fiction included in this study may appear incongruous with the global scope of interest outlined in this introduction, particularly the rural or provincial fiction, however, in various ways all of the authors included in each chapter address how individuals and social groups drew on an increasingly complicated array of perspectival scales to meditate on their position in the global marketplace.

In taking this line of focus it is necessary to include a range of fiction not only set in different areas, but also published in different forms and intended for different readerships. It is through this that the complexities of Britain's engagements with global expansion can be advanced. Lauren Goodlad argues that in studies on Victorian literature scholars need to take into account both the British and the global aspects of the genre: "'Victorian' literature, though written in English by authors who were typically British nationals, is the product of palpably transitional forces and global perspectives" (*The Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic* 1). Goodlad goes on to explain that her study "calls for renewed attention to literary form, noting the range and intensity of Victorian fiction's aesthetic engagements with global encounter" (11). This study, in part, responds to that call. It addresses the ways that authors writing in diverse literary styles – from realist novels such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, to the melodrama of G. W. M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London*, through to the didactic short stories in Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* – depict communities from 'global perspectives', as Goodlad terms it. In each example of literature included in this study global influences, whether they are the importation of new goods, the exportation of local produce, the movement of people, or increased levels of communication and circulation of information, are depicted as a making up part of the fabric of everyday life for communities spread across Britain. How different people respond to this is what, I argue, informs the contrasting geographical affects of different authors works.

When selecting the fiction to be examined in this study I was conscious of placing authors that have received much previous critical attention alongside authors that have yet to receive the same levels of scholarly interest. In doing so I hope to shed new light on writers such as Charles Dickens, Elizabeth

Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot, by placing them in the context of their contemporaries, whilst also bringing critically overlooked writers such as Harriet Martineau and G. W. M. Reynolds to the fore. In Chapters Two and Three of this thesis I explain the popularity of both Martineau and Reynolds respectively and note the limited critical attention that they have received in fields of Victorian studies. Here, however, it is important to note the reasons for thinking about these different authors alongside one another. One of the reasons motivating my selection of authors was the aim to demonstrate the prevalence of concerns towards expanding marketplaces. The majority of previous criticism has considered these topics in realist fiction but, while this genre is important, and I have included many realist narratives in this study, it is important to note other genre's engagement with economic expansion.¹¹ For example, I consider how it is featured in fiction that employs the devices and aesthetics from melodramatic or didactic genres.

As this introduction has outlined, there has been much critical interest in the various ways in which the Victorians engaged with the world around them, but less attention has been paid to the feelings these prompted in communities experiencing the tensions and pressures of time-space compression. This study argues that it is through literary depictions of the competing feelings of hope, ambition, excitement, anxiety, uncertainty, and resentment that nineteenth-century writers imagined the wide range of responses to modernity and the unexpected ways in which individuals and communities were pulled together and apart into new social formations. In the past decade many critical works have been published on understandings of the emotions and psychology in

¹¹ See John Plotz *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* and Elaine Freedgood *The Ideas in Things* (discussed earlier in this introduction) for further discussion of realist fiction and global commodities.

nineteenth-century literature and culture. Works by critics such as Thomas Dixon, Sally Shuttleworth, and Rick Rylance have highlighted the ways in which discourses of psychology developed and changed over the Victorian period. While this research has provided invaluable information on nineteenth-century scientific understandings of the mind, my study approaches feelings from a slightly different angle. I use the term ‘feelings’ deliberately as it signals my interest in the literary depiction of affective responses to social and economic changes.

In his seminal work *Marxism and Literature*, published in 1977, Raymond Williams defines his understanding of feelings in literature as the “characteristic elements of impulse, restraint and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and inter-related continuity” (132). Explaining his theory of the inter-related continuity of feelings in more detail, Williams explains the use of the term *structures of feeling*:

The term is difficult, but ‘feeling’ is chosen to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology’. It is not that we must go beyond formally held and systematic beliefs, though of course we have always to include them. It is that we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences. [...] We are then defining these elements as a ‘structure’: as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension. Yet we are also defining a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but

taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies (132).

I quote this passage at length as it highlights many of the key concerns of this thesis. How do people feel about the world around them? How does this change when social or political changes occur in their community? As Williams explains, a study of feelings provides room to think about how these responses are “still *in process*”; feelings are malleable and shift according to different influences. It is important to note, however, that Williams published this definition in 1977.

Thinking about the advances that have been made in recent decades in literary and critical fields of scholarship in terms of globalisation, space, place, and mobilities, it is possible to reassess some of the readings made by Williams in terms of the affective impact of processes of economic, commercial, and imperial processes of expansion. This thesis attempts to think through some of the nuances of Williams’s structure of feeling in light of the global and spatial turns in Victorian studies in such a way that highlights the uncertainty and anxieties regarding global expansion in the Victorian literary imagination.

Where my study differs from Raymond Williams’s use of ‘structures of feeling’ is in my focus on the impact of expanding market places. As such, this study asks slightly different questions of shared or communal feelings from those posed in Williams’s work. My focus falls more firmly on how expanding markets are imagined to connect different communities together. I assert that it is through market and economic connections that people thought about their relationships both with their neighbours and with far-flung communities in new ways. As such, my reading of geographical affect takes a somewhat different angle of enquiry from Williams’s structures of feeling. While sensitive to

“meanings and values as they are actually lived and felt” (132), as Williams describes it, geographical affect also provides space to consider the unevenness in how different perspectival scales open up or shut down according to expanding marketplaces.

Chapter Outline and Structure

The following thesis is split into two sections, with each section then split into two chapters. The first section is titled ‘The City’ and the second section, ‘The Countryside’. In splitting this study into these two geographical areas I am not intending to reinforce the country/city binary that has long been maintained in studies of nineteenth-century modernity; instead, I hope to demonstrate the cross overs and connections between writers imagining urban and rural communities in Victorian literature. There are frequent overlaps between the two areas and it is helpful to consider them side-by-side and to draw out the shared moments of feelings of social tension or uncertainty. Despite being written in different genres and intended for different readerships, all the fiction included in this thesis articulates the concerns, anxieties, and aspirations associated with extending economic and material connections. Separating the different literary portrayals of expanding markets, however, are the various ways in which the different scalar categories of the local, regional, national, imperial, and global are folded in on one another. It is these differences that articulate the wide-range of responses to the growth of global marketplaces as expressed in mid-Victorian fiction.

The first section examines fiction set in urban communities: first, Industrial and Condition of England fiction, second, metropolitan fiction. Seen as

a whole, Section One addresses the ways in which nineteenth-century authors attempted to represent the influence of the increasing commercial, financial, communication, transport, and information connections that British cities, both northern industrial centres and London, shared with the rest of the globe. This section considers these themes both in terms of the processes of movement, mobility, and labour on which these connections depended, and in terms of the literary aesthetics used to represent their presence in urban communities.

Chapter One focuses on Industrial and Condition of England novels. My reading of *Mary Barton*, *North and South* and *Hard Times* examine the ways in which urban communities experienced the flows and circulations of capital, goods, commodities, and people. This chapter argues that a sense of place in these narratives is informed not by an inherent connection with the local environment, but through the influence of the external connections and circuits of movement fostered by Britain's industrial expansion. The analysis of these works draw on contemporary mobility studies and global histories in order to examine the intricacies of the geographical affects in these novels. However, I argue that Gaskell and Dickens do something more complicated than simply mapping the global expansion of Britain's industrialisation in ways that support the narratives of Britain's march towards modernity. Both authors animate the flows and movements fostered by capitalism alongside the restricted, controlled movements or immobility of certain social groups or individuals.

As such, Chapter One sheds new light on the global scope of Industrial and Condition of England fiction. Despite the resurgence of critical interest in global encounters in Victorian literature, especially relating to debates around the circulation of commodities, the global scale of industrial narratives remains relatively under interrogated. It is the aim of Chapter One to reveal the ways

that through depicting global, colonial, national, and regional perspectival scales Dickens and Gaskell highlight the extent to which the labour and capital invested in northern British industrial cities were inherently implicated in global marketplaces. It is the uneven ways that these connections are felt by different people in these communities that shape the geographical affects of *Mary Barton*, *North and South*, and *Hard Times*.

Continuing the debates established in Chapter One on the local impacts of increasingly globalised trading, Chapter Two thinks more closely about how these concerns are depicted in fiction set in London. The focus of this chapter falls on Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* and G. W. M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London*. Both these works present expansive views of London that encompass the social and cultural diversity of the city, whilst also placing London in the global landscape of international trading, finance and communication. This reading considers how the aesthetics used in these two works can be considered alongside nineteenth-century visual cultures of panoramas, microscopic displays and world exhibitions. As such, this chapter thinks more closely about the ways in which imaginings of scale, and attempts to make sense of the space-time compression that was seemingly bringing the world closer together, were part of a wider cultural preoccupation in mid-Victorian England. By employing close readings of both Dickens's and Reynolds's lengthy narratives, I argue that the competing panoramic and microscopic perspectives used by both authors to animate the metropolis can be understood as an attempt to capture the confusion and uncertainty of life in the metropolis.

The second section turns to examine fiction set in the countryside. The third chapter examines three rural narratives: 'The Hill and the Valley' and

'Brooke and Brooke Farm' from Harriett Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* and *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot. This chapter interrogates what is understood by the term 'rural' and why these narratives are so frequently omitted from studies on nineteenth-century modernity. In my readings of Martineau and Eliot I aim to demonstrate the dynamic and active ways in which these authors imagined rural communities to engage with processes of modernisation and economic and commercial expansion. I use the term 'engage with' deliberately as in *Illustrations of Political Economy* and *The Mill on the Floss* rural communities are not depicted as passively succumbing to the forces of agricultural modernisation, rather they feature characters debating and contemplating the ways in which they could incorporate external connections and influences into their daily lives. The tension in these narratives reside in the manner in which the unpredictable booms and busts of the global marketplace, thought of on a global scale, can be incorporated alongside the local seasonal rhythms of rural communities. As such, this chapter seeks to challenge diffusionist readings of capitalist development that place rural communities on the periphery of modernity.

The fourth, and final, chapter of this thesis considers regional and provincial fiction. This chapter contributes to recent debates taking place in Victorian studies between critics such as Ian Duncan and Josephine McDonagh regarding the global engagements of nineteenth-century provincial and regional novels. In my reading both regional and provincial fiction engage with the global processes of expansion, but do so by deploying very different depictions of scales and geographical affects. The first reading focuses on Charlotte Brontë's regional novel *Shirley*. I argue that through formal narrative and structural devices Brontë's regional novel interweaves the geographic, communal, and

dialectic specificities of the West Riding in North Yorkshire with the framework of global economic marketplaces. In a different way, George Eliot's provincial society in *Middlemarch* is read with a focus on the literary devices used to portray different characters' understandings of the scales of their local community. Through offering a re-reading of Eliot's web metaphor I suggest that it is possible to understand provincial fiction as providing a far more complex and meditative portrayal of communal bonds and boundaries than has previously been assumed.

Seen as a whole, this thesis includes a wide range of prose fiction, written by a diverse range of writers. It is useful here, however, to explain that for reasons of space I have only selected two to three examples of each area of fiction in each chapter. I am aware that these readings could be expanded and that there is much to say about how other authors, perhaps less canonical authors or authors writing in a slightly earlier or later periods than this thesis allows, depicted these concerns. However, I see this thesis as establishing the foundations for an understanding of how many different authors articulated similar concerns regarding the ways in which people felt in their local community in periods of global expansion.

Section One

The City

The first two chapters of this thesis examine depictions of scalar perspectives and geographical affect in urban fiction: industrial and metropolitan fiction respectively. The introduction to this thesis outlined the broad concerns of each of the chapters. It is useful here, however, to set out a more detailed reading of the new approaches to understandings of the nineteenth-century city provided by this section. For decades the Victorian city, whether industrial or metropolitan, has been held up as the symbol of nineteenth-century modernity. The urban community encompasses the whole social scope of the development of industrialised forms of labour, increased transport connections, print networks, and communication links across the globe.¹² However, the city has often also been understood to represent the disintegration of local 'known' communities. As Raymond Williams explains in *The Country and the City*,

[...] the transition from the country to the city – from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban society – is transforming and significant. The growth of towns and especially of cities and a metropolis; the increasing division and complexity of labour; the altered and critical relations between and within social classes: in changes like these any assumption of a knowable community – a whole community, wholly knowable – became harder and harder to sustain (165).

While I do not reject Williams's reading of the 'altered and critical relations' in Victorian cities, this present study addresses this topic from a slightly different

¹² For a detailed reading of the population and cultural changes that took place in Victorian cities see the introduction to Tanya Agatholoeous's *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*. See also H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff's *The Victorian City: Images and Realities* and Lynda Nead's *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*.

angle of focus. It addresses how nineteenth-century industrial and metropolitan fiction plots the uneven ways in which processes of expansion were experienced in the Victorian city. It is not that everyone was pulled into the same processes, or experienced them in the same ways, instead what these novels and serialisations reveal are the ways in which the expansion and development of connections spanning out from Victorian cities both produced and were dependent on an inherent systems of unevenness.

The study of scales and geographical affect of these works reveal how Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, and G. W. M. Reynolds are all sensitive to the ways in which nineteenth-century urban living was both expansive in its connections across the globe, but also created huge distances between those living in close geographical proximity to one another. The large arrays of perspectival scales featured in all of the fiction included this section reveals the extent to which the literary depictions of the geographical affect of nineteenth-century cities drew together a diverse range of experiences and scalar perspectives. For some individuals and social groups, the global connections that their labour and capital was invested in does not necessarily open up the world beyond their local environment, for others, the spread of global market connections appears to dissolve the distances between Britain and the rest of the world.

Writing in 2015 in *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* the Warwick Research Collective (WReC), comprised of Sharae Deckard, Nicholas Lawrence, Neil Lazarus, Graeme Macdonald, Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, Benita Parry, and Stephen Shapiro, argue that unevenness is an inherent part of capitalist development. They note that, “[m]odernity’ does not mark the relationship between some formations

(that are ‘modern’) and others (that are not ‘modern’, or not yet so)” (12). They go on to explain that it is essential to recognise “that capitalist development does not smooth away but rather *produces* unevenness, systematically and as a matter of course” (12). Although WReC focus largely on twentieth and twenty-first-century instances of capitalist development, *Combined and Uneven Development* does provide a way to think through the complicated geographical affects of mid-nineteenth-century urban fiction. It is my contention that industrial and metropolitan fiction both feature a wide range of scalar categories so as to plot the uneven ways in which economic expansion was experienced and registered by different individuals and social groups living in the city.

The scalar categories, however, are depicted in very different ways in the works of Gaskell, Dickens, and Reynolds. Gaskell gives shape to various patterns of loyalty and affiliation that are produced by the economic expansion taking place in industrial cities. In both *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855) Gaskell plots the ways that scalar categories are understood by different people and are used by different social groups as a way in which to understand the different and uneven impact of globalisation. Dickens, by contrast, in both *Hard Times* (1854) and *Little Dorrit* (1857), examined in Chapters One and Two respectively, provides an interrogation of how the alternating range of scalar perspectives impacts local communal relationships: how are different scales of perspective informed by industrial, financial, and commercial economic expansions? How do these different connections have an impact on different characters’ understandings of the geographical affect of their urban community? Finally, G. W. M. Reynolds’s long serialisation *The Mysteries of London* (started in 1844) provides a capacious and, at times, confusing portrayal of the multiple lives that make up London. My reading argues that Reynolds interlocks the

different scalar perspectives of London so as to meditate on the city's place within the global marketplace and critique the inherent unevenness of the impacts of globalisation. Seen together the first two chapters of this thesis demand that readings of urban nineteenth-century fiction need to be understood within the framework of global economic expansion.

Chapter One

Industrial and Condition of England Fiction: Elizabeth Gaskell *Mary Barton* and
North and South and Charles Dickens *Hard Times*

Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis is concerned with the depictions of expanding marketplaces and lengthening commodity chains in mid-nineteenth-century Condition of England fiction. It is my contention that in both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell and *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens portrayals of industrial communities are placed firmly within the context of world-wide economic expansion. As such, this chapter aims to deepen understandings of the global geopolitics of industrialisation as depicted in Condition of England novels. Both Gaskell and Dickens draw together diverse scalar categories of identification and interaction so as to express the complex ways in which northern British industrial communities experienced the impacts of increasingly world-level market forces. All three of the narratives examined in this chapter highlight the unevenly developed way that industrial expansion took shape and how this unevenness affected different individuals and social groups living and working in industrial towns.

John Darwin notes that after 1830 industrialisation was “critical” to Britain’s economic expansion (19). He explains that, “[i]ndustrialisation changed the context and equation of imperial power [...] It hugely reinforced the cultural prestige of the imperial rulers, and (through the new technologies of communication) increased the volume and intensity of their cultural impact” (19).

Despite the central role played by industrialism in Britain's global expansion, the majority of previous criticisms on nineteenth-century industrial fiction have tended to address the genre in the framework of national concerns. While criticism by Raymond Williams, Patrick Brantlinger, Catherine Gallagher, and Hilary Schor have done much to reveal the complex class, gender, and political ideologies at play in these novels, there remains more to be done on how these works can be read alongside alternative axis of scalar categories.¹³ I argue that by paying attention to the wide array of perspectival scales – ranging from local neighbourhood relations, to national connections and communications, outwards to the global circulations of capital, commodities, and people - the geographical affects of these works reveal the complicated ways in which the everyday lives of British industrial communities were understood to be part of far broader global processes of expansion. *Mary Barton*, *North and South*, and *Hard Times* ask pertinent questions regarding how people whose labour and capital are invested in industrial expansion positioned themselves in relation to extending marketplaces.

This is not to suggest, however, that Dickens and Gaskell present the geographical affects of industrial communities in exactly the same way. Over the course of this chapter I seek to unpick the differences in how both authors plot the various interconnections between their fictional depictions of industrial towns and the wider national and global landscapes of expansion. Gaskell pulls the connections in her novels to spread across the globe, with characters moving to and from and in communication with communities in diverse international locations. It is through this interaction between different

¹³ See Raymond Williams *The Country and the City*, Patrick Brantlinger *The Spirit of Reform: British Literature and Politics, 1832-1867*, Catherine Gallagher *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867*.

geographical areas that Gaskell depicts characters' uncertainties and excitements about how and where sources of identities and affiliation lie. Both *North and South* and *Mary Barton* pose questions regarding how a sense of home or a feeling of shared communal affiliation can be formed in periods of ever extending connections. By contrast, Dickens's *Hard Times* focuses in on the relationships within one industrial community. It is through expressing the feelings of isolation and dislocation in Coketown that Dickens depicts the impacts of setting out a community according to Adam Smith's principles of market expansion. In all three novels representations of market expansions work to highlight the uneven ways that people living and working in industrial communities were exposed to global networks of material, information, and communication connections.

Elizabeth Gaskell *Mary Barton* and *North and South*

The following readings of *Mary Barton* and *North and South* argue that Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial novels need to be understood in the context of globally expanding economic connections. Previous criticisms of the global scopes of Gaskell's fiction have largely focused on the emigration of Jem and Mary in the concluding chapters of *Mary Barton*. While the Canadian emigration is an important aspect of the novel, I assert that it is only one of a large number of global interactions that feature in Gaskell's works. By focusing on how Gaskell animates circulations and movements of people, commodities, and capital it is possible to plot the ways in which her fiction responds to a far broader geopolitical reality than has previously been assumed. There is not one clear way to map how Gaskell interlocks the different scalar categories of

identity and interaction. In both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* local, regional, national, and global ranges of scale are drawn together in ways that reveal the inherent unevenness of globalised trading and exchange.

In a recent study on contemporary theories of place the geographer Tim Cresswell notes that the concept of place needs to be “conceptualised in relation to mobility, processes and flow” (*Place* 62). He elaborates that “[t]he things we do (practice) create a place that is always being produced and reproduced in a mobile, rather than a static way” (*Place* 62).¹⁴ The idea of places being shaped by processes of mobility and immobility is at the fore of the readings of economic expansion in this chapter. I turn first to *Mary Barton* and how different narratives of movement are placed alongside one another, so that local, national and global journeys and mobilities become mixed with one another. The second reading addresses the movement of social groups and individuals in *North and South*, both free flowing and forced or restricted. Seen together these two novels highlight the complicated ways in which Gaskell imagined expanding marketplaces to draw different people into the forces and pressures of globalised modernity.

In the Preface to *Mary Barton* Gaskell clearly sets out her concerns regarding the lives of the local people living in Manchester. She explains that she feels “a deep sympathy with the care-worn men, who looked as if doomed to struggle through their lives in strange alternations between work and want” (3). Despite this early claim for a focus on locality, in *Mary Barton* the lives of the people of Manchester, and their struggle between work and want, are never divorced from the larger geopolitical reality of expanding marketplaces and

¹⁴ For more information on recent advances in mobility studies see Alison Blunt ‘Cultural Geographies of Migration: Mobility, Transnationality and Diaspora’.

extending economic and commercial connections.¹⁵ At points Gaskell explicitly discusses the links between the living and working conditions of Manchester's population and the fluctuation in foreign markets:

An order for coarse goods came in from a new foreign market. It was a large order, giving employment to all the mills engaged in that species of manufacture; but it was necessary to execute it speedily, and at as low prices as possible, as the masters had reason to believe that a duplicate order had been sent to one of the continental manufacturing towns, where there was no restriction on food, no taxes on building or machinery, and consequently where they dreaded that the goods could be made at a much lower price than they could afford to buy them for; and that, by so acting and charging, the rival manufactures would obtain undivided possession of the market. It was clearly their interest to buy cotton as cheaply, and to beat down wages as low as possible. And in the long run the interests of the workmen would have been thereby benefited (171).

This passage clearly sets out the ways in which British industrial communities are implicated in larger networks and systems of global trading. Here, Gaskell highlights the inequalities inherent in such systems: the driving down of workers' wages in order to compete with foreign markets. This is an explicit explanation of the workings of globalised marketplaces; however, the tensions between the globalised networks of free trade and capitalism and the daily lives of people on the streets of Manchester are also expressed in more nuanced ways throughout the novel. Whether it is characters walking between regional towns, or groups

¹⁵ For more readings on industrialisation and *Mary Barton* see Hilary M. Schor *Scheherezade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel*, Deidre D'Albertis 'Disassembling Fictions: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Social Text', Chris Vanden Bosch 'Mary Barton, Social Agency, and the Representation of Chartism', Gordon Bigelow *Famine, Fiction, and the Rise of Economics in Victorian Britain and Ireland*, Susan Zlotnick *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution*, and Jill L. Matus 'Mary Barton and North and South' from *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*.

emigrating across the globe, *Mary Barton* provides a complex meditation on the ways in which a sense of place and community was informed by expanding trade, information, and transport connections.

At first sight it may seem counterintuitive to commence a reading of globalised scales with a study of walking, but in *Mary Barton* characters walking between different locations present a critical meditation on capitalism's reshaping of the national and the global landscape. In her 2015 study *Mobility in the Victorian Novel* Charlotte Mathieson notes that walking "serve[s] to open up discursive reflections on the changing space of the nation" (19). Mathieson's study focuses on depictions of walking in rural or provincial narratives; this chapter suggests that walking serves a similar purpose in industrial fiction. In each instance of walking in *Mary Barton* the physical experience of having to use one's body to traverse distances is presented in a way that serves to highlight how the new modes and networks of transport and communication associated with modernity were only open to certain social groups. The different journeys by foot all take place either within or between industrial and urban cities; in other words, walking is not depicted as a return to a pre-industrial way of life or as an idyllic past time, but as a necessity and an attempt to negotiate the spatial distances between industrial centres.¹⁶ It is in this way that I argue that Gaskell employs these moments of walking as a way in which to cut across the narratives of time-space compression that characterise Adam Smith's, and his nineteenth-century followers', understandings of expanding capitalist connections.

¹⁶ For more information on walking and Victorian transport see chapter six of Philip Bagwell *The Transport Revolution from 1770* and Anne D. Wallace *Walking, Literature and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century*.

The two instances of walking that serve to most starkly highlight the inequalities of time-space compression occur when characters are forced to travel between urban cities. The first, told in retrospect, takes place when Job Leigh walks from Birmingham to Manchester with his orphaned grandchild:

‘Th’ reckoning left us very bare, and we thought we’d best walk home, for it was only sixty mile, they telled us, ad not stop again for nought, save victuals. So we left Brummagem (which as bleak a place as Manchester, without looking so like home), and walked a’ that day, carrying babby turn and turn about [...]

‘we were footsore and tired enough, and to my mind the babby were getting weaker and weaker, and it wrung my heart to hear its little wail! I’d ha’ given my right hand for one of yesterday’s hearty cries. We were wanting our breakfasts, and so were it too, our motherless babby!’ (107-108).

The second instance takes place later in the narrative when Will walks to Liverpool in order to secure work:

‘To-night. I shan’t see you again.’

‘To-night! and you go to Liverpool! Maybe you and father will go together. He’s going to Glasgow, by way of Liverpool.’

‘No! I’m walking; and I don’t think your father will be up to walking.’

‘Well! and why on earth are you walking? You can get the railway for three-and-sixpence.’

‘Ay but Mary! (thou mustn’t let out what I’m going to tell thee) I haven’t got three shillings, no, nor even a sixpence left, at least, not here. [...]

‘Nay, never fret over my walking a matter of thirty mile,’ added he, as he saw she looked grave and sorry. ‘It’s a fine clear night, and I shall set off betimes, and get in afore the Manx packet sails.’ (192).

In both the passages quoted above walking is the alternative for people who cannot afford to travel by railway or coach. They also, particularly in Job's narrative, depict the bodily toil of travelling by foot. For these walkers the distances between the industrial cities of Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, are not shrunken by the economic and commercial connections that they share with one another. The scenes of walking and the physical pain that these journeys can cause counteract the imagining offered by proponents of *The Wealth of Nations* that distances were shrinking as a result of capitalist expansion. The "space-time compression" (Harvey 24) that was supposed to characterise nineteenth-century capitalist modernity is absent from these narratives and instead Gaskell focuses on the spatial distances that remain between different urban communities.

Thinking about how walking functions in the Victorian novel more broadly, Charlotte Mathieson holds that "walking may [...] at first appear to be detached from the changing space of the modern, mobile nation", but that novels such as *Adam Bede*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Old Curiosity Shop* "counter this suggestion, and resituate walking as a vital and pertinent space within their wider narrative networks of mobility and nation" (19). There are a number of significant ways in which my reading of walking in industrial fiction differs from that offered in Mathieson's study. For Mathieson, walking and making journeys on foot can be understood as a site of formations of alternative or subversive communities. So, according to her reading of *The Old Curiosity Shop* "Dickens uses the condition of being off the network as a space that allows for a re-visioning of national community. Nell and her grandfather are 'networked out' of the modern nation, but their journey serves to reveal an alternative network of national community" (25). The scenes of Job and Will walking in *Mary Barton* serve a very different

end. They have not been 'networked' out of the modern nation, they are still very much a part of it, but what Gaskell's depiction of walking reveals is the way in which individuals can be caught up in, and even contribute to, the output of systems of industrial modernity yet are still not allowed full access to the connections that they create between communities.

In terms of the scale and geographical affect of the novel, these moments of journeying on foot present a crucial part of Gaskell's depiction of Manchester and how she positions it in relation to the rest of the nation and the world. Rather than stressing the increased links that Manchester shares with other communities on an international scale, these journeys on foot demonstrate that the physical distances between Manchester and other places still exist, despite the increased flow of commodities and capital. The power geometry of this part of the novel can be closely aligned to Massey's reading of contemporary understandings of place and mobility:

Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it (149).

It is a similar feeling of imprisonment that both Job and Will associate with the need to walk between cities; they are aware that other methods of transport exist, but they are not necessarily available to all people in Manchester's community. It is feelings of isolation and exclusion that characterise these journeys and that plot Manchester – both geographically and affectively – as separate from the networks of modernity that are taking place around them. The

notion that time and space are collapsing as a result of industrial modernity is revealed to be true only in part; for those people who are allowed access to the circulations of modernity places are seen to be increasingly close and interconnected to one another, to those like Will and John, however, the distances are as insurmountable as ever.

This reading is concerned with the manner in which Gaskell depicts different, and at times competing, processes as contributing to the geographical affect of Manchester. In contrast to the physical and emotional difficulties associated with journeys by foot, Gaskell also depicts the connections that railway journeys were opening up between Manchester and other communities. In *Mary Barton* Gaskell depicts the feelings of uncertainty and excitement that Mary experiences when she first travels by steam train. Much has been written on the ways in which railway networks changed the speed with which people could travel across the nation, what has received significantly less critical attention are the feelings associated with this movement and the subsequent feelings regarding spatial and communal identity. Admittedly, the actual train journey itself is passed over in the sentence, “And now they were in the tunnel! – And now they were in Liverpool!” (284); however, when read alongside the other depictions of the effects of scale and movements in *Mary Barton* the railway journey becomes of great importance to understandings of the geographical affects of the novel.

It is often stated that the extension of the railway network in the nineteenth century was accompanied by a destruction of, or at least a disintegration of, distinct localities. In *The Railway Journey: The Industrialisation of Time and Space in the 19th Century* Wolfgang Schivelbusch quotes an article that appeared in *Quarterly Review* in 1839. The journalist notes that, “[a]s

distances were thus annihilated [by railway travel], the surface of our country would, as it were, shrivel in size until it became not much bigger than one immense city” (qtd. in Schivelbusch 34). Expanding on this reading, Schivelbusch explains this perceived contraction of spatial distances in more detail:

As the space between points – the traditional travelling space – was destroyed, those points moved into each other’s immediate vicinity: one might say that they collided. They lost their old sense of local identity, formerly determined by the spaces between them. The isolation of localities, which was created by spatial distance, was the very essence of their identity, their self-assured and complacent individuality (38).

It is the annihilation of space and time that is frequently taken to characterise railway travel, which Schivelbusch associates with the development of railway networks, that fundamentally changes the spatial relationships between different locations and localities. Writing in *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space, and the Machine Ensemble* Matthew Beaumont and Michael Freeman consider the effects that this shrinking of spaces had on passengers. They note only that “[p]assengers stepped into it [the railway compartment] in one place and stepped out of it another, without much consciousness of having overcome distance, in all its frictional restrictions on movement. [...] Time and space were apparently annihilated by trains and motion (23-24).¹⁷ It is in *Mary Barton*,

¹⁷ For more readings of cultural depictions of Victorian railways see Jonathan Grossman *Charles Dickens’s Networks: Public Transport and the Novel*, Nicholas Daly *Literature, Technology, and Modernity 1860-2000*, Ralph Harrington ‘The Railway Journey and the Neurosis of Modernity’ from *Pathologies of Travel*, John Lucas ‘Discovering England: the View from the Train’, Matthew Beaumont ‘The Railways and Literature: Realism and the Phantasmagoric’ in Ian Kennedy and Julian Treuherz *The Railway: Art in the Age of Steam*, Ian Carter ‘The Lost Idea of a Train’: Looking for Britain’s Railway Novel’ and *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity*, and Jack Simmonds *The Victorian Railway*.

however, that Elizabeth Gaskell provides a more fully rounded depiction of the affective experience of travelling by railway.

Before the one sentence detailing the experience of railway travel – “And now they were in a tunnel! – and now they were in Liverpool!” (284) – Gaskell depicts the feelings that Mary has before boarding the train:

Common as railroads are now in all places as a means of transit, and especially in Manchester, Mary had never been on one before; and she felt bewildered by the hurry, the noise of people, and bells, and horns; the whiz and the scream of arriving trains.

The very journey itself seemed a matter of wonder. She had a back-seat and looked towards the factory-chimneys, and the cloud of smoke which hovers over Manchester, with a feeling akin to the ‘Heimweh’. She was losing sight of the familiar objects of her childhood for the first time; and unpleasant as these objects are to most, she yearned after them with some of the same sentiment which gives pathos to the thoughts of the emigrant (282-283).

The scalar effects of this passage draw together the regional, the national, and the global and fold them in on one another. Mary, never having been on a railway before, does not consider this journey in terms of how it brings her closer to other people in her nation, but in terms of feeling like an ‘emigrant’. The homesickness, and the feelings of pathos and yearning Mary experiences do not echo Victorian commentators that the nation was ‘shrinking in size’ as a result of rail travel. Instead, this paragraph highlights the feelings of specific regionality that Mary still feels towards Manchester and her feelings towards leaving the ‘familiar objects of her childhood’. The use of childhood scenes complicates the geographical affect of railway travel as it contrasts the industrialised speed of railway travel with the emotional attachment of past

childhood memories of landscapes. This passage inverses the notion of space-time compression that is frequently associated with the introduction of the railway travel. Mary is unlike the passengers that Michael Freeman evokes when he claims that Victorian railway travellers stepped into the train “in one place and out of it at another, without much consciousness of having overcome distance” (23).

Having considered the depictions of walking and railway travel in this novel, it becomes apparent that Elizabeth Gaskell’s portrayal of Manchester is not one that easily aligns itself to the understanding of processes of expansion producing a village-like network of trading relations. Instead, Gaskell highlights the manner in which these connections between different commercial and urban centres are only open to certain individuals: all of Manchester society are pulled into the processes of industrial modernity, but only some of them are allowed to profit from the connections produced by these processes. If the novel were to end in Manchester, it would be easy to read *Mary Barton* as a critique of the ways in which industrial market forces only benefited certain social groups; however, the concluding chapter confuses such an assumption. Following the trial for Carson’s murder and John Barton’s death, Jem and Mary emigrate to Canada. In contrast to the industrial settings that have characterised the majority of the novel, the description of Jem and Mary’s new home in Canada is decidedly rural in tone:

I see a long, low, wooden house, with room enough, and to spare. The old primeval trees are felled and gone for many a mile around; one alone remains to overshadow the gable-end of the cottage. There is a garden around the dwelling, and far beyond that stretches an orchard. The glory

of the Indian summer is over all, making the heart leap at the sight of its gorgeous beauty (392).

This part of the narrative has received the most attention in terms of global studies. The extent to which this closing section is a turn away from the industrial narrative that it follows has been much debated. Kate Flint notes that the emigration of Jem and Mary to Canada is “improbably idyllic” (10) and Coral Lansbury argues that, “the story ends awkwardly; there can be no future in Manchester for the young couple [...] Gaskell could see no resolution to the industrial conflict of the day, and the novel reflects this” (22). While Diana Archibald holds that, “[i]n *Mary Barton* the pastoral is effectively deployed to further both imperialism and the ideal of domesticity. For the reader must learn that ‘home’ is no longer possible in England” (34).¹⁸

I agree with these readings that there is a certain unresolved tension in the pastoral depiction of Canada and the idealised retreat it seems to provide for Jem and Mary and the hardship and labour associated with life in the industrial city that has featured earlier in the novel. However, when read alongside the earlier depictions of scale in the narrative a different reading comes to the fore. In each instance of circulation and movement included in this novel Gaskell presents a complication between understandings of scale and distance: Liverpool, a city that should be considered a neighbouring community prompts feelings associated with global travel, while Canada, a distant country, suggests feelings of homeliness. In such a manner *Mary Barton* both speaks to and problematises Adam Smith’s imagining of a global network of village

¹⁸ For historical studies on Victorian emigration see Dudley Baines *Emigration from Europe*, James Belich *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglophone World*, Martin Daunton *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. 3*, Robert D. Grant *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800-1860*, Alex Murdoch *British Emigration, 1603-1914*, and Janet C. Myers *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination*.

relations in *The Wealth of Nations*. Throughout the novel Gaskell draws together competing paradigms of social affiliation and loyalty that appear to both simultaneously trouble and reaffirm the world-view provided by proponents of industrial capitalist expansion. In thinking about the different ways in which Gaskell animates feelings towards processes of expansion it becomes apparent that a sense of place or feelings of communal affiliation were being drastically reconfigured in this period. The different moments of movement and circulation in *Mary Barton*, whether of people, commodities, or capital, depict the various ways in which industrial capitalism reshaped different peoples' experiences of regional, national, and global landscapes.

In a similar manner, *North and South* is a novel that interrogates the uneven patterns of mobility and movement as produced by global economic expansion. Despite its seemingly simple title referring only to the 'North' and the 'South', the geographical scope of the novel draws together a complicated and wide-reaching range of locations and settings; from the cotton fields of America, to the ships of the Spanish navy, to the rural villages of England, to the townhouses of London, through to the streets, factories, and dwellings of northern industrial towns. I argue that by presenting the effects that events in each of these areas had on one another *North and South* examines the problems and tensions of thinking in terms of clearly demarcated geographic areas in a period of increasingly globalised trading. The complex scalar and spatial metaphors that are employed throughout the novel complicate understandings of expansion as set out by Adam Smith. Instead of a smooth and seamlessly expanding set of economic connections, linking outwards from Britain to the rest of the world, what is presented in *North and South* is an uneven and unpredictable network of exchanges and interdependences.

Through examining moments of mobility and immobility in this novel, or moments of forced, restricted or free-flowing movement, this chapter argues that Gaskell's novel is a literary registration of the opportunities and pressures arising from extending economic connections.

In order to represent the ways in which different moments of mobility or immobility arise in industrial communities, Gaskell depicts an array of perspectival scales. How different characters understand and feel about the expanding world around them, and their places within it, are shaped according to the new and changing material connections and market forces. For some characters the extending material changes are linked to emotional movements, such as Frederick Hale's return from the Spanish navy, or Edith's emigration to Corfu, for other characters, such as the Irish workers, expanding market connections result in a sense of dislocation and isolation from any sense of a stable home. In a recent article on women's movements in *North and South* Wendy Parkins argues that in the novel "modernity is not represented simply in the factories and the class struggles of the industrial city of Milton but in the many different aspects of the cultural experience of modernity and the subject's responses to it that the novel explores" (508). She goes on to explain that "[i]t is through the juxtaposition of locations, and the sense of dislocatedness to which it gives rise, that the novel captures the cultural experience of modernity" (508). It is a similar reading that I take forward in this chapter. *North and South* asks integral questions of what it feels like to be part of an increasingly globally connected world: Where does one call home? How does a local community respond to the movement of workers and labour? Do bonds form between those living in the same geographic area or do they remain with those you leave behind? These questions are posed repeatedly over the course of the narrative

and, depending on whether they are applied to the Hale family, the Higgins family, or the Irish workers, produce widely different answers.

The concern with ideas of place, affiliation, and loyalty appear on the early pages of the novel when Margaret Hale is forced to move from the idyllic rural village of Helstone to the industrial northern town of Milton. The movement of the Hale family results from Mr Hale's religious doubts; however, it is through the contrasts that Gaskell draws between the family's different locations that the concerns regarding communal affiliations in periods of expanding trade are first established. In the early pages of the novel Margaret's feelings towards the village of Helstone are first described:

This life – at least these walks – realised all Margaret's anticipations. She took a pride in her forest. Its people were her people. She made hearty friends with them; learned and delighted in using their peculiar words; took up her freedom amongst them; nursed their babies; talked or read with slow distinctness to their old people; carried dainty messes to their sick; resolved before long to teach at the school, where her father went every day as to an appointed task, but she was continually tempted off to go and see some individual friend – man, woman, or child – in some cottage in the green shade of the forest. Her out of doors life was perfect [...]

'I like all people whose occupations have to do with land; I like soldiers and sailors, and the three learned professions, as they call them. I'm sure you don't want me to admire butchers and bakers, and candlestick makers, do you, mamma?' (16-18).

In this passage the ideas associated with rural living in the south of England are centred on an idealised notion of community: everyone knows one another and lives and works in close proximity to each other. Work is associated with the local land and does not partake in any wider networks of exchange. The

occupations of 'shop' people, trivialised by Margaret as 'butchers and bakers, and candlestick makers', are looked on with scorn rather than a sense of expanding mutually beneficial connections. As such, Gaskell's depiction of a rural village both mimics and troubles the idealised local relations expressed in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*. While the idea that rural communities are made up of bonds of loyalty and affiliation is present, the notion that this could be extended outside of the 'green shade of the forest' is not presented as a positive change. The privileging of people whose "occupations have to do with the local land" departs from ideas of expanding marketplaces to focus, instead, on sustaining and providing for local communities (18).

A very different depiction of communal relations, however, is depicted when Margaret and the Hale family move to Milton. Unlike the idealised rural relations of Helstone, Milton is presented as a community defined by its trade, commerce, and labour:

For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the darker for the contrast with the pale gray-blue of the wintery sky; for in Heston there had been the earliest signs of frost. Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke; perhaps, after all, more a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell. Quickly they were whirled over long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly built houses, all small and of brick. Here and there a great oblong many-windowed factory stood up, like a hen among her chickens, puffing out black 'unparliamentary' smoke, and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell rain (67-68).

The sensory language used to describe the air and atmosphere of Milton emphasises the industrial output of the town; the local weather appears to have

been replaced by the black 'unparliamentary' clouds of smoke and the smell of foliage or natural environments has disappeared completely. By describing the factories as being "like a hen among her chickens", Gaskell mirrors the rural pastoral imagery used earlier in the novel to describe Helston, but does so in a way that undercuts the idea of production and consumption. For, rather than a hen living on local land and producing eggs for a local community, the hen-like factory consumes cotton and its produce is traded across the nation and the globe. Margaret notes how the "great loaded luries" that "blocked up the not over-wide thoroughfares" were loaded with "cotton, either in the raw shape in bags, or in the woven shape in bales of calico" (68).

But it is not only the labour that takes place in Milton that is presented in stark contrast to Helstone, the people who populate the streets of the industrial town and the relations that they share with one another also differ greatly from the local relations in the rural community. When walking through the streets near the factory Margaret comments on the actions and appearances of the "factory people":

In the back streets around them there were many mills, out of which poured streams of men and women two or three times a day. [...] They came rushing along, with bold, fearless faces, and loud laughs and jests, particularly aimed at all those who appeared to be above them in rank or station. The tones of their unrestrained voices, and their carelessness of all common rules of street politeness, frightened Margaret a little at first (82).

The 'unrestrained' and 'careless' attitudes and behaviour of these people contrast the known local relations in Helstone. The throngs of people streaming through the streets in Milton are presented as an unknowable mass, any sense

of communal affiliation is depicted only in the laughs and jests between groups as they run through the streets. Although these early descriptions of both Helstone and Milton may at first appear to reinforce the binary between northern industrial towns and rural villages, over the course of the narrative Gaskell interweaves the movements of different individuals and social groups between various geographical locations in such a way that demonstrates the increasing interconnections between all areas.

Commenting on the geography of *North and South* Terence Wright notes that, “[t]he two elements in this title, it may be noted, are allowed to stand beside each other – North *and* South, not North *or* South. The point is important [...] we are not invited to make a final and absolute choice, but are given the opportunity to weigh both experiences, both sets of values and give both sets its due” (97). By focusing on scale and geographical affect in this novel, Wright’s reading can be expanded further; it is not simply that both sets are given their ‘due’, but that both sets are revealed to be part of a far wider and more complicated matrix of expanding economic and material connections than a simple dichotomy between the north and the south would allow. The narrative is structured around a constant series of movements as people traverse across the different geographical areas. Whether it is movements on an international scale across nations and continents, such as Frederick’s return from and then subsequent return to Spain, or Edith’s move to Corfu following her marriage, or on a national scale, such as Mr Bell’s journeys between Milton and Oxford, or even on a localised scale of Margaret’s walks through the streets of Milton, *North and South* troubles the notion that geographic areas exist independent of one another. For the most part, the journeys listed above are under taken for reasons of emotional or family importance. They are aided, however, by the

increase in material and communication connections spanning across the globe: Edith is able to write and telegraph to her family in England, Frederick is able to come and go from Milton by the railway service, and Margaret's walks around Milton are enabled by the industrial town layout.

But what of other movements and mobilities? It is my contention that Gaskell does not depict scales and scalar perspectives in such a way that reinforces a notion that expanding market and material connections could bring all areas together into a harmonious community of mutually beneficial trading. Instead, different perspectival scales function to problematise this notion. It is through fluctuations in the global marketplace that Gaskell presents narrative turns that highlight the forced or restricted movements of certain individuals or social groups. Through the movements, or lack of movement, of the Irish workers, the Milton factory workers, and the circulation of capital and commodities more generally, Gaskell positions the geographical affect of Milton as being directly implicated in global marketplace fluctuations. As such, this reading contrasts many recent understandings of the novel that have privileged a reading of the domestic or national, rather than a global scope of the work. In *Virtual Americas* Paul Giles argues that in *North and South* Gaskell attempts to occlude the transnational context of cotton manufacturing:

In [the] new world of transnational communication, capital, like labour, has become the subject to the fluctuations of international markets, but Gaskell, prizing a more traditional social stability and cohesion, extrapolates her organic version of England from the (partial) repression of transatlantic turbulence, thus exemplifying how the attempt to demarcate British culture at this time was uncomfortably shadowed and threatened by the spectre of the United States (38).

Instead, I argue that Gaskell positions the tensions and feelings of uncertainty in Milton in direct correlation to the global competition from American markets. Mr Thornton, the manufacturer of the mill in Milton, complains of competition from the American “yarns”: “‘Why’, said he, ‘the Americans are getting their yarns so into the general market, that our only chance is producing them at a lower rate. If we can’t, we may shut up shop at once, and hands and masters go alike on tramp’” (173). It is also explained that, “there had been no failures in Milton; but, from the immense speculations that had come to light in making a bad end in America [...] it was known that some Milton houses of business must suffer [...] severely” (508). Therefore, the expansion of market connections not only opens up new ways for people to move around and experience the world, it also threatens to rupture social relations and bring economic deprivation on certain social groups.

As Mr Thornton explains, the only way that British mills could compete with their American counterparts in the global marketplace was to lower the rate of wages. Jenny Uglow notes that in the 1840s “American banks had been giving credit to planters so that they could hold back cotton and demand high prices. Lancashire manufacturers retaliated by refusing to order and slowing production” (138). However, critics have often read this historical context as a backdrop, rather than an integral component, of *North and South*. Julia Sun-Joo Lee argues that “[f]or much of the novel [...] England’s entanglement (to use a textile metaphor) in the international textile trade is safely abstracted” (456). But, it is exactly the competition of the global marketplaces that I understand as constituting the geographical affect of this novel. The discontent of the workers at their reduction in wages in order to allow Milton to compete with America and the subsequent belief that “th’ masters keep th’ state o’ trade in their own hands”

(162), as Higgins puts it, is what first ruptures the sense of local communal feelings. The workers do not feel that they benefit from the profits of their labour, “[w]e help to make their profits, and we ought to help spend ‘em” (162), but their perspectival scales do not reveal to them the globalised marketplace to which they are now contributed and within whose forces they are implicated. They feel isolated and dislocated from both the produce of their labour and from other social groups, namely the mill owners, living in the same geographic locations as them. It is with the importation of the Irish workers, however, when questions of social affiliation and loyalty are more forcefully brought to the fore.

The ‘importation’ of the Irish workers to Milton is first mentioned following the strike of the local factory workers. When Margaret asks what has caused the upset Fanny Thornton replies,

‘Perhaps you know my brother has imported hands from Ireland, and it has irritated the Milton people excessively – as if he hadn’t a right to get labour where he could; and the stupid wretches here wouldn’t work for him; and now they’ve frightened these poor Irish starvelings so with their threats, that we daren’t let them out. You see them huddled in that top room of the mill, - and they’re to sleep there, to keep them safe from those brutes, who will neither work nor let them work. And mamma is seeing about their food, and John is speaking to them, for the women are crying to go back’ (209-210).

Later in the same chapter the Irish workers are described as “crying and shouting as if they were mad with fright” (219). The Irish workers are referred to on numerous occasions throughout the narrative as being ‘imported’ by Thornton to work in his mill, yet the descriptions of their response to this move stresses the vulnerability and fear of these workers and their families. They are

presented as an anonymous mass of people who are seemingly unable to speak for themselves and whose movements are controlled by other people. Even within Milton they are moved around by Mr Thornton so as to avoid confrontation with the local workers. It is the ways in which Gaskell depicts these movements of this group of people within the narrative of *North and South* that reveals her complicated mappings of economic expansion.

In the years leading up to and during the years of the Great Famine in Ireland, which started in 1845 and lasted until 1849, Victorian writings on the Irish population considered the position that they held in relation to Britain. Over a decade after the famine in 1860, Charles Kingsley wrote to his wife following a visit to Ireland and describes the “human chimpanzees” he saw in that “horrible country” (111). This blatant racism characterised many of the British responses to the Irish famine, but following the mass migration of many Irish workers to England a slightly more sympathetic approach to the plight of the Irish is featured in some examples of British writings. *North and South* is frequently cited as an example of this sympathetic stance. Amy E. Martin describes in her article ‘Victorian Ireland: Race and the Categories of the Human’ the responses that Irish immigrants in Britain prompted. She holds that “Victorian commentators and writers noted with pity and even horror the appalling living and working conditions of Irish immigrants in Britain”; however, “there is a surprising ideological continuity between those Victorian discourses that dehumanise the Irish and those that sought to recuperate them for humanity through the civilising mission” (53). I agree with Martin that Gaskell presents an ideologically ambiguous portrayal of the Irish workers in *North and South*, but what I want to focus on is the way in which their presence causes uncertainty

regarding where and to whom feelings of affiliation should be directed in a period of expanding market connections.

Before the strike of the local workers is called off, Nicholas Higgins explains to Mr Hale the reasons for the discontent among the Milton factory labourers:

The workmen's calculations were based (like too many of their masters') on false premises. They reckoned on their fellow-men as if they were possessed the calculable powers of machines, no more, no less; no allowance for human passions getting the better of reason, as in the case of Boucher and the rioters; and believing that the representations of their injuries would have same effect on strangers far away, as the injuries (fancied or real) had upon themselves. They were consequently surprised and indignant at the poor Irish, who had allowed themselves to be imported and brought over to take their places. This indignation was tempered, in some degree, by contempt for 'them Irishers', and by pleasure at the idea of the bungling way in which they would set to work, and perplex their new masters with their ignorance and stupidity, strange exaggerated stories of which were already spreading through the town (274-275).

In this passage Gaskell establishes the tensions that are associated with the movement of the Irish workers into the community of Milton. According to the local workers, the Irish community 'allowed' themselves to be moved around the country and have seemingly no sense of affiliation to their home in Ireland or their new position in Milton. In terms of the broader questions of this thesis, then, the narrative of the Irish workers in *North and South* highlights the complication of feelings of affiliation in periods of globalised trading. The workers in Milton do not feel an affinity with the Irish workers because they are in a similar economic or class position to themselves, but neither do they identify with them because

they are now in the same geographic location. It complicates the patterns of affiliation proposed by Adam Smith and his followers that increased trading would bring people from disparate locations together into mutually beneficial and harmonious social relations. Instead, what Gaskell presents are the pressures and tensions resulting from the forced 'importations' of peoples around the world and the feelings that this prompts both in the migrants and the communities receiving them.

Through the importation of the Irish workers Gaskell animates in a nuanced manner the way in which capitalist processes of expansion not only enable groups of people or individuals to travel outwards, such as Mary and Jem's migration in *Mary Barton*, but also force people to move against their will. The descriptions of the Irish people "crying and shouting as if they were mad with fright" and the "women [...] crying to go back" highlight the way in which Gaskell imagines these workers to be drawn into the networks of modernity against their will (219, 210). The presence of the Irish workers in *North and South* positions the narrative of the Lancashire mill town in the context of a far wider geographical affect of modernity than simply the physical boundaries of the town; they draw attention to new social formations and movements that people are forced to undergo as a result of market fluctuations.

So far in this reading of *North and South* I have addressed the various ways in which mobility and movement, both forced and free-flowing, are animated in the narrative as a response to expanding economic and market connections. In what remains, however, I turn to address how stasis is featured in the novel and the extent to which this is also a product of extending marketplaces. Bessy Higgins is a factory worker in Milton who has become ill due to the fluff from the textile mill getting into her lungs. Margaret befriends

Bessy and her family and visits them in their small house in Milton as Bessy's condition worsens. The Higgins are described as living in one of the "crowded narrow streets" in Milton, inside "there burnt a large fire in the grate, making the whole place feel like an oven"; the atmosphere was "oppressive" (117-118).

Lying in this room on her deathbed, Bessy explains to Margret the cause of her illness:

'I began to work in the carding-room [...] and the fluff got in my lungs and poisoned me [...] Little bits of fluff, as fly off fro' the cotton, when they're carding it, and fill the air till it looks all fine white dust. They say it winds round the lungs, and tightens them up. Anyhow, there's many a one as works in a carding-room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff' (120-121).

Bessy has worked in the factory all her life, she describes feeling that all she has been "born for is just to work my heart and my life away" (120). As a result of her factory work she has become physically incapable of moving, not only away from Milton, but even out of her bed. The work she undertakes in the factory implicates her in the global networks of capitalist trading; but the more work she undertakes, the more her own movement and mobility are taken away from her. Lying in a claustrophobic room in a narrow street in Milton, the narrative of Bessy Higgins's immobility sets out the way in which the processes of global marketplace are experienced on a local scale.

This sense of claustrophobia or entrapment is further heightened with Bessy's confession that she dreams of seeing the world spread out below her, a perspective that has never been allowed to her in her daily life:

'I felt smothered like down below. When I have gone for an out, I've always wanted to get up high and see far away, and take a full breath o' fullness in that air. I get smothered enough in Milton, and I think the sound yo' speak of among the trees, going on for ever and ever, would send me dazed; it's that made my head ache so in the mill (119).

Bessy's position in the narrative represents the physical immobility afforded to certain people in networks of industrial modernity, but it also demonstrates the affective impact this has on her life. Unlike the Irish workers who are only depicted as crying or yelling, Bessy articulates what it feels like to be physically trapped within an urban industrial environment, but to imagine the ability to see above the confines that trap her in her situation. Bessy may only know her local environment, but she is aware that there are other ways of living and being in the world. Her only way of moving outside of, or in this case above, her situation is to imaginatively place herself there; she is limited in her position of the world, but she is not limited in the scope of her imagination.

The geographical affect of *North and South* is shaped by different and competing scalar perspectives; by depicting the forced movement of the Irish workers, the restricted movement of Bessy Higgins, and the emotional movements of the Hale family and their relations, Gaskell highlights the unevenness of the results of economic expansion. While for some people horizons and connections appeared to be expanding and opening, for others the processes supporting these extension root them more firmly than ever in their existing social and geographical situation. In both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* the scalar perspectives associated with economic expansion are presented in a loaded and conflicted way; Gaskell highlights how the extension

of global market connections rely on certain social groups being left outside of the bigger geopolitical realities of globalised trading.

Charles Dickens *Hard Times*

In the opening chapters of *Hard Times* Charles Dickens depicts the industrial community of Coketown as “a town of machinery and tall chimneys” (27). Around these industrial buildings are “several large streets all very like one another” inhabited by people “to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow” (27-28). Catherine Gallagher notes that in this passage “Dickens’s narrator gives us a dry and schematic *premise* in the place of a human environment” (*The Body Economic* 62). I propose that Dickens presents the “dry and schematic *premise*” of Coketown in order to critique the abstracting effects of economic expansion. Through setting out the industrial community of *Hard Times* strictly in accordance with processes associated with the division of labour and the extension of material connections, Dickens critiques the ways that British industrial workers experienced the impacts of a globally expanding marketplace. However, unlike Adam Smith’s depiction of the processes of economic expansion as smoothly multiplying between communities in *The Wealth of Nations*, in *Hard Times* local feelings and bonds of loyalty and affiliation do not withstand the stretching of connections quite as seamlessly as envisioned by Smith. The geographical affect of *Hard Times* centres on the loaded presentation of scalar perspectives that are shaped by the inhabitants of Coketown feeling that they are constantly left outside the bigger geopolitical reality of globalised trading.

As such, this reading focuses on the ways in which Dickens presents the geographical affect of Coketown as being informed by a portrayal of an inward

feeling of scalar perspectives. By using the phrase ‘inward scalar perspectives’ I refer to Dickens’s portrayal of feelings of isolation, frustration, and discontent experienced by all characters living in Coketown. It is these feelings, I argue, that highlight how the extension of trading and market connections result in the increase of emotional and social distances between individuals living in the same geographic locality. The aim of this reading is to demonstrate the extent to which the repeated motif of characters expressing feelings of stagnation and entrapment in *Hard Times* can be understood in the context of British industrial expansion. It is important to note that the scales of perspective of this novel differ from many of the other narratives included in this thesis: *Hard Times* does not depict scale and geographical affect as being exclusively influenced by the movement of people or by the importation of foreign goods, instead it is informed by the feelings of restriction that different social groups and characters have towards their limited position in society.

It may appear to be an odd choice to use *Hard Times* as an example of an affective depiction of modernity, a novel that has long been dismissed in fields of literary criticisms as offering a simplified or overly melodramatic reading of industrial social relations.¹⁹ *Hard Times* has received much critical attention with regards to the depiction of nineteenth-century education and marriage, but it has been frequently overlooked in discussions of nineteenth-century global industrial expansion.²⁰ Moreover, those studies that have considered its depiction of industrialisation focus mainly on Dickens’s rendering of the deadening monotony of factory work.²¹ In *The Body Economic: Life, Death and*

¹⁹ See George Orwell’s essay on Dickens and the working class.

²⁰ John D. Baird, “‘Divorce and Matrimonial Causes’: An Aspect of *Hard Times*.”, Anne Humpherys ‘Louisa Gradgrind’s Secret: Marriage and Divorce in *Hard Times*’, and Elaine Ostrey “Social Wonders”: Fancy, Science, and Technology in Dickens’s Periodicals.

²¹ For readings of the factory in *Hard Times* see Patrick Brantlinger ‘Dickens and the Factories’, Geoffrey Carnall ‘Dickens, Mrs Gaskell, and the Preston Strike’, Philip Collins ‘Dickens and

Sensation in the Victorian Novel Catherine Gallagher argues that industrialism in this work is associated with a preoccupation with 'workfulness': "The prose doesn't just mime the monotony of the environment but it also announces that the novel is both product and producer of the severe workfulness it seems to criticize.[...] Workfulness is not just an attribute of people in this novel; it is a mode of representation and an angle of vision on the world in general" (63).

This reading considers how Dickens animates the 'workfulness' that Gallagher identifies as shaping perspectival scales and geographical affect particular to the urban industrial experience.

In order to understand the ways in which Dickens critiques abstracted understandings of social relations it is necessary to examine the description of the Coketown in 'The Key Note' in more detail.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes would have allowed it; but, as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next (27-28).

Industrialism', Suzanne Daly 'Spinning Cotton: Domestic and Industrial Novels', Patricia E. Johnson '*Hard Times*' and the Structure of Industrialism: The Novel as Factory', and Elizabeth Starr 'Manufacturing Novels: Charles Dickens on the Hearth in Coketown'.

In this passage Dickens clearly sets out the repetitive and monotonous routines of the workers of Coketown. The physical spaces of the town, the 'large streets all very like one another', mimic the people that inhabit them. The anonymity of the town and the people who live in it differ from almost every other depiction of locality included in this thesis; instead of presenting a specific regional landscape, Coketown is defined precisely by its non-distinct topographical layout. Unlike Gaskell's depiction of the busy, chaotic, and overpopulated streets of Manchester, Coketown is an orderly, controlled area. But, while the majority of previous criticism has read this passage as defining the novel as a whole, I argue that it provides a backdrop against which to counteract the eruptions of emotion that occur in different individuals and social groups.

In *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith invokes three neighbours - a 'tailor', a 'shoemaker', and a 'farmer' - to represent the possibility of harmonious and prosperous trading that could be produced by the division of labour. Smith explains, "[a]ll of them find it in their interest to employ their whole industry in a way which they have some advantage over their neighbours, and to purchase with a part of its produce, or what is the same thing, with the price of a part of it, whatever else they have occasion for" (400). As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Adam Smith uses this description of localised village trading as a model for marketplace expansions and couches his understanding of global interactions in the quotidian exchanges of known social relations. Before this description, however, Smith also cautions that the majority of capital exchanges and investments tend to be centred on the 'home' market:

Home is in this manner the centre, if I may say so, round which the capitals of the inhabitants of every country are continually circulating, and

towards which they are always tending, though by particular causes they may sometimes be driven off and repelled from it towards more distant employments (398).

In this way Smith highlights that in order for economic expansion to take place in a profitable way, it is necessary for investors and traders to have confidence in where they are placing their labour and their capital. Depicted in *Hard Times* is the fragmentation and abstraction that occurs when this confidence or this knowledge is not presented. 'The Key Note', quoted above, outlines the limited ways in which the people of Coketown experience the profits of their labour and their place within the global marketplace. The repetitive routines taking place on the streets and in the factory of Coketown do not enable the workers to see beyond the monotony of their daily lives. Because the produce of their labour is in a constant process of exportation and exchange, it is never even mentioned in the novel what is being manufactured in the factory, the workers and inhabitants of Coketown do not have a sense of where their labour or their capital is being invested.

Dickens does, however, signal the connections that the industrial production of Coketown shares on the global marketplace. In 'The Key Note' Dickens compares the mechanisms of the factory moving "monotonously up and down" to the "head of an elephant in melancholy madness" (27-28). The elephant looms over Coketown and all its inhabitants in a way that positions it as the backdrop to the global marketplace to which they contribute. The choice of an elephant, rather than a more nationally domestic animal, firmly places Coketown in the context of global economic connections. In a study on Victorian machines Tamara Ketabigan notes that, "when Dickens compares the steam engine to a melancholy mad elephant, he allies it with a creature that his

contemporaries viewed with a sense of wonder and awareness, however veiled, of constant possible danger” (58). I would add to this that it is a creature that his contemporaries would associate with colonial and economic expansion. The presence of the elephant pulls the scalar perspectives of *Hard Times* outwards from the localised social relations of northern Britain to the global processes and exchanges that make up marketplace trading. It is important to note, however, that the presence of the elephant in the scene of Coketown does not disrupt the sense of workfullness or productivity. The elephant mimics the workers in its ‘melancholy’ stance and blends into the descriptions of the lay out of the town.

It is the obtuse way that Dickens presents the globalised context of industrialisation as bearing over the daily routines of Coketown that separates his depiction of globalised trading from those of his contemporaries. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Elizabeth Gaskell shaped the different experiences of expanding economic connections through narratives of mobility and immobility. Gaskell also inserted sections that explicitly explained the effects of global competition on wages and prices in Britain. Dickens, by contrast, focused on the ways that the unevenness of economic expansion resulted in people not being aware of how their labour contributed to a wider marketplace. It is this inability to fully comprehend the expanding and changing world around them that contributes to the people of Coketown’s sense of dislocation and frustration. In the introduction to this thesis I refer to the studies of recent economic historians that propose a reading of nineteenth-century expansion that pays attention to both the global and the local simultaneously. For historians such as Bayly, Darwin, and Magee and Thompson, Victorian expansion needs to be understood as a global phenomenon that draws

countries across the world into systems of communication and interdependence. *Hard Times* highlights what it feels like to be part of a local community that is becoming increasingly lost within these broad networks. As such, it poses important questions regarding how scalar perspectives shaped by the expanding economic markets did not necessarily reveal the expansive connections to the people on whose labour they were dependent.

The tension in how to pay attention to both the broad sweeps of globalised capitalist trading and the everyday materials and occurrences of people's lives is explored in Fernand Braudel's 1979 three volume work *Civilisation and Capitalism 15th-18th Century*. Braudel's study aims to provide an all-encompassing world history of the development of the capitalist market economy, but a history that pays attention to the "expression of *material life* or *material civilisation*" (Braudel 23). It is both the global scope and the local concerns that make *Civilisation and Capitalism* such an important work for this present study. In volume one of the series, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, Braudel establishes how these two approaches to history, the global and the local, can be understood simultaneously:

Everyday life consists of the little things one hardly notices in time and space. The more we reduce the focus of vision, the more likely we are to find ourselves in the environment of material life: the broad sweep usually corresponds to History with a capital letter, to different trade routes, and the networks of national and urban economies. If we reduce the length of time observed, we either have the event or the everyday happening. The event is, or is taken to be, unique; the everyday happening is repeated, and the more often it is repeated the more likely it is to become a generality or a structure. It pervades society at all levels, and characterises ways of being and behaving which are perpetuated through endless changes (29).

According to Braudel, the habits and routines of everyday life are never divorced from the broader changes in global history. Or, to put it another way, “the ways people eat, dress, or lodge at different levels of that society, are never a matter of indifference. And these snapshots can also point out contrasts and disparities between one society and another which are not at all superficial” (29). It is such a scalar approach to the development of capitalism and market economies that I argue is present in *Hard Times*.

In the conclusion to volume one of *Civilization and Capitalism* Braudel outlines his reading of global processes and everyday material lives:

[...] on the top floor we have placed real capitalism, with its mighty networks, its operations which already seemed diabolical to common mortals. What has this sophisticated level to do with the humble lives at the foot of the ladder, the reader may ask. Everything perhaps, for they were drawn into its operations (562).

For Braudel’s study the focus falls on “material life” that, put simply, is “made up of people and things” (31). Braudel explains that this is a more complicated concept than it may appear at first sight. The relations between ‘people and things’ are effected by global population numbers, harvests, and the availability of staple food types. What is of interest to Braudel is the ways in which these global changes are registered in the everyday lives of people in diverse societies living across the globe. In *Civilisation and Capitalism* Braudel traces the ways in which different societies experienced these changes and how they subsequently effected the economic and material wealth of nations. I suggest that a similar way to thinking about the global material changes associated with

nineteenth-century modernity can be located in *Hard Times*. Braudel's study examines how changes in objects that characterise the fabric of everyday life have an effect on the ways in which people register and experience the world around them. In a similar manner to C. A. Bayly, writing three decades after Braudel, the presence of objects from other areas expand people's "horizons of desire" (Bayly 10). Depicted in *Hard Times* is how this expansion of horizons results in a fragmentation of localised communities.

It is this fragmentation that informs the portrayal of the geographical affect of Coketown. As demonstrated in 'The Key Note', the people of Coketown repeat their daily routines without any acknowledgment of the world around them; to them "every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next" (28). This abstraction, however, is present in other areas of life in Coketown outside of the routines of the factory workers. In Gradgrind's school the children are taught that a horse is a "[q]uadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive" (10). The concept of a horse is dissected and fragmented until it is presented to the pupils not as a whole creature, but as a conglomerate of discrete parts. A similar abstraction is mirrored in the relationships between the people of Coketown. From the title of the novel, *Hard Times*, to chapter titles such as 'No Way Out', 'Lower and Lower', and 'Down', the whole narrative is interspersed with references to feelings of difficulty, hardship, and suffocation. Of particular interest, however, is the way in which these feelings divide individuals living in Coketown. Early in the novel it is asked whether "[i]t is possible [...] that there may be any analogy between the case of the Coketown population and the case of the little Gradgrinds?" (30). I argue that the analogy between all characters living in Coketown, whether workers,

masters, or local school children, rests on a shared feeling of dissatisfaction with the place afforded to them in globalised modernity; however, what defines the geographical affect of Coketown is the division these shared feelings create between different individuals.

I start this reading with feelings of resentment as presented in the Gradgrind children, Louisa and Thomas. In the narrative structure of *Hard Times* Dickens introduces the feelings of the Gradgrind children prior to the routines and feelings of the workers and, as such, it makes sense to start a reading of the geographical affect with them. Before the 'Key Note' of the novel and the depiction of the routine of Coketown has even been struck in chapter five, Dickens has already introduced Louisa and Thomas Gradgrind and their states of emotional fatigue and discontent. Having been found by their father watching the circus, Louisa and Thomas are described as having

[...] an air of jaded sullenness in them both, and particularly the girl: yet, struggling through the dissatisfaction of her face, there was a light with nothing to rest upon, a fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow, which brightened its expression. Not with the brightness natural to cheerful youth, but with uncertain, eager, doubtful flashes, which had something painful in them, analogous to the changes on a blind face groping its way (19).

In a similar manner to Ketabigan's reading of the "destructive and deeply emotional potential for revolt" in the machinery of Coketown, Louisa's demeanor and imaginative state suggest a simmering potential for an emotional uprising (48). The "uncertain, eager, and doubtful flashes" that pass across her face hint at the unpredictable and irrational feelings that are 'starved [of] imagination', but could still burst forth at any moment. When attempting to articulate her feelings

to her father all Louisa can ascribe them to is a feeling of constant fatigue: “I was tired. I have been tired a long time [...] I don’t know of what – of everything I think” (20).

The threat of these feelings to burst forth in Louisa’s character runs throughout the narrative in which she is repeatedly depicted using angry and even violent imagery to express her emotions and her views on those around her. After Mr. Bounderby, her future husband, kisses her on the cheek she “stood on the same spot, rubbing the cheek he had kissed, with her handkerchief until it was burning red” (27). She exclaims to Tom that, “You may cut the piece out with your penknife if you like [...] I wouldn’t cry” (27). This impulsive and irrational display of discontent is presented alongside Louisa’s more meditative contemplations on the limits of her life. Echoing her complaint of being tired of everything, Louisa explains to her mother her habit of watching the fire in the hearth: “I was encouraged by nothing mother, but by looking at the red sparks dropping out of the fire, and whitening and dying. It made me think, after all, how short my life would be, and how little I could hope to do in it” (57). It is the dual feelings of pent-up energy ready to burst forth and a quiet resignation towards one’s position in society that link together Louisa and the other characters of Coketown.

Like his sister, Thomas Gradgrind also suffers from the predicament of desiring more than his position in society will allow to him. He complains that,

‘I am sick of my life, Loo, I hate it altogether, and I hate everybody except you. [...]

‘I wish I could collect all the Facts we hear so much about,’ said Tom, spitefully setting his teeth, ‘and all the Figures, and all the people

who found them out; and I wish I could put a thousand barrels of gunpowder under them, and blow them all up together!' (54-55).

The image of the explosive gunpowder highlights the unpredictable emotive state that Dickens ascribes to both Louisa and Thomas. Their daily routines of school lessons provide them with little opportunity to express these feelings. Thomas elaborates on this state claiming that, "I am a Donkey, that's what I am. I am as obstinate as one, I am more stupid than one, I get as much pleasure as one, and I should like to kick like one" (54). Dickens mixes together the human emotions and the brute instincts of animals to depict the unpredictable outbursts that threaten to break through the regularity of the daily routines of industrial life. It is often assumed in critiques of industrial life that it is the workers that are reduced to sub-human beings (this will be discussed in greater depths in the following paragraphs), but Dickens renders the middle-class children of Gradgrind just as susceptible to this reduction as the factory 'hands'.

But how do these suppressed feelings of anger and resentment relate to industrial processes of expansion? In order to assess this more fully it is necessary to consider the similarities of these feelings experienced by Louisa and Thomas Gradgrind and the workers of Coketown. As stated, Dickens directs the reader early in the novel to note the 'analogy' between the Gradgrind children and the local factory workers. The workers in Coketown express similar feelings of simmering resentment and anger as those voiced by Louisa and Thomas. In chapter four of book II of *Hard Times*, 'Men and Brothers', Dickens presents the shared feelings of discontent among the workers:

That every man felt that his condition to be, somehow or other, worse than it might be; that every man considered it incumbent on him to join

the rest, towards the making of it better; that every man felt his only hope to be in allying himself to the comrades by whom he was surrounded; and that in this belief, right or wrong (unhappily wrong then), the whole of the crowd were gravely, deeply, faithfully in earnest; must have been as plain to any one who chose to see what was there, as the bare beams of the roof, and the whitened brick walls (138).

The shared feelings between workers are those of resentment, anger, and discontent. It is telling that the need to unite with other workers in similar positions is considered 'incumbent'; it is a necessity rather than a desire to unite with fellow workers. The paradigms of social affiliation and loyalty here are a far cry from the communal, village-like relations of Adam Smith's imagining of global trading in *The Wealth of Nations*. In *Hard Times* even those people who work in the same geographic area, who are "equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work" do not share any feelings of community other than a shared desire to improve their own individual lots (28).

The community of Coketown, then, depicts what occurs when a town is laid out according to the doctrines of the division of labour and industrial productivity. The abstraction functions on two levels: first, people are unaware of the globalized marketplace to which they contribute, and, second, they become detached from any shared sense of feeling or affiliation with those who live in the same geographic area. Dickens demonstrates the manner in which extending market trading does not produce a sort of 'global village' as set out by Adam Smith, it only serves to rupture bonds between local communities and any sense of affiliation with the local environment. It is important to note, however, that Dickens does present an alternative form of community to the 'workfulness' of Coketown. Sleary's Circus operates in *Hard Times* as an

alternative form of community to contrast the layout, feelings, and geographical affect of Coketown. The circus is situated in the “neutral ground upon the outskirts of the town, which was neither town nor country, and yet was either spoiled” (15-16). As such, the circus community exists between both the country and the city and is in a constant state of movement. This is a different type of movement than that featured in any of the Condition of England narratives included in this chapter. Unlike the people of Coketown, whose labour and capital are involved in processes to support the constant circulation of capital and commodities, but who move very little themselves, the Circus people appear to live in an almost ‘pre-modern’ state outside of the forces of marketplace trading.

In terms of scalar perspectives, however, the movement of the performing group is still implicated and bound up within the networks of globalised modernity. The circus travels around the country, and although providing an alternative state of existence to the static position of the Coketown workers, it is still dependent on the income of economic activity of industrial towns. Yet, it is this focus on the close relationships between the members of the circus that serves to highlight the disintegration of communal feeling in the social relations in Coketown. Throughout the novel the members of the circus demonstrate the strongest bonds of affiliation and loyalty:

Yet there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving often as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the every-day virtues of any class of people in the world (40).

It is not affiliated with any sense of locality and its social bonds are preserved in a self-contained community or pre-existing relations. As such, the circus can be read as functioning in *Hard Times* as a critique of the industrial relations that make up the Coketown community. However, I argue that the circus does more than simply stand in contradistinction to the 'workfulness' of Coketown.

Although it may be represented in a more liminal fashion, Sleary's Circus stands as another form of globalised modernity in *Hard Times*. It offers displays of Mr E. W. B. Childers's "daring vaulting act as the Wild Huntsman of the North American Prairies" reflecting the broadening global expectations of Victorian circus-goers (33).²² So, the circus speaks precisely to uneven development in that it's an older form of socio-economic and cultural phenomenon that continues to play a role in urban modernity.

The only instance that Dickens presents an alternative to or a 'way out' of the social connections forged by expanding market trading is through the character of Stephen Blackpool. In the concluding chapters of *Hard Times*, following his expulsion from the town, Stephen Blackpool falls down a disused mineshaft and meditates on the disintegration of feelings of community in Coketown:

'I ha' fell into th' pit, my dear, as have cost wi'in the knowledge o' old fok now livin, hundreds and hundreds o' men's lives – fathers, sons, brothers, dear to thousands an' thousands, an' keeping 'em fro' want and hunger. I ha' fell into a pit that ha' been wi' th' Fire-damp crueller than battle. I ha' read on 't in the public petition, as onny one may read, fro' the men that works in puts, in which they ha' pray'n and pray'n the law makers for Christ's sake not to let their work be murder to 'em, but to spare 'em for

²² For more information on Indian riding acts in Victorian circuses see Paul Schlicke's notes to *Hard Times* on pp. 288-289.

th' wives and th' children that they loveas well as gentlefok loves theirs. When it were in work, it killed wi'out need' (263).

From his first introduction through to his melodramatic death in the mineshaft, Stephen's is the one voice that acknowledges the lack of social connections between the different people in Coketown. Writing on Stephen's place in *Hard Times* Thomas M. Lineham notes that, "central to our understanding of Blackpool's total rhetorical function in the novel is our awareness that he has achieved a state of sanctity which the system can neither appreciate nor comprehend" (32). I understand Stephen, however, less as a figure of holy 'sanctity' and more as an individual that does not allow himself to be consumed by the feelings of resentment that Dickens associates with industrialisation. He separates the material condition of his life, the routines that he is forced to apply to everyday in his factory work, with his feelings towards those around him. It is this that separates Stephen Blackpool from his fellow workers, for the other inhabitants of Coketown the daily routines of industrial life have destroyed their understandings of the lives of others in their community.

However, this portrayal of the feelings of the workers of Coketown does something more complicated than reiterating Thomas Carlyle's claim that "[m]en are grown mechanical in head and in heart" (37). It is not simply that they have become automatons that go to work each day without reflecting on their situation. As the numerous references to the emotions of anger and resentment simmering under the surface in different individuals across the society of Coketown demonstrates, Dickens's portrayal of the urban experience was far more complex than this. Instead, what *Hard Times* demonstrates is the ways in which the processes of industrial expansion that support Britain's role in the global market place result in a disintegration of feelings of locality. But this is not

a loss of locality in terms of people feeling like they are being subsumed into a much wider networked community, this is a loss of locality as each individual becomes engrossed within their own feelings of resentment. The scope of the novel may not include descriptions of the connections that Coketown shares with other communities across the world, but they are present in every character's response to their place within the industrial system.

To return to Braudel, in *Hard Times* Dickens presents the repeated every day happenings that make up the structures of everyday life, rather than the broad sweeps of History with a capital letter. Yet, Dickens also depicts the feelings that accompany these daily structures. The geographical affect of Coketown is not influenced by the presence of external influences, as in Gaskell's depiction of Manchester, but by the ways in which the broadening landscapes of modernity are not made visible to the people of Coketown. By depicting a concentrated depiction of one community experiencing the pressures and tensions of industrial modernity Dickens presents a scaled down version of what was taking place across the nation. The 'power geometry', as Massey terms it, of capitalist modernity in this novel highlights the restrictions it places not only on people's movements, but also the ways in which it draws them into paradigms of social loyalty and affiliation.

Chapter Two

Metropolitan Fiction: G. W. M. Reynolds *The Mysteries of London* and Charles Dickens *Little Dorrit*

Introduction

In the introduction to a 2010 special edition of *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 'Urban Mobility: New Maps of Victorian London', Katharina Boehm and Josephine McDonagh note that the "Victorian city has always served as the primary icon of nineteenth-century modernity" (194). Whether through the "conspicuous displays of power, wealth, and technological prowess", or the "dark underside of poverty, disease, and crime" the city, and more specifically London, has characterised what many people understand as one of the defining features of nineteenth-century modernity (194). Boehm and McDonagh argue that in response to recent critical works on space, place, and globalisation there has been a "significant shift in the direction of studies of the city" (196). It is this reading of the depiction of city spaces in nineteenth-century literature that enables an understanding of how London was implicated in processes of global expansion:

The city is newly conceptualized as a hub in wider networks of exchange and communication, and the focus oscillates between the local and its relationship with the transnational. There is a fresh attention to scale, as the minutia of everyday life reveal stories of much larger significance (196).

In the articles that follow Boehm and McDonagh's introduction cultural historians and literary critics examine the ways in which the materiality of daily life in the modern metropolis reveals the new social contexts of urban mobility and global connections.²³

This chapter aims to contribute to Boehm and McDonagh's work on local and global scales in Victorian metropolitan modernity. Focusing on G. W. M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* and Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, this chapter interrogates how the different aesthetic features and scalar perspectives take shape in these two narratives. In its focus on scale and geographical affect this chapter highlights the ways in which Reynolds and Dickens imagined different individuals and social groups living in the capital to register the city's expanding global connections. Both authors interrogate how feelings of communal identity and belonging were changing in London as the metropolis was becoming increasingly connected in and dependent on globalised networks of trade. Both *The Mysteries of London* and *Little Dorrit* link together the scalar categories of the local, regional, national, imperial, and global in ways that register the complexities of Victorian Londoners' engagements with the world around them.

London occupies a particular position in understandings of Victorian global expansion. Home to the financial City, the Bank of England, and Whitehall, London came to represent the epicentre of what the economic historians P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins refer to as 'gentlemanly capitalism'. The term 'gentlemanly capitalists' encompasses financiers and investors from the gentlemanly class who, following the decline of the aristocracy, rose in

²³ See articles James Grande 'Nineteenth-Century London in William Godwin's Diary', Alastair Owens, Nigel Jeffries, Karen Wehner, and Rupert Featherby 'Fragments of the Modern City: Material Culture and the Rhythms of Everyday Life in Victorian London', Ellen Ross 'Missionaries and Jews in Soho: 'Strangers within our Gates', and David L. Pike 'Afterimages of the Victorian City'.

economic and social prominence in the nineteenth century.²⁴ Cain and Hopkins explain that “the cosmopolitan economic policy which the City favoured [...] the interests of large sections of Britain’s export industries” and as such “represented enormous economic strength” (144-145). Responding to the “new demands created by a growing world economy and to the pressures of increased supply” the ‘gentlemanly capitalists’ of London controlled the flow of vast sums of capital from Britain outwards to the rest of the globe (Cain and Hopkins 167).

But there was more to London’s global connections than the financial districts of the City. In the first half of the nineteenth century the population of London exploded from 3 million to 4.5 million people (Agatholoeous 20). Although many of this number had moved from rural areas of Britain or had travelled over from Ireland, there were sufficient immigrants from other countries to make “London notably more international than any other part of England” (Agatholoeous *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* 20). Tanya Agatholoeous outlines that sizable immigrant populations arrived from Africa, the West Indies, China, Italy, Spain and Poland (21). London also shared numerous print, communication, and information links with other communities across the globe. In *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street* Mary L. Shannon examines the close geographic proximity shared between London’s newspaper editors and how “modern print technologies” allowed them to communicate with “far-flung” readers (23). Richard Menke has highlighted similar communication networks that spread out from the capital across the world, aided by the development of postal services and telegram technologies.

²⁴ For a more detailed reading of ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ see Cain and Hopkins *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* Chapter 4 and Cain and Hopkins ‘Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850-1945’.

As such, London represented not only an economic gateway to the rest of the globe, but also a social, cultural, and technological global point of focus.

Although both G. W. M. Reynolds and Charles Dickens were prolific documenters of London life, and in their narratives drew on many of the social and economic changes outlined above, they were renowned for their differing political stances. Reynolds was an outspoken Republican and in 1848 was elected to a member of the Chartist Party. Dickens, on the other hand, dismissed Reynolds as one of the “Bastards of the Mountain, draggled fringe on the Red Cap, Panders to the basest passions of the lowest natures” (qtd. in Humpherys and James 164). Despite their different political allegiances, however, both authors interrogate how feelings of communal identity and belonging were changing in London as the metropolis was becoming increasingly connected to and dependent on globalised networks of trade. While Dickens has received much critical attention regarding his portrayal of city life, Reynolds has only recently started gaining increased levels of interest in fields of Victorian studies.

The Mysteries of London is a complex multi-narrative work that was serialised for twelve years (1844-1856). It was a huge commercial success in its period both in Britain and across the colonies (Humpherys and James 6), but it is still often omitted from studies of nineteenth-century fiction. One reason for this is its expansive length. At an estimated six million words the sheer breadth of material often makes it an impractical source to study (James 101). But it is exactly this capaciousness that I believe creates its unique portrayal of London life and makes it integral for this thesis.²⁵ Reynolds’s depiction of geographical

²⁵ This study focuses on the first two volumes of *The Mysteries of London*. The reason for choosing the first two volumes is due to the fact that the narratives featured in these volumes present the first depictions of London as being part of a globally trading world. I argue these

affect highlights the complexities of the various scalar perspectives afforded to different individuals and social groups in living in London. By presenting an expansive cast of characters from across metropolitan society, Reynolds gives shape to the perspectival scales contributing to the often overwhelming and unnerving effects of metropolitan modernity. In contrast to *The Mysteries of London*, *Little Dorrit* has received much critical attention. When discussing transnational issues in the novel, the majority of past criticism has explored the topics of cosmopolitanism or European travel. This chapter will take a different approach by focusing on, what I read as, the genuinely global scope of the novel. I argue that Dickens's depictions of global systems of trade, commerce, and finance draw individuals and communities across London into uncertain patterns and structures of loyalty and affiliation. By paying attention to the various affective modes associated with these systems and the different ways in which characters respond to them, Dickens meditates on how people create their own space in a modern city, whilst also profiting from the new connections offered by free trade and commerce.

This chapter also aims to position both Reynolds's and Dickens's works within the context of optical cultures and displays exhibited in London in the nineteenth-century. My thesis's focus on literary depictions of scalar perspectives shares many similarities with studies on Victorian visual technologies and global exhibitions. Recent research on the popularity of panoramic and microscopic shows in London in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth-century have revealed the extent to which these exhibitions attempted to provide an ordering of the world and a consolidation of scalar

opening images of London are key to the depiction of the metropolis that follows in the rest of the series.

perspectives.²⁶ By focusing on different perspectives, the panoramic and the microscopic displays promised viewers a condensed way of observing the world around them. The first part of this chapter examines how this ordering was represented in these exhibitions and how it can then be used to read the scalar perspectives of Dickens and Reynolds's works. I argue that many cross overs exist between the various scales produced by panoramas and microscopes and the literary registration of perspectives in *The Mysteries of London* and *Little Dorrit*. My readings of these two narratives demonstrate, however, that in their portrayals of panoramic and microscopic perspectives both Dickens and Reynolds seek to highlight the disorienting effects of expanding market connections.

Scalar Perspectives, Optical Cultures, and the City

In her 2011 study *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World* Tanya Agatholoeous argues that in the Victorian period “as Britain’s capital and economic centre, London was, of course, a symbol of the nation and the ‘heart of the empire’” (xv). As stated in the introduction to this chapter, over the course of the nineteenth century London underwent dramatic financial, technological and communication developments that opened up its horizons to the world beyond the empire:

[...] with the new and fast-expanding networks of trade, finance, post, steamship, telegraph, print, and immigration that took shape over the course of the nineteenth century, it became unmistakably linked to the world beyond the nation as well. This unprecedented level of connectivity

²⁶ See studies by Alison Byerly, Erkki Huhtamo, and John Plunkett.

produced both dreams and nightmares, giving shape to a city literature as richly evocative as it was deeply equivocal (xv).

Agatholoceous argues that it is the manner in which these new and ‘fast-expanding networks’ both excited and unnerved the Victorians that inform mid-nineteenth-century literary depictions of the metropolis. In order to account for these tensions and uncertainties, Agatholoceous proposes a new reading of Victorian fiction set in the capital, one that accounts for London’s ability to symbolise “both the world’s compression and its new visibility qua world” (20): she terms this reading “cosmopolitan realism” (xvi). By examining the metropolitan works of authors from William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, and William Morris, through to Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf, *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* argues that there is a shared literary aesthetic between these writers that employs “shifts in perspective from *polis* to *cosmos* and back again, [... that] produced both a sense of detailed accumulative knowledge and an idea of a totality” (xvi). As such, Agatholoceous’s study brings to the fore the complicated perspectives that contributed to the mid-Victorian literary imagination of London; a city that was made up of discrete localities and social bonds, whilst also seeming to encompass the scope of the whole world in its global connections.

There are many points of convergence between Agatholoceous’s study and this thesis: most importantly, the exploration of the ways in which mid-nineteenth-century authors employed literary aesthetics associated with scale and perspective in order to represent experiences of globalised modernity. This current chapter uses the arguments featured in *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* to ask similar questions regarding other forms of metropolitan fiction and the aesthetics of geographical affect. While

Agatholoeous's study makes mention of the "dreams and nightmares" (xv) that characterise nineteenth-century city literature, the focus falls more heavily on the formal representational devices employed by authors to portray the scope of the metropolis. In this study I argue that both Dickens and Reynolds do something more complicated than mimic the scopes of popular panoramic displays. I argue that in order to articulate the complex scalar perspectives and geographical affect of the metropolis Dickens and Reynolds interlock different scalar perspectives – ranging from the microscopic outwards to global panoramas – to register the changing feelings of loyalty and affiliation in different London communities as result of processes of global expansion.

This section considers how the scalar perspectives depicted in different visual cultures and optical displays are often associated with a form of knowing and controlling the world. They place the viewer, usually the metropolitan visitor, in the centre of the display. The world is laid out around them so that they can observe it at their leisure. I suggest that an interesting interplay exists between the tightly controlled perspectives of panorama, world and microscopic exhibitions, and the complex array of scalar perspectives that this thesis identifies with fiction of the period. Both cultural forms, visual displays and literature, share a preoccupation with how the world was expanding and changing and how best to represent these changes. They differ, however, in how various scalar vantage points are presented alongside one another. In this section I address the panorama and the microscope in order to assess how these optical displays offered a totalising or a controlled view of the world. This will then help to assess the scalar perspectives of *The Mysteries of London* and *Little Dorrit* and the extent to which they concertina and interlock different

perspectival scales on top of one another so as to highlight the geographical affects of expanding marketplaces.

From the late decades of the eighteenth century the panorama became a popular part of London exhibition culture.²⁷ Agatholoeous explains how as “its popularity grew, the panorama increasingly reflected the urban context of its production, specialising in the representation of the British capital and other international cities” (88). The shows of London included Thomas Girtin’s *Eidometropolis* (1802), Henry Aston Barker’s *Panorama of London from the Albion Mills* (1792), and Thomas Hornor’s *Panorama of London* (1830). There were also numerous panoramas depicting cities from around the globe including Paris, Cairo, Vienna, Hong Kong, Rome, Moscow, and Delhi.²⁸ The panorama provided viewers with an opportunity to view a city in a bounded environment in, what Jonathan Crary calls, an “ambulatory ubiquity” (113). Alison Byerly explains that the panorama was “a defining artefact of Victorian culture, enacting many of the contradictions inherent in Victorian attitudes toward representation, toward travel as a means of ‘knowing’ other places, and toward the increasing complexity of the nineteenth-century world” (151). In amongst the confusion and uncertainty of life in the metropolis the panorama appeared to offer spectators an opportunity not only to learn about the world around them, but also to order it into manageable segments: panoramas “promised a synthesis and condensation of an entire landscape that would allow the viewer to comprehend and consume it” (Byerly 151). Bernard Comment explains that “[i]t [the panorama] gave individuals the happy feeling that the world was organised around and by them, yet this was a world from which they were

²⁷ See Richard Altick *The Shows of London* for more information on the development of exhibition culture in the late decades of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth century.

²⁸ For a more detailed list of global panoramas see Alison Byerly “A Prodigious Map Beneath His Feet’: Virtual Travel and the Panoramatic Perspective’ *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*.

separated and protected, for they were seeing it from a distance. A double dream came true – one of totality and possession” (19). Put simply, in a period of expanding economic, communication, and social connections and interactions, the panorama offered a digestible view of the world.

Panoramic exhibitions could take shape around either a circular panorama, providing a static 360-degree view of a landscape or horizon, or a moving panorama, a painted revolving screen that would often be displayed with an accompanying lecture. Erkki Huhtamo explains that “[c]ircular panoramas emphasized immersion into a place or event, while moving panoramas relied more on narration and combinations of different means of expression” (8). In the Publicity Handbill for the Colosseum of Regent’s Park the Panorama of London, a circular panorama depicted from the summit of St Paul’s Cathedral, it is declared that the panorama occupies “a Surface of 46,000 Square Feet, presenting such a PICTORAL HISTORY OF THE METROPOLIS AND ITS SUBURBS – Its Vastness, Wealth, Commerce, and Luxury – as no other can effect” (fig. 1.). As the poster goes on to explain, the opportunity to view the city from a previously largely inaccessible vantage point “excited the admiration from *thousands* from all parts of the world” (fig. 1). While circular panoramas, such as that on display at the Colosseum, offered immersion into one scene, moving panoramas would offer multiple scenes in one showing. The Publicity Handbill for Roberts’ Moving Panorama at Theatre Royal Covent Garden featured ten different scenes spanning from St. Petersburg to Constantinople (fig. 2). The ‘journey’ between these two cities comprises scenes including a “Mountain – Fortress and Soldiers Bivouacking’, a ‘Snowy Landscape’, ‘The Mountain of Bulgaria’, and ‘The Desert by Sunset’. Despite differing in both their construction and contents, these two examples of

popular mid-nineteenth-century panoramas highlight the visual and optical attempts to encompass the vast scales of the city and the world that was comprehensible to the viewer.

Writing on the popularity of these exhibitions and the effects they had on the Victorian imagination John Plunkett notes that, “there were significant points of convergence and crossover between nineteenth-century print media and the panoply of optical recreations” (1). Specifically, “[t]he success of the panorama exemplifies why nineteenth-century screen practice was such a fertile source of inspiration for writers. The panorama provided a new way of seeing the world, and on representing the self’s relationship to that world” (3). Charles Dickens depicts this point in his short story ‘Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller’ published in *Household Words* in 1850. In this narrative Mr Booley explains the different ways in which the panorama has allowed him to travel around the world without ever leaving London:

'It is very gratifying to me,' said he, 'to have seen so much at my time of life, and to have acquired a knowledge of the countries I have visited, which I could not have derived from books alone. When I was a boy, such travelling would have been impossible, as the gigantic-moving-panorama or diorama mode of conveyance, which I have principally adopted (all my modes of conveyance have been pictorial), had then not been attempted. [...] Some of the best results of actual travel are suggested by such means to those whose lot it 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' (79).

The idea that panoramas enabled “new worlds [to] open out to them [the viewer], beyond their little worlds” (79) is integral to understanding how the panorama

provided new scalar perspectives to the Victorians. The vast expanses offered by panoramas, whether the detailed depictions of a single image or the multiple views of a moving panorama, encourages the viewers to place themselves in the central position of observer and consumer.

Continuing the panorama's promise to provide the viewer with an opportunity to see countries or cities in new ways, James Wyld attempted to provide a view of the whole expanse of the globe in one viewing. Erected in Leicester Square and open for the decade between 1851 and 1862, James Wyld's Great Globe constructed a model of the world that stretched 188 feet in circumference, 60 feet in diameter and had a surface of 10,000 square feet (Lightman 24). Bernard Lightman explains the sight that would have greeted visitors' eyes as they entered the Globe:

In order to enter the Globe itself, visitors had to pass through an opening in the crust, coming through on the side of the Antarctic Ocean. Once inside the visitor stood on a small circular floor at the bottom of the huge sphere. The southernmost parts of Africa and America were the first pieces of land to be seen. [...] Their eyes would also be drawn to the colourful relief map covering the concave surface of the globe. The map was composed of 6,000 plaster casts. Volcanoes were represented as being in a state of eruption. Their peaks were painted a fiery red, and cotton wool, representing smoke, came out the top. Deserts were a light tawny colour, fertile districts a bright green, rivers in blue and seas in light green or blue (24).

As can be seen in figure 3, the Globe was constructed so that visitors could observe different areas of the world at a time, focusing on specific topographical details, but they were also able to take in the geographical distances and proximities between different countries and continents.

Most revealing about the aims of the Great Globe, however, is ‘Notes to Accompany Mr Wyld’s Model of the Earth’ that was published to accompany the exhibition. Wyld explains that although the British were “justly proud of the extent of our empire”, it seemed to him that “geographical knowledge is less cultivated amongst us than it should be” (i). In order to rectify this, Wyld suggests that it is necessary to “have the earth’s surface delineated on a large scale” (i). But, in reality, the Great Globe was a more complicated and ambitious project than simply fulfilling a desire to improve geographical knowledge. Wyld’s Globe was created with the clear incentive of placing London and its population firmly in the centre of the world. First, describing the importance of London to the British Empire and processes of global expansion Wyld notes that,

As the chief seat of a race to which the largest portion of the earth’s surface – perhaps, also, the largest portion of the earth’s population – belongs; as the link between the Old World and the New; and as the centre of the arts of peace, London would be rightly chosen as the scene for such an essay. [...] In London all the wanderers meet, and form part of a vast fluctuating population. Here we find the wearied hero from Hindoostan, the wealthy trader from China, the missionary from Polynesia, the hunter from the Caffé waste, and the antiquary from Thebes or Nineveh. All these keep up the heart-throb of enterprise and speed their youthful brethren to new fields of labour and success (xii-xiii).

Supporting Agatholoeous’s claim that as “Britain’s capital and economic centre, London was, of course, a symbol of the nation and the ‘heart of the empire’” (xv), Wyld’s reasoning for exhibiting his Globe in London position the capital firmly at the centre of the Empire. But this is not only an imperial reading of the metropolis, he also draws on the networks of trade, commerce, and missionaries that, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, John Darwin

has understood as comprising the British Modern World System.²⁹ It is this positioning of London as the centre of the modern world that Wyld intended to present to his visitors. Describing the different reasons for people visiting the Great Globe Wyld explains that,

What one examines for amusement, another investigates for business; while the child is gathering up elements of the past, the politician is diving into the future, and the man of business seeking how he may profit by the present. The rapid extension of steam enterprise is here shown on a connected scale. [...] Looking through the dim distance, and measuring the small populations which we claim as colonies, we often adopt erroneous views and fail to appreciate the vastness of those regions which now invite our exertions (xv-xvi).

The reference to the new connections between countries afforded by steam travel and the shift these prompted in scalar perspectives demonstrates Wyld's concern with representing the interconnections across the globe. But, as the last sentence in the above quotation signals, this is an interconnectedness that always places Britain at the centre. The Globe provides an explanation and a simplification of Britain's role in the extension of globalised economic marketplaces.

It was not, however, only in displays of panoramic magnitude that the Victorian's engaged with new scalar perspectives of observing the world around them; the middle decades of the nineteenth-century also witnessed an increase in microscopic displays. In 1841 both the Adelaide Gallery and the Royal Polytechnic Institution featured oxyhydrogen microscope displays. These microscopes were adapted magic lantern boxes that allowed the projectionist to

²⁹ See the introduction of this thesis for a discussion of John Darwin's *The Empire Project*.

cast projected images onto screens of hugely magnified natural objects. In an essay on nineteenth-century scientific displays Iwan Rhys Morus explains that “visitors to oxyhydrogen microscope shows marvelled – and presumably felt more than a little nauseated – at seeing the countless tiny creatures that inhabited a drop of Thames water magnified a thrilling ‘3,000,000’ times” (347). Morus goes on to note that “[t]hese displays were exhibitionist set pieces carefully designed to make the seemingly intangible appear spectacularly and tangibly visible” (348). By focusing on a specific example of natural life, here a drop of the Thames water but examples also included a section of human hair or a fly’s wing, these displays revealed to the Victorian spectators the hidden layers of the world around them.


Although it may appear incongruous to consider microscopic displays that focus on tiny details alongside the broad sweeps of the world covered by panoramas and global exhibitions, they both share a concern for representing the new scalar perspectives afforded to the Victorians. Isobel Armstrong explains in *Victorian Glassworlds* the disorientating effects that microscopes had on human relations with the natural world: “It was no longer possible to conceive of the smallest small thing. According to the arbitrary powers of magnification the worm or the fly grows big, and ‘little things go lessening’ [...] Scale retreats, the minuscule and gigantesque become incomparable” (318). She explains that “[t]he microscope gave us *access* to a *hidden* world, it gave *access* to a *distinct* world. It allowed a hallucinatory, dreamlike visuality to coexist with precision. Wonder and hyper-real immediacy, enchantment and the empirical belonged together” (319). But this idea of a ‘*hidden* world’ was dependent on only presenting one section, or one piece, of a whole. The isolation of certain parts from the whole provides, then, an abstracted way of

seeing the world. It may have provided a 'hyper-real immediacy' to the viewer, but it was an immediacy that jumped from one perspective to another.

It is the ease with which these optical and visual exhibitions leaped from different scalar perspectives that provided a controlled way of seeing the world. For both the wide scopes of the panorama and the intricate details of the microscopes, shifts in perspective are controlled and presented to the viewers in a way that enabled them to make sense of the world around them. They did not overwhelm the viewers with different scalar perspectives at the same time. But, in offering specific points of view these displays and exhibitions limited the ways in which the viewers could interact with the different perspectival scales. The panoramas and Wyld's Great Globe may have offered a broad scope, but this was dependent on a freezing of the temporal. By contrast, the microscopic views, as stated, only present a tiny proportion of the whole object. It is in fiction that the intricacies, nuances, and complications between different scalar perspectives are brought to the fore.

Setting up the different ways in which these optical cultures deployed scalar perspectives to provide an ordering of the world provides a framework for my readings of scale and geographical affect in *The Mysteries of London* and *Little Dorrit*. Rather than providing an ordering of the world, the microscopic and the panoramic scales are evoked in both Reynolds and Dickens's works in ways that highlight the multiple and complicated connections between London and the rest of the world. Moreover, they provide both authors with a way of depicting multiple 'worlds' existing within London. Different scalar perspectives enable the writers to focus in on specific groups or individuals whilst also spanning outwards to consider the city, or even the world, as a whole. These

scalar perspectives are deployed so as to highlight the complexities and complications, rather than offering a controlled depiction of London.



COLOSSEUM,
REGENT'S PARK.—OPEN FROM TEN TILL DUSK.

Without Extra Charge!
PHILLIPS'S NEW PICTURE OF THE ANGLO-CHINESE COLLEGE AND MISSIONARY STATION AT MALACCA,
And a Selection of Music between the hours of 2 and 4, on Myers's Grand **DOUBLE ECLOPHON**,
by the celebrated Mr. **WARNE**, Organist to the Temple.

THAT STUPENDOUS AND UNEQUALLED WORK OF ART, THE

PANORAMA OF LONDON,

Is now open in all its PRISTINE BEAUTY, occupying a Surface of 46,000 Square Feet, presenting such a PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE METROPOLIS AND ITS SUBURBS—its Myriads of Public and Private Buildings—its Vastness, Wealth, Commerce, and Luxury—as no other means can effect; and upon the completion of which, the Artist might well have exclaimed with HORACE, "*Ergo momentum are perennius.*" It has excited the admiration of thousands from all parts of the world, and must continue to be the leading Colossal Feature of the Morning Exhibitions.

THE ORIGINAL BALL AND CROSS FROM ST. PAUL'S.
A VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE BUILDING.
THE SALOON OF ARTS

Has been re-decorated, and contains the MOSES and LORENZO DE MEDICIS of Michael Angelo, the TOWNLEY VENUS, the unrivalled Works of Phidias, Canova, and Flaxman; together with the most choice specimens of modern art in SCULPTURE.

ADMISSION ONE SHILLING.

THE CONSERVATORIES,

Which at this Season are particularly beautiful, are filled with a rare and expensive COLLECTION OF FOREIGN and TROPICAL PLANTS, and are calculated to delight not merely the Botanist and Florist, but every class of Visitors. They extend 300 feet, and are divided into six compartments, each having a different temperature, and presenting different descriptions of Plants. The Stove Plants are at this time in a fine healthy state.

ROMANTIC MARINE GROTTO OF CAVERN,

Apparently formed in the very bowels of the earth, with walls and floorings of rocks—its roof encrusted with Sialacites, and giving from each side a Magnificent and entirely New View of

THE NEEDLES, OFF THE ISLE OF WIGHT,

In addition to which may be seen

Animals naturally destructive to each other living in perfect harmony.

From this part the Visitor proceeds through a Subterranean Passage to

THE SWISS COTTAGE,

In front of which are massive ROCKS, WATERFALLS, LAKE, and all the characteristic Features that distinguish the SCENERY OF SWITZERLAND. To these objects of attraction may be added the MOUNTAIN and LAKE SCENERY recently completed. NAPOLEON'S FAVORITE GARDEN SEAT, from Longwood, in the Island of St. Helena, with the Arm-Rest, as made by himself; also the WILLOW from the parent stock, which overshadows the Grave of that distinguished personage.

MR. PHILLIPS'S NEW PICTURE OF THE ANGLO-CHINESE COLLEGE, AND MISSIONARY STATION AT MALACCA.

ADMISSION ONE SHILLING.

TAYLOR'S ELECTRO-MAGNETIC ENGINE,
Turning Articles in Wood, Ivory, and Metal; and
A CHOICE COLLECTION OF NAVAL AND OTHER MODELS.

ADMISSION ONE SHILLING.

SPLendid EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS!
THE CUMBERLAND GALLERY,
Containing fine Specimens of the Ancient and Modern Masters.

ADMISSION ONE SHILLING.

GALLERY OBSCURA, STEPHENSON.

The Proprietor of the Colosseum begs to state that good SPECIMENS and MODELS in every Branch of Science and Art will be received at the Colosseum, and every effort made to forward the views of the Depositors.

J. WATERHOUSE, Printer, 5, Catherine Street, Strand.

Figure 1. Handbill for Panorama of London at the Colosseum. This handbill is part of the Bill Douglas Collection at the University of Exeter. Image retrieved from Victorian Popular Culture Online.

Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden.

The **NEW SPLENDID PANTOMIME**
attracts crowds of laughing and delighted spectators, and
WILL BE REPEATED EVERY EVENING.

ROBERTS'
MOVING

Panorama:

In Ten Compartments.

ST. PETERSBURGH,

During a **FESTIVAL,**

Including Views of the following Public Buildings:
The Marble Palace—Hermitage—Theatre—and Picture Gallery.
Winter Palace—and the Admiralty.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>2. Mountain, — Fortress,
and Soldiers Bivouacing.</p> <p>3. Snowy Landscape.</p> <p>4. The Mountains of Bulgaria,
and March of the Russian
Troops.</p> <p>5. Ambuscade—and Grand
BATTLE.</p> | <p>6. The Desert by Sunset—and
Halt of a Caravan.</p> <p>7. Approach to Constantinople
by the Dardanelles.</p> <p>8. Turkish Man of War becalmed.</p> <p>9. Splendid Gondola of the
Grand Seignor—and Castle
of the Seven Towers.</p> |
|---|---|

CONSTANTINOPLE,

Comprehending the Magnificent Mosque of St. Sophia—Mosque of the Sultan
ACHMED—The Seraglio, or Palace of the Grand Seignor—and Suburbs of
Galata in the distance.

NOT AN ORDER WILL BE ADMITTED during the run of
this pre-eminently successful Pantomime.

Tomorrow. Shakspeare's Tragedy of **OTHELLO.**
Othello, Mr. KEAN, Iago, Mr. WARDE, Cassio, Mr. C. KEMBLE,
Desdemona, Miss JARMAN, Emilia, Miss LACY.

On Friday, (78th time) the Comedy of **CHARLES THE SECOND.**
King Charles, Mr. C. KEMBLE, Lord Rochester, Mr. WRENCH, Capt. Copp, Mr. FAWCETT,
Mary Copp, Miss GOWARD.
With (by particular desire) the Operatic Romance of **THE BOTTLE IMP.**
Albert Mr. WOOD, Willibald Mr. KEELEY, Nicola Mr. DIDDEAR, The Bottle Imp Mr. O. SMITH,
Marcella Miss CAWSE, Philippa Miss H. CAWSE.

On Saturday will be repeated Sheridan's Comic Opera of **THE DUENNA,**
which continues to attract crowded and delighted audiences.
Carlos, Madame VESTRIS,
Don Jerome, Mr. BLANCHARD, Antonio, Mr. BIANCHI TAYLOR,
Ferdinand, Mr. WOOD, Isaac, Mr. FAWCETT, Father Paul, Mr. BARTLEY, Lay-Brother, Mr. MEADOWS,
Louisa, Miss CAWSE, The Duenna, Mrs. DAVENPORT.
Clara (4th time) Miss BYFELD.

On Monday will be revived Shakspeare's Tragedy of **RICHARD THE SECOND.**
Richard, Mr. KEAN,
Bolinbroke, Mr. WARDE,
Queen, Miss LACY.

On Tuesday, (11th time) **THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.**
With, (45th time) **THE INVINCIBLES.**
In both which Pieces Madame VESTRIS will perform.

A NEW OPERA, in Three Acts,
The Music by LIVERATI and A. LEE,
With new Scenes, Dresses and Decorations, will be immediately produced.

Printed by W. Reynolds, 9, Denmark-Court Strand.

Figure 2. Handbill for Robert's Moving Panorama at Covent Garden. This handbill is part of the Bill Douglas Collection at the University of Exeter. Image retrieved from Victorian Popular Culture Online.

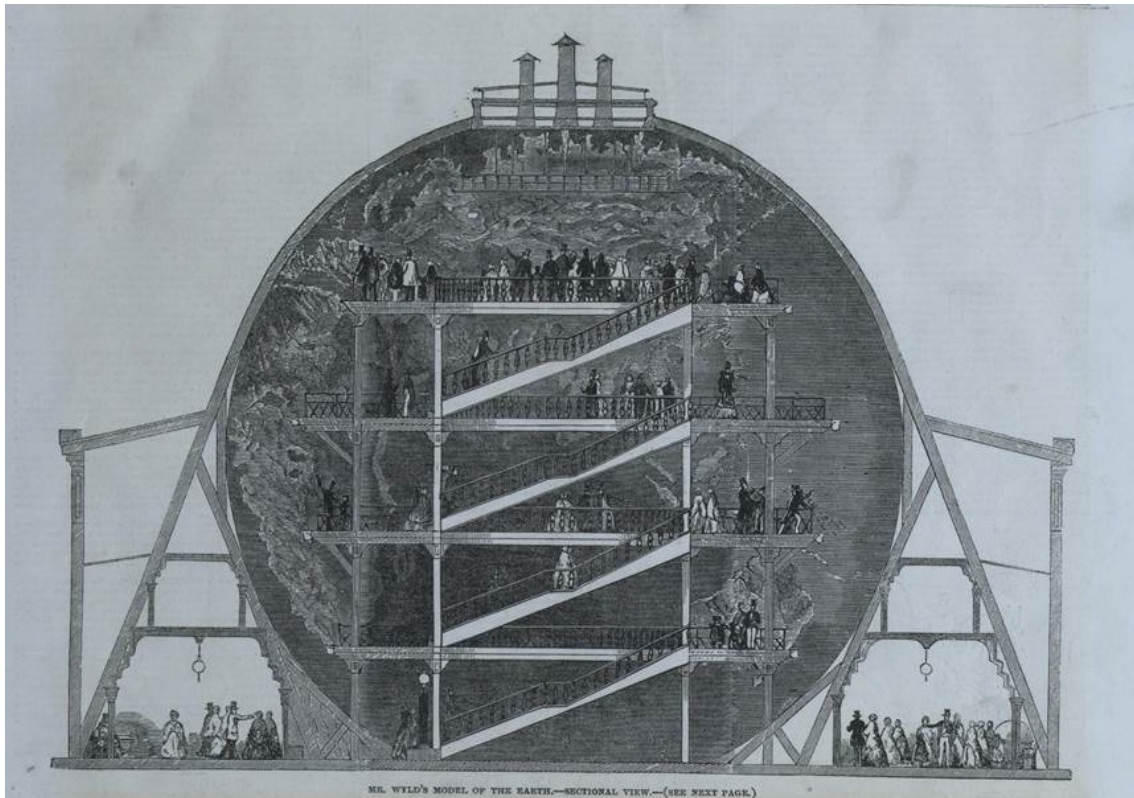


Figure 3 James Wyld's Great Globe. 'Mr Wyld's Model of the Earth' Image from *Illustrated London News*. London. June 7th 1851. Pg. 511. Image received from University of Exeter Open Research Access.

G. W. M. Reynolds *The Mysteries of London*

In 1844 G. W. M. Reynolds published the first installment of what would become his twelve year-long serialisation *The Mysteries of London* (later renamed *The Mysteries of the Court of London*).³⁰ Described as the “longest British work of fiction in the nineteenth century”, over the course of its estimated six million words *The Mysteries of London* covered all of London life, from the bedrooms of Buckingham Palace, through to the overcrowded slums of the East End (James 101). It is comprehensive and capacious in its inclusion of Londoners, from monarchs to murderers, and from financiers to East End seamstresses, so that it seems that no aspect of London community was omitted from Reynolds’s plots. Despite its focus on the complicated narratives of London, however, the opening lines of the serialisation take the reader far away from the streets of the metropolis and instead situate them as a panoramic observer of the entire globe, offering them a view of the broad sweeps of civilisation and commerce:

Civilisation has wrought out refinement in every art and every science, and whence it has diffused its benefits over the earth. It has taught commerce to plough the waves of every sea with the adventurous keel; it has enabled handfuls of disciplined warriors to subdue the mighty armaments of oriental princes; and its daring guns have planted its banners amidst the eternal ice of the poles. It has cut down the primitive forests of America; carried trade into the interior of Africa; annihilated time and distance by the aid of steam; and now contemplates how to force a passage through Suez and Panama (3).

³⁰ Reynolds had a disagreement with his original publisher George Vickers and in 1848 moved publishing houses. Confusingly, Vickers continued to publish a series called *The Mysteries of London* after Reynolds’s departure. For more information on this change of publishers see Anne Humpherys ‘An Introduction to G. W. M. Reynolds’s ‘Encyclopaedic Tales’” *G. W. M. Reynolds: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Politics, and the Press*.

Instantly the scale of the serialisation is exploded to cover the world as a whole, and in doing so places London firmly within a world-wide move towards 'civilisation'. In the following reading of *The Mysteries of London* I argue that this opening passage establishes the expansive sense of global scale that is continued throughout the serialisation. This reading suggests that this scale is used to present London as part of a wide-reaching network of commerce and exchange that, through various plots and narratives, implicates all those who live in the metropolis. Such an approach to *The Mysteries of London* will depart from recent criticisms of the work that have focused on its commercial success and Reynolds's supposed habit of pandering to popular tastes.³¹ Instead, this chapter asserts that Reynolds provides both a critique and a meditation on how economic expansion shaped the ways that various groups and individuals living in the city experienced the world around them.

Underpinning the introductory description of modernity in *The Mysteries of London* are the processes that this thesis associates with both nineteenth-century globalisation and economic expansion: free trade, capitalism, commercial exchange, and imperialism. In a reworking of Adam Smith's imagining of a globally trading world village in *The Wealth of Nations* Reynolds brings to the fore the violence and destruction that are inherent in these processes. The distances between trading communities are not traversed effortlessly, but with war, guns, and environmental ruin. It is the focus on the complicated, and not always mutually beneficial, networks and connections

³¹ For much of the twentieth century Reynolds was mentioned only in passing in studies on nineteenth-century popular culture. See Margaret Dalziel's *Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago* (1957), Louis James *Fiction for the Working Man* (1963), and Richard Altick *The English Common Reader* (1957). The first collected edition dedicated solely to Reynolds and his works was published in 2008 *G. W. M. Reynolds: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Politics, and the Press* ed. Anne Humphries and Louis James.

fostered by modern trading and commerce that I read as providing the underlying structure to *The Mysteries of London*. This thesis sets out to argue that Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* is a crucial work in understanding the ways in which the metropolis was both undergoing seismic social and cultural changes, whilst also shaping similar changes taking place across the globe. As such, this chapter will provide another reading to the growing field of scholarship on Reynolds and his work which, thus far, focus largely on his popularity and his often sensational or melodramatic aesthetics.

Since his first publications it has often been stated that G. W. M. Reynolds was a commercially savvy writer. In 1853 John Parker claimed that Reynolds's popularity resulted from his ability to depict "the sensual and the horrible" which would "fearfully stimulate the animal propensities of the young, ardent and the sensual" (qtd. in Neuburg 161). More recently, Ian Haywood has noted that "Reynolds radicalised mass reading literary production" (171). Similarly, Sally Ledger argues that while both Dickens and Reynolds "embraced radical as well as popular culture" (143), Reynolds's motivations were "primarily commercial" (143). However, this commercial awareness extends beyond Reynolds's sales figures as it influences his depictions of social relations and connections between communities. In 'Reynolds's *Mysteries* and Popular Culture' Juliet John notes that in Reynolds's fiction the whole of London is depicted as a market for literary and cultural exchange: "The city becomes 'a mart for the sale of literary wares' and a 'mart of miscellaneous trades'.

Economic forces shape cultural appetites and vice versa. Power resides in market forces generated in the context of a burgeoning democracy [...]" (167). In *The Mysteries of London* the connections underpinning interactions between the different characters and disparate social groups are made up almost entirely

of commercial or financial bonds. The mysteries of London are frequently revealed to be, or at least related to, the new anonymous forms of exchange associated with financial capitalism and speculative enterprises. Numerous plot lines are structured around the exchange of banknotes, financial blackmail, and secret inheritances that extend across the social spectrum of London. Whether it is the “butchers, tailors, linen-drapers, tallow manufacturers, and toy-vendors” (157) selling their wares on the streets of London, the Resurrection Man selling off body parts, or the financial gamblers of the west end saloons, London is made up of a constant series of commercial exchanges.

It is the contention of this chapter, however, that these economic connections between different characters and social groups are informed by the complex scales and geographical affect that Reynolds employs to depict metropolitan life. I argue that these economic and commercial links do more than simply present a complicated portrayal of the unexpected ways in which London throws different people together into the same community; they enable Reynolds to demonstrate the different patterns of social affiliation and loyalty in a city characterised by expansion, both on a national and a global level. In her 2015 study on London literary and periodical culture Mary L. Shannon explains what she considers to be the inherent tension in Reynolds’s portrayal of life in the capital in *The Mysteries of London*:

In *Mysteries*, Reynolds is caught between two conflicting and competing positions. On the one hand, he longs for a sense of unity in his depiction of London, so that he can establish some sort of coherent position from which to move his readers to radical political action. [...] Yet at the same time, Reynolds wants the freedom to lack a centre, and a multiplicity of plot, to allow for the proliferation of mystery, and therefore the proliferation of narrative (100).

Later in the same reading, Shannon surmises that “despite the connections which Reynolds draws between his myriad Londoners, the contradictions of his depiction of London suggest that the sprawling nature of the city is essential for London” (107). Or, as Anne Humpherys put it in her essay ‘An Introduction to G. W. M. Reynolds’s Encyclopedia of Tales’, the form of the *Mysteries* is “its effort at totalization through multiple tales” (126). While I agree with Shannon and Humpherys that certain tensions and inconsistencies do exist in Reynolds’s attempts to present a totalising, but mysterious, portrayal of the metropolis, I think that there is more to be said about the ways in which he connects characters and social groups together. It is not simply a desire for a ‘proliferation of narrative’, although this is of course a factor, but it is also a meditation on how different people are drawn into or experience different paradigms of social affiliation and loyalty associated with processes of expansion.

Fundamental to this reading is recognition of the manner in which Reynolds deploys aesthetics and images associated with optical and visual exhibitions. I argue that these images are used to represent the different and competing perspectives that Reynolds sees as existing simultaneously in the metropolis. By overlaying panoramic and microscopic depictions of the city Reynolds presents the idea that the city is made up of worlds within worlds, and worlds with different perspectives. It is in this way that the geographical affect of Reynolds’s London is not simply informed by what his myriad of Londoners observe around them, but also by the ways in which perspectives alter and shift according to which scalar perspectives are open to different people. Drawing on specific optical exhibitions from his contemporary society, Reynolds uses

microscopic and panoramic perspectives to demonstrate the complicated range of scales that must be accounted for in any depiction of life in nineteenth-century London. In a similar way to Doreen Massey's contemporary reading of the "power-geometry" of modern London (149), Reynolds depicts London society as being constructed around a complex array of perspectival scales and social relations.

One such example of scales and perspectives can be seen in an opening installment of the first volume of *The Mysteries of London*. Shortly following the introductory panoramic sweeps of the whole world, the development of 'civilised progress', and the "annihilation of space and distance", the perspective of the narrative presents a microscopic view of the streets of London and the people that inhabit them (3). Drawing on specific references to the oxyhydrogen microscope on display at the Polytechnic Institution, Reynolds meditates on the ways in which London is comprised of a myriad of different worlds:

The visitor to the Polytechnic Institution or the Adelaide Gallery, has doubtlessly seen the exhibition of the microscope. A drop of the purest water, magnified by that instrument some thousands of times, appears to be filled with horrible reptiles and monsters of revolting forms.

Such is London.

Fair and attractive as the mighty metropolis might appear to the superficial observer, it swarms with disgusting, loathsome, and venomous objects wearing human shapes.

Oh! London is a city of strange contrasts!

The bustle of business, and the smile of pleasure, - the peaceful citizen, and the gay soldier, - the splendid shop, and the itinerant pastry-stall, - the gorgeous equipage, and the humble market-cart, - the palaces of nobles, and the hovels of the poor, - the psalm from the chapel, and the shout of laughter from the tavern, - the dandies lounging in the west-end streets, and the paupers cleansing away the mud, - the funeral

procession, and the bridal cavalcade, - the wealthy and high-born lady whose reputation is above all cavil, and the lost girl whose shame is below all notice, [...] in a word, grandeur, squalor, wealth and misery, virtue and vice, - honesty which has never been tried, and crime which yielded to the force of irresistible circumstances, - all the features, all the characteristics, all the morals, of a great city, must occupy the attention of him who surveys London with a microscopic eye (46).

The 'strange contrasts' that Reynolds views as constituting London society are drawn together in ways that highlight the differing social worlds that co-exist in the metropolis. The city is not presented as one unified community, but as a conglomeration of different, smaller communities. The question that *The Mysteries of London* poses is how all of these different 'features' and 'characteristics' of the metropolis can be viewed at anyone point. Although Reynolds makes reference to the use of a 'microscopic eye' that is needed to survey all of these facets of London life, he equally challenges how such an 'eye' could do anything more than 'survey'. Although the microscope highlights the fact that any drop of water is comprised of many 'forms', it is only able to reveal what is contained in 'one drop' of water at a time. Surely, what Reynolds's sprawling serialization does is attempt to simultaneously dramatise what is in multiple different 'drops' of London society. In *The Mysteries of London* the metropolis exists both as a centre of global economic and financial connections, a gateway to the empire, and a place of localised relationships between individuals living in the same streets and areas of the city.

In order to demonstrate how this plays out in terms of social feelings and geographical affect in the narrative it is useful to explore a specific example of how the everyday lives of individuals in Reynolds's London are demonstrated to be implicated within these broader systems. As stated, *The Mysteries of London*

provides any number of narrative threads and characters that could be examined. Here, however, I focus on George Montague and Ellen Monroe. In the first two volumes of *The Mysteries of London* George Montague features in one of the main narratives around which the structure of the serialisation is built. To summarise, Richard and Eugene Markham are brothers who, following a row between Eugene and his father, are separated and agree to meet in twelve years' time. Eugene Markham reinvents himself as George Montague Greenwood, a financier and City man who climbs his way up the social ladder of London to become a corrupt politician. His brother, Richard, meanwhile remains at home, but following the death of his father is wrongly imprisoned in Newgate Prison. Running alongside this narrative is the story of Ellen Monroe, a seamstress from the East End. Over the course of the first volume of *The Mysteries of London* George Montague and Ellen Monroe's narratives become intertwined as Ellen is forced to work as an artist's model, and later a prostitute, subsequently becoming pregnant with Montague's child. In the concluding installment of volume one, Montague dies, repentant for his crimes leaving Ellen and his child all his money.

Previous studies of George Montague and Ellen Monroe have provided invaluable readings of the ways in which Reynolds implicates both characters in the cultures of prostitution and blackmail that, according to Reynolds's *Mysteries*, were rife across all classes living in London. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman examines the extent gender implications of Ellen's role as both artist's model and prostitute in the serialisation, arguing that the "very processes of representation that make her available for this gendered consumption simultaneously produce Ellen as a sexual subject" (34). In a similar manner, Jessica Hinds focuses on Ellen's objectification, noting that,

Ellen's career might seem to argue against the objectification to which her sex is made subject: her beauty is the only asset that she is able to exploit. In fact, the ramifications are more complex [...] Reynolds is not against the working classes making the most of whatever capital they command (122).

In this reading of Montague and Ellen, however, I want to focus on a different angle of their characters. Here, I want to think about the effects of scale on life in the metropolis experienced by both characters and what this tells readers regarding the different social paradigms of processes of global expansion existing in London. Both characters are drawn into the global scope of London's imperial, financial, and commercial networks, but in ways that depict how these various networks were experienced by people living in different social, economic, or geographical areas of the city. As such, *The Mysteries of London*, and Montague and Ellen's narratives in particular, enable a reading of the ways in which in the Victorian literary imagination scalar depictions of global modernity were thought through along the lines of both class and gender relations. The ways in which Montague and Ellen both profit and suffer from the opening and closing of financial and commercial horizons demonstrates the complicated manner in which global marketplaces feature in local worlds and individual lives.

I start with George Montague and the affective scales associated with the financial district and culture of the City. George Montague, "a tall good-looking young man of about three or four-and-twenty" (25), is introduced early in the narrative as a man of immense wealth, unknown business, and unscrupulous morals. In a similar manner to Dickens's Mr Merdle or Trollope's Augustus

Melotte, George Montague represents the embodiment of public fears of forgery and corruption associated with the move to paper money and financial speculation. As Sara Malton explains, “in the credit economy that became a defining feature of nineteenth-century culture, mendacity and money form an especially dangerous combination” (1), and from his first introduction Montague is associated with both:

His manners were certainly polished and agreeable; but there was nevertheless something reserved and mysterious about him – an anxiety to avert the conversation from any topic connected with himself [...] He was, however, well-informed upon most topics; ambitious of creating a sensation in the world, no matter by what means; resolute in the pursuit of wealth, and careless whether the paths leading to the objects which he sought were torturous or straight forward [...] all admitted that he was a thorough man of the world (25).

For Montague, who the reader later discovers is Eugene Markham, speculative enterprise provides an open ground for him to exploit the anonymity associated with city trading.

He was then a City man: but if the reader be anxious to know what sort of *business* he transacted to obtain his living; whether he dabbled in funds, sold wines upon commission, effected loans and discounts, speculated in shares, got up joint-stock companies, shipped goods to the colonies, purchased land in Australia at eighteen-pence an acre and sold it again at one-and-nine, conducted compromises for insolvent tradesmen, made out the accounts of bankrupt, arbitrated between partners who disagreed, or bought things in a friendly way at public sales; whether he followed any of these pursuits or meddled a little with them all, we can no more satisfy our readers than attempt the biography of the Man in the Moon (26-27).

In each of these possible sources of income Montague is involved in the extending trading and commercial links. Although it is not detailed precisely which or any of these he invests in, the possibility that he could be associated with so many different forms of financial and capitalist enterprise demonstrates the range of opportunities and connections available to financiers. Montague is a “thorough man of the world” (25) and he makes the most of what the world can offer him. The only firm definition that the reader is given of Montague’s income is that “he devoted his attention to commercial speculations of all kinds and under all shapes” (25).

As stated, George Montague shares several notable similarities with Dickens’s Mr. Merdle, except for one crucial characteristic. Later in this chapter I will discuss how Mr. Merdle, although seeming to profit from the international connections created by speculative capitalism, is in fact ill at ease with his place in London communities. George Montague, by contrast, is confident of his place in society and his ability to create wealth out of little or no capital. He scorns the idea that “money was necessary to beget money” (26). Instead he

[...] adopted a better system of logic than vulgar reasoning. He knew that there was little merit in producing bread from flour, for instance: but he perceived that there was immense credit due to those who could produce bread without any flour at all. Upon this principle he acted, and his plan was not unattended with success. [...] he began his, ‘City career’, as he sometimes observed, without a farthing, and he was seldom without gold in his pocket (26).

Montague is able to exploit the connections that London financial culture provided. Due to his wealth, however, Montague is able to traverse across the

city and over the course of the narrative of the first two volumes he is equally at ease with the gambling dens and brothels of East London as in the society parties of West London. In terms of scale and geographical affect, Montague demonstrates the fear that the invisible connections between nations could enable morally dubious and unscrupulous individuals to profit from the extending horizons that were opening up because so much is happening off stage.

The perspectives of scale associated with Montague and the global expanses of London's financial district present a reading of the distinct forms of scales of affect associated with those people living in the 'City'. He embodies the geographical affect associated with the 'gentlemanly capitalists' of the era. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins argue that it was gentlemanly capitalists that made London's engagement with processes of global capitalist expansion "distinct from provincial, industrial Britain" (182):

As the world economy expanded and opportunities for foreign investment grew, the numbers of socially acceptable investment outlets multiplied and vast flows of returning income which resulted helped to first to reproduce this gentlemanly elite and then, slowly, to recreate it in a new form. In other words, the nature of the new economic society which emerged in London and the south-east in the latter half of the nineteenth-century was moulded by the social and cultural preferences of a gentlemanly class which was itself changed by the process (182-183).

This is apparent in the descriptions of the ways in which Montague's range of connections spread from London outwards to the far reaches of the colonies. But what Reynolds does in *The Mysteries of London* is to situate this expansive, panoramic view of the financial City's connections alongside those of people

who are unable to imagine such vast horizons of globalised connections. Alongside these globalised scales of financial connections run the specific localised experiences of those who are implicated within the same processes of economic expansion, but unlike Montague are unable to reap the same financial or monetary rewards.

In contrast to Montague, Ellen Monroe is a silk seamstress who works in London's East End. Throughout the narrative of the first two volumes of *The Mysteries of London* Ellen Monroe occupies several different social occupations within the city. She starts, as stated, in the textile and cloth trade in the East End, she then becomes a model for a sculptor, an artist, a photographer, a mesmerist, then a performer as a dancer and finally as a tragedian. Whilst working as a model, Ellen on one occasion falls into prostitution and becomes pregnant with George Montague's illegitimate child. As already stated, the majority of previous criticism has focused on Ellen's objectification and sexualised status in the narrative. This criticism is of much worth to understandings of the gender roles Reynolds ascribes to different social groups living in London. I want to focus here, however, on the early passages introducing Ellen's life as a seamstress in the East End of London and how the scalar perspectives associated with her daily routines differ from those ascribed to Montague.

Ellen is introduced to the narrative in the first volume of the series in a chapter titled "MISERRIMA!!! or, 'very miserable things'" (73):

In one of the low dark rooms of a gloomy house in a court leading out of Golden Lane, St. Luke's, a young girl of seventeen sat at work. It was about nine o'clock in the evening; and a single candle lighted the miserable chamber, which was almost denuded of furniture. [...]

And so Ellen was compelled to toil and work, and work and toil – to rise early, and go to bed late – so that she had scarcely fallen asleep, worn out with fatigue, when it appeared time to get up again; - and thus she rose and forsook her cheeks – and her health suffered – and her head ached – and her eyes grew dim –and her limbs were stiff with the chill! (74-75).

The repetitive and ceaseless cycles of work and toil set out in this paragraph demonstrates the limited circles of reference available to Ellen. As the narrative goes on to explain, “misery was above – misery below: misery was on the right and on the left” (80). But beyond these melodramatic portrayals of misery, this description of Ellen’s life provides a meditation on the effects of global commerce and trade. Throughout *The Mysteries of London* Reynolds is meticulous in detailing the hours and price of work undertaken by different individuals. Mary L. Shannon notes that Reynolds “is fascinated by local detail [...] by how much money they [people] earn. He uses such details, however, to make the move from the particular to the general, in a kind of social synecdoche” (106). This move from the particular to the general, the ‘social synecdoche’ as Shannon terms it, demonstrates the links between individuals in the city.

Following the circular and claustrophobic descriptions of the toil, work, and misery that define Ellen’s life in the East End, Reynolds then details the nature of the work that she undertakes:

Ellen had to rise at five that morning to embroider a silk shawl with eighty flowers. She had calculated upon finishing by eight in the evening; but although she worked, and worked, and worked hour after hour, without ceasing save for a moment at long intervals to rest her aching head and stretch her cramped fingers, eight had struck – and nine had struck also – and still the blossoms were not all embroidered. [...]

Eighty blossoms for sixpence!
Sixteen hours' work for sixpence!!
A farthing and a half per hour!!! (75 – 77).

The specific detail regarding Ellen's daily work contrasts with the broad sweeps of progress that are depicted in the opening passage to the serialisation. The interlocking of these two perspectives, the grand march of 'civilised progress' and the specific details of the poor seamstress, highlight the different ways in which London is comprised of worlds within worlds. This portrayal of scales operating on different levels for different individuals and communities is strikingly similar to Doreen Massey's reading of contemporary accounts of globalisation and scale in twenty-first-century London that is discussed earlier in this thesis. Ellen's experience of working within a global system of trade, but without the opportunities of movement out of her local world, is the nineteenth-century version of Massey's descriptions of the people now living in London who cannot afford to travel on the international planes that are forever flying over their heads. In both cases the awareness of a far larger network is apparent, but the structures and systems of capitalism in the city does not open these scales up to them. Reynolds, like Massey, also stresses that this is not a unique situation for certain individuals. Following the description of Ellen's life and work it describes how in her neighbouring house there were "eleven souls thus herded together, without shame, in a room eighteen feet wide! These eleven human beings dwelling in swine-like existence, existed upon twenty-five shillings a week" (79). Particularly when read alongside Montague's early scenes, it becomes apparent that the spatial experiences of both the city and the world are highly affected by the rigid structures and circuits of modernity.

Commenting on the narrative structure of *The Mysteries of London*, Shannon notes that,

[...] despite the connections which Reynolds draws between his myriad Londoners, the contradictions of his depiction of London suggest that the divided, sprawling nature of the city is essential for fiction [...] Generally speaking, Reynolds's Londoners fail to look up from their own concerns (107).

In this chapter I hope to have put forward a different view of Reynolds's portrayal on London and the connections between Londoners. There may not be any clear conclusions to a way in which London could be unified into one equal community, but I do not agree that this was due to his "Londoners fail[ing] to look up from their own concerns" (107). Rather, I think it is because they are all so tightly implicated in the processes associated with global modernity. As the use of the microscope's scale reveals, Reynolds was interested in how individuals were caught up in far larger systems of commerce and power. The opening paragraphs of the Prologue forewarn the reader that the individuals detailed in London are already part of the global march towards commercial progress and 'civilisation'. Montague and Ellen's narratives demonstrate both the ways in which these systems provided certain opportunities for people within the city to profit from the global circulation of capital, while condemning others to a state of limitation and exploitation. The global networks of which London is a part leave little room for individuals, other than through instances of melodramatic murder, to escape from these circuits.

Charles Dickens *Little Dorrit*

In a similar manner to Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London*, Dickens opens *Little Dorrit* not in the streets of London, but with a meditation on global commerce and trade. Unlike Reynolds, however, this is not an image of violence, destruction, and the passage of 'civilised progress', but of stagnation and isolation. The international trading port of Marseilles is the setting for this scene:

There was no wind to make a ripple on the foul water within the harbour, or on the beautiful sea without. The line of demarcation between the two colours, black and blue, showed the point which the pure sea would not pass; but it lay as quiet as the abominable pool, with which it never mixed. Boats without awnings were too hot to touch; ships blistered at their moorings; the stones of the quays had not cooled, night or day, for months. Hindoos, Russians, Chinese, Spaniards, Portuguese, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Genoese, Neapolitans, Venetians, Greeks, Turks, descendants from all the builders of Babel, come to trade at Marseilles, sought the shade alike – taking refuge in any hiding-place from a sea too intensely blue to be looked at, and a sky of purple, set with one great flaming jewel of fire (15).

In this opening image of trade the various nations of the globe are in close proximity, but they are taking 'refuge' rather than uniting and profiting from one another's commerce.³² Bridging the geographical gap between European waters and African trade routes, Marseille represents a gateway of global trading networks. The water of the harbour, however, the location and means by which these disparate groups are brought together, is described as an 'abominable pool' with no current which is as stagnant as the communication

³² For more information on international trading in *Little Dorrit* see chapter three of Charlotte Mathieson's 2015 study *Mobility and the Victorian Novel*.

and exchange between the boats. The people inhabiting these boats are not described as coming from one universally trading world, but as “descendants from all the builders of Babel” (15), groups who appear to be irrevocably divided into a postlapsarian state of separation.

It is this image of Babel that provides the starting point for the reading of *Little Dorrit* that follows in this chapter. Challenging Adam Smith’s eighteenth-century imagining of free trade as a global network of village-like relations, Dickens’s depiction of commerce is one that draws individuals, communities, and nations into uncertain patterns and structures of loyalty and affiliation. By paying attention to the various affective modes associated with these systems and the different ways in which characters respond to them, Dickens provides a meditation on how people create their own space in a modern city, whilst also profiting from the new connections offered by processes of economic and imperial expansion. This differs in a number of significant ways from the reading of *The Mysteries of London*; while Reynolds presents the forces of modern commerce as an overarching framework that draws people into new structures of feeling and community, Dickens presents a far more meditative view of modern London communities. Throughout *Little Dorrit* London is thought of on both local and global scales, what differs from *The Mysteries of London* is how different people attempt to forge their way in these circuits. Global markets are not presented as impenetrable external forces, but as something that people engage with, battle with, and attempt to use to their own advantage. In *Little Dorrit* Dickens’s rendering of geographical affect and scale is more intricate than a simple dismissal of free trade capitalism and commercial connections. Just as one sense of scale or potential network of connections may appear futile, another way of thinking about communities is brought to the fore. Much

has been written in recent years on the manner in which this opening image challenges ideas of nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism; this chapter, however, thinks about this idea of blocked capital and communication in the context of nineteenth-century processes of expansion and globalisation.³³

This chapter argues that for Dickens the modern geography of the city is one that allows people to exploit global and metropolitan connections, but also to shape their own place in the city. It is this duality that is presented in Dickens's motif of the actions of forging (a mechanical, engineering, and creative verb) versus the actions of forgery (a deceitful action associated with hidden motives and resulting in spurious products).³⁴ This chapter examines the various ways in which London characters such as Arthur Clennam, Mrs Clennam, Daniel Doyce, Mr Merdle, and the Barnacles engage with either or both of the acts of forging and forgery in attempts to create a sense of stability and place in the ever-moving circuits of modernity. This tension between creation and deceit that Dickens identifies with modern London produces a complex geographical affect among those experiencing its effects. They are all, albeit in different ways, affected by the hope, aspirations, and promises offered by extending connections, but also the resentment, anxiety, and discontent that occur when expectations are not fulfilled.

This reading has been inspired by Regenia Gagnier's recent article on the novel, 'Freedom, Determinism, and Hope in *Little Dorrit*: A Literary Anthropology'. Gagnier argues that in *Little Dorrit* Dickens presents the "uneasy

³³ For more readings of Dickens's portrayal of Marseille see Ayse Celikkol *Romances of Free Trade: British Literature, Laissez-Faire, and the Global Nineteenth Century* and Charlotte Mathieson's *Mobility in the Victorian Novel*. For readings of cosmopolitanism and Marseille see chapter 2 in Amanda Anderson's study *The Powers of Distance*, James Buzzard's article 'The Country of the Plague' and Mattias Bauer's chapter "Foreign Languages and Original Understanding in *Little Dorrit*" from *Dickens, Europe and the New World* ed. by Anny Sadrin.

³⁴ According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online to forge is "to make, fashion, frame, or construct", while the noun forgery is the product of "a fraudulent artifice [or] a deceit" (n.p.).

pleasures of knowing that we are both nature and culture, free, but only within limits” (332). But, for Gagnier, the novel is also a story of hope, a hope that she identifies as coming from the use of technologies to create a sense of stability: “Using technologies to transform culture wherever we are, humans are the niche constructors par excellence. Reflection on this natural history of change tells us things can and will change” (341). I draw on Gagnier’s reading of hope in *Little Dorrit* in order to consider how it is associated with not only domestic niches characters create for themselves (Gagnier focuses on Amy Dorrit’s creation of a niche for her family), but also with how characters attempt to create a sense of affiliation within the systems of global trading and commerce. In this way, this study will bridge the affective reading of Gagnier’s article with the global and spatial studies discussed earlier in this chapter. It will explain how the forging and forgeries that takes place in the narrative are attempts by different characters or groups of characters to create social, economic, or familial bonds within the uncertainty of the modern city.

Over the course of *Little Dorrit* Dickens presents various complicated versions of possible modes of social affiliation. Like the boats in Marseilles harbour the people of London are presented as isolated and detached in the circuits of modern trading. Unlike, the boats, however, the characters of London are depicted as attempting to create some sort of bonds between one another. In order to examine the different ways in which these feature in the novel, and the different senses of geographical affect that they produce, this reading will follow three lines of enquiry. First, I will address the tension that resides throughout the novel regarding forging or maintaining local family connections and affiliations versus the forging or creation of globally commercial connections. Second, I will turn to explore more fully the way in which this tension is

associated with the actions of financial or speculative capitalism and how the bonds that these create between people are presented through the narrative of Mr Merdle. Finally, I will focus on Daniel Doyce and his engineering and invention. What is at the crux of this reading is the acknowledgement that Dickens does not present global aspects of modern London life as wholly damaging or negative, but merely the ways in which they were used and exploited by certain individuals. Dickens presents London as a city in transition and as such affords its inhabitants possibilities to forge their own connections.

From the descriptions of the “enormous depths and thundering waterfall” (488) of the Italian Alps, through to the “miles of close wells and pits of houses” (44) in London’s Bleeding Heart Yard, the narrative presents the world through different instances of scalar perspectives, both panoramic and microscopic. But this sense of scale is employed for more than simply adding variety to the story. The manner in which different characters respond to and register these shifting sense of scales provides the basis for the novel’s meditation on local communities within the globally trading and communicating world. There is no one overarching structure of how global and local relations are played out in the city, instead Dickens offers numerous readings of how a diverse range of characters appropriate or reject the new systems of modernity into their lives and the resulting feelings that this produces.

For example, the Barnacles, the family that controls the Circumlocution Office, view themselves to be at the centre of the globe; Mr. Clennam notes that they see themselves as the “pivots this great world goes round upon” (333). Such an image presents this London-based family as engineering the world to their advantage, rather than passively profiting from foreign financial investments. The engineering imagery is continued into descriptions of how the

Barnacles operate their work at the Circumlocution Office: “the Circumlocution Office went on mechanically, every day, keeping this wonderful, all-sufficient wheel of statesmanship, How not to do it, in motion” (120). This clash of images, the active engineering of a pivot and a wheel and the obscure and deliberately misleading red-tape of the Circumlocution Office, signals the ambiguity that Dickens associates with modern trading systems. How can connections formed by the instabilities of finance and speculative capitalism result in the Barnacles understanding of themselves forging the ordering of the world? The blurring of these two occupations (engineering and finance) represents the complication in how modern financial and commercial circuits were operating in London. Throughout the novel Dickens draws on this conflict in order to highlight the complexities of financial connections and bonds; what appears to be mechanical and able to support the whole world, is revealed to be largely nebulous, confusing, and illusionary.

This disjunction between modern global systems and the ways in which they are felt or registered in local worlds and communities is further complicated in the Clennam family’s response to and engagement with the Opium trade in their London family home. Unlike the Barnacles who profit from the invisible connections of finance, the Clennam family have made their wealth through the systems of exchange and commerce associated with the Opium trade.³⁵ China plays an integral role in the Clennam family’s life and fortune; Arthur is introduced on his return from China and it is revealed that his father spent many years in Asia. But unlike the Barnacles who view their international connections as justifying their belief that they are at the centre of the world, the Clennam’s

³⁵ Although Opium is never explicitly mentioned in the novel, it has been argued convincingly by critics that this is the source of the Clennam’s wealth. See Wenying Xu’s article ‘The Opium Trade and *Little Dorrit*: A Case of Reading Silences’.

narrative depicts a far more problematic appropriation of global commercial scales within local worlds and relations.

In chapter III, titled 'Home', Arthur Clennam returns to his mother in London. The irony of this title becomes apparent when Arthur first approaches his childhood home:

An old brick house, so dingy to be all but black, standing by itself within a gateway. Before it, a square courtyard where a shrub or two and a patch of grass were as rank (which is saying much), as the iron railings enclosing them were rusty; behind it, a jumble of roofs. It was a double house, with long, narrow, heavily framed windows. Many years ago, it had had it in its mind to slide down sideways; it had been propped up, however, and was leaning on some giant crutches: which gymnasium for the neighbourhood cats, weather-stained, smoke-blackened, and overgrown with weeds, appeared in these latter days to be no very sure reliance.

'Nothing has changed', said the traveller, stopping to look round. 'Dark and miserable as ever. A light in my mother's window, which seems never to have been extinguished since I came home twice a year from school, and dragged my box over this pavement' (46-47).

The family home is physically crumbling and falling away into the London streets. The foundations appear to be hollow as the house gradually slides into the ground. A similar motif of emptiness or instability continues into the house where "there was the old cellaret with nothing in it, lined with lead, like a sort of coffin in compartments; there was the old dark closet with nothing in it" (48). In this home it appears that nothing is, in fact, at home. But this is not solely a family home. The house that Clennam returns to is also the trading house for the company. It is the conflict between the extending international connections and profits that financially support this house and the feelings of those who live

in the house that presents the problems of incorporating global scales and systems into everyday feelings.

The effects of this disjunction are encountered in Mrs Clennam's response to the spaces that she inhabits. She claims she has fallen into a state of stasis within the house, stating that:

‘The world has narrowed to these dimensions Arthur [...]

‘All seasons are alike to me,’ she returned with a grim kind of luxuriousness. ‘I know nothing of summer and winter, shut up here. The Lord has been pleased to put me beyond all that.’ With her cold grey eyes and her cold grey hair, and her immovable face, as stiff as the folds in her stony head-dress, - her being beyond the reach of seasons, seemed but a fit sequence to her being out of reach of all changing emotions (49-50).

When discussing free trade and modernity the understanding of a ‘space/time implosion’ is often evoked or referred to as bringing communities and countries together. In David Harvey's formulation, “the history of capitalism has been characterised by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seem to collapse inwards upon us” (240). Mrs Clennam's description of her feelings regarding her state present a different reading of the effects that this space/time implosion. Despite the extended commercial connections of her family and the financial support they have provided for her, Mrs Clennam's own understanding of her place in the world seems to have narrowed to such an extent that space and time have imploded on themselves entirely. The boundaries of her space are the walls that she can see, the passing of time has no effect on her.

The underlying tension in the Clennam's familial relations it is revealed results from a confusion over the roles of a home and a trading house:

'Mother, our House has done less and less for some years past, and our dealings are progressively on the decline. [...] Even this old house in which we speak', pursued her son, 'is an instance of what I say. In my father's earlier time, and in his uncle's before him, it was a place of business – really a place of business, and business resort. Now, it is merely an anomaly and incongruity here, out of date and out of purpose [...]'

'Do you consider,' she returned, without answering his question, 'that a house serves no purpose, Arthur, in sheltering your infirm and afflicted – justly infirm and righteously afflicted – mother?'

'I was speaking only of businesses purposes.' (60).

The feelings of discontent and resentment harboured by Mrs Clennam are bound up with the liability and debt associated with both the financial and personal implications of the Clennam family business. Mrs Clennam is depicted as finding it difficult to consolidate the personal feelings of deceit associated with her husband's (at this point in the narrative still secret) infidelity and the business on which her existence is dependent. The personal feelings of limitation and resentment experienced in the Clennam's home override the global sense of scale that could be afforded by the flow of capital and commodities to and from China.

This tension between the familial feelings of unease is never fully reconciled with the expanding networks of the global marketplace. In the final stages of the narrative Mrs Clennam's home physically collapses, finally imploding both the family's home space and global connections of the family trade on themselves entirely:

As they looked up, wildly crying for help, the great pile of chimneys which was then alone and left standing, like a tower in the whirlwind, rocked, broke, and hailed itself down upon the heap of ruin, as if every tumbling fragment were intent on burying the crushed wretch [Rigaud] deeper (827).

With this falling of the great 'tower' Dickens re-uses the image of the tower of Babel from the opening page. If this were the final image of the novel it may be possible to read this as a suggestion that modern London is forever condemned to a postlapsarian state of division. However, the narrative provides other readings of how global systems of commerce, trade, and industry can be reconciled with the everyday lives, feelings, and relationships of Londoners.

So far this reading of *Little Dorrit* has focused on groups of characters who have either inherited or have long-standing networks of connections with other nations. The Circumlocution Office is described as "this glorious establishment [that] had been early in the field, when the one sublime principle involving the difficult art of governing a country, was first distinctly revealed to statesmen [...] HOW NOT TO DO IT" (119), while, as stated, the Clennam business had been in the family for generations. By comparing these two different establishments it is possible to pull out the contradictory structures of feeling that Dickens associated with the connections formed in modern world systems. For the Barnacles and the Circumlocution Office the images and language of engineering and forging are appropriated so as to add form to their nebulous business transactions. By contrast the Clennam's become increasingly insular as the company fails to compete in the modern systems of trading. It is necessary now to turn to consider those individual characters in the

novel that Dickens presents as attempting to forge their own way through the intricate and complicated structures of feeling produced by modern world systems in London.

Where Mrs Clennam is unable to form any sort of home or niche in either the local or the global systems in which she is incorporated, Mr Merdle, at first, appears to succeed where she and her family's company have failed. Mr Merdle is presented as an unscrupulous financier for whom the world is an ever-expanding network of connections laid out for him to invest his capital. In narrative terms, Merdle plays a pivotal role in the novel as through his investments he unites disparate characters across London, from his Society parties, to Bleeding Heart Yard, to the Circumlocution Office. But, I suggest that he also occupies a crucial position in the meditation on geographical affect that occurs throughout the novel. To those that surround him Mr Merdle represents the capitalist dream that the world can be united in a frictionless manner through beneficial commercial connections. Previous studies have considered Mr Merdle and the social context of finance in the novel: for example, Ben Parker considers finance and the mystery plot in 'Recognition or Reification: Capitalist Crisis and Subjectivity in *Little Dorrit*', and Christopher Herbert in 'Filthy Lucre: Victorian Ideas of Money' examines Merdle alongside nineteenth-century understandings of Christian morality. Where this study will depart from these previous works is in examining Merdle as Dickens presents him in the wider network of London society. By thinking about Merdle in this way it soon becomes evident that the feelings of stability that his financial wealth appears to bring to others are not shared by Merdle himself.

In *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Britain* Mary Poovey considers the contemporary financial

events that may have influenced Dickens's portrayal of Merdle (namely the suicide of John Sadler (375)), but she suggests that ultimately Merdle serves as an obstacle. She explains that he is a "blocking agent:[...he] momentarily impedes the romance plot that links Arthur Clennam to Amy Dorrit and decisively colours the *bildung* chronicle of Clennam's reform" (376). Poovey argues that "the Merdle plot figures only briefly, the details of the financiers' crimes remain vague, and the effects of speculation he inspires are registered in a moral vocabulary that obscures his actual crimes" (375). I agree with Poovey that there is certainly a blurring of the crimes that Merdle commits beyond a reference to "Forgery and Robbery" (742), but what I think is of more interest is the shift that occurs in Merdle's feelings towards his place in society, and the feelings of others towards him, that change over the course of the narrative. I argue that these changes are associated with scale, as Merdle's scale collapses from the globe to his own individual hopelessness.

From Merdle's first mention in the novel he is a character associated with an expansive sense of scale. Mrs Merdle boasts to Fanny and Amy Dorrit that "Mr Merdle is the most extensive merchant, *his transactions are on the vastest scale*, his wealth and influence are very great..." (258) (My italics). When Mr Merdle is introduced to Mr Dorrit he is described as "Merdle! O ye sun, moon, and stars, the great man! The rich man, who had in a manner revised the New Testament, and already entered into the kingdom of Heaven" (641). To Mr Dorrit, and as the chapter continues to describe, those around him, Merdle and his finance is the centre of the world, equivalent to a celestial being. When considering his business ventures the sense of scale associated with Merdle is undeniably global. He is described as being of "world-wide renown" (641).

Mr Merdle was an immensely rich man; a man of prodigious enterprise; a Midas without the ears, who turned all he touched into gold. He was in everything good, from banking to building. He was in Parliament, of course. He was in the City, necessarily. He was Chairman of this, Trustee of that, President of the other (265).

Everything about his business ventures are vast and far reaching. Even his timekeeping is described in epic terms: “Mr Merdle himself was usually late on these occasions, as a man still detained in the clutch of giant enterprises when other men had shaken off their dwarfs for the day” (268).

Mr Merdle stands to represent to all of those around him the ease with which capitalist financial connections can be spread across the world in London’s favour. The possibilities and opportunities that are associated with Merdle are reiterated throughout the narrative. The Treasury hopes that,

[...] he might venture to congratulate one of England’s world-famed capitalists and merchant-princes (he had turned that original sentiment in the house a few times, and it came easy to him) on a new achievement. [...] To extend the triumphs and resources of the nation; and Treasury felt – he gave Mr Merdle to understand – patriotic on the subject (269).

While the Bishop wonders “whether it had occurred to his good friend, that Society might not unreasonably hope that one so blest with his undertakings, and whose example on his pedestal was so influential with it, would shed a little money in the direction of a mission or so to Africa?” (270). What is striking about the descriptions of Merdle, however, is the manner in which the hope associated with his sense of scale are always felt by other characters; his commerce and connections with other nations opens up the scales of reference of those around him. Suddenly the “ever expanding horizons of desire” (Bayly

10) associated with global economic connections appear to be so much closer to home. To others, the wealth of Merdle appears to compress his experience of space and distances between countries as his influence appears to effortlessly traverse across boundaries.

Yet rather than presenting this free market dream of one individual being able to personally profit from economic expansion, and in so doing benefiting society, Dickens problematises the assumption this will bring happiness, or even prosperity. While Merdle's transactions may appear to others to be on the "vastest scale" (258), Merdle's own affective response to his position becomes increasingly closed down and limited. He is described as being in a state of constant anxiety:

He did not shine in company; he had not very much to say for himself; he was a reserved man, with a broad, overhanging, watchful head, that particular kind of dull red colour in his cheeks which is rather stale than fresh, and a somewhat uneasy expression about his coat-cuffs as if they were in his confidence, and had reason for being anxious to hide his hands (266).

These feelings of anxiety are experienced by Merdle not solely in affective ways, they also have an impact on his physical constitution. From his first introduction to the narrative Merdle is described as suffering from a 'complaint', one that even a physician cannot identify: "He has the constitution of a rhinoceros, the digestion of an ostrich, and the concentration of an oyster. [...] How such a man should suppose himself unwell without reason, you might think strange. But I have found nothing the matter with him" (272). It is later revealed that this 'complaint' is associated with Merdle's "Robbery and Forgery [...] he never had any money of his own, his ventures had been utterly reckless, and his

expenditure had been enormous” (742). For those in ‘Society’ Merdle represents the supposed stability of old forms of banking, his name is enough to reassure people of his trustworthiness, his acts of forgery and deception reveal that in systems of financial capitalism this assurance is no longer feasible.

By the time Merdle’s crimes are revealed he has already committed suicide and the imaginary connections that he held for London Society vanish with his death. Merdle, then, has gone from being thought of on global scales to committing the most personal of acts of hopelessness. The last description of Merdle details his remains returning to the local environment of the streets of London:

There was the bath in the corner, from which the water had been hastily drawn off. Lying in it, as in a grave or sarcophagus, with a hurried drapery of sheet and blanket thrown across it, was a body of a heavily-made man, with an obtuse head, and coarse, mean common features. A skylight had been opened, to release the steam with which the room had been filled; but, it hung, condensed into water-drops, heavily upon the walls, and heavily upon the face and figure in the bath. The room was still hot, and the marble of the bath still warm; but, the face and figure were clammy to the touch. The white marble at the bottom of the bath was veined with a dreadful red. On the ledge at the side were an empty laudanum bottle and a tortoise-shell handled penknife – soiled, but not with ink (738).

Merdle, the character who represented the free flowing circulation of financial capitalism, ends the narrative in a state of stagnation. Just like the waters in Marseilles harbour, and the “deadly sewer [that is] in the place of a fresh river” (46) in the streets of London, Merdle’s final condition is that of inertia. His last breaths hang “condensed [...] heavily upon the walls”, his blood remains veined

at “bottom of the bath”. Eventually, these remains will evaporate through the skylight or drain down the plug, but even then they will only join the impenetrable fogs and stagnant sewers of the city.

From analysing the different ways in which certain characters register and experience the forces of global economics it could be read that any attempt to forge any long-lasting network, niche, or shared feeling under their influence to be nothing more than illusionary. But to do so would be to overlook the integral aspect linking the Barnacles, the Clennams, and Mr Merdle. All three of these characters are to some extent involved in practices of forgery and deception. As stated, this is clear with Merdle’s crime of ‘robbery and forgery’, but it is also true of the Barnacle’s Circumlocution and their principle that “never, on any account whatever, to give a straight answer” (127). To a different degree, forgery is also inherent in the Clennam’s business. Mrs Clennam’s deception towards Arthur is part of the reason for the feelings of unhomeliness in the Clennam family home/trading house. In what remains of this section I will address the alternative experiences of scale and forging of global connections in the plot lines of characters who live and work in Bleeding Heart Yard, namely Daniel Doyce.

While the characters already examined in this chapter are largely defined by their global connections, or at least the illusion of having global connections, the inhabitants of Bleeding Heart Yard experience London in a very different way. The scales of experience associated with these Londoners are firmly rooted in their local, geographical situation:

[...] a place much changed in feature and in fortune, yet with some relish of ancient greatness about it. Two or three mighty stacks of chimneys, and a few large dark rooms which had escaped being sub-divided out of

the recognition of their old proportions, gave the Yard a character. It was inhabited by poor people, who set up their rest among its faded glories, as Arabs of the desert pitch their tents among the fallen stones of the Pyramids; but there was a family sentimental feeling prevalent in the Yard, that it had a character (150).

London is described as growing up around the yard “as if the aspiring city had become puffed up in the very ground on which it stood, the ground had so risen about Bleeding Heart Yard” (150). And the only way of escaping the yard was “by a low gateway into a maze of shabby streets, which went about and about, tortuously ascending to the level again” (150). But the sentiments associated with this geographical locale are not wholly frustrated. The first description of the inhabitants of the Yard hints at the possibility of movement in this community. They are compared to “Arabs of the desert [that] pitch their tents among the fallen stones of the Pyramids” (150). They are not a community that is averse to movement, but it is that the growth of the modern city has physically prevented them from moving on from their current situation.

In his recent study on Victorian London, *Capital Offences: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London*, Simon Joyce argues that nineteenth-century metropolitan life was characterised by “[n]ew ideologies, spatial models, and figures [that are...] required at the moment when the paradigms of lived experience shift, and the geo-social totality is no longer subsumable beneath older cultural representational concepts” (3). Joyce goes on to explain how “the experience of London in the nineteenth century represents one of the most important and influential moments of geo-social rupture” (23). This notion of nineteenth-century London experiencing a ‘rupture’ in new spatial models and the traditional modes of living can be seen in Dickens’s description of Bleeding

Heart Yard. The city has grown up around the Yard and has encased the inhabitants within their location. The community that the Yard represents and the work undertaken by the people who live there have become seemingly incompatible with the development of the city and capitalist undertakings on which it depends.

It is the character of Daniel Doyce the inventor that Dickens employs to meditate on the manner in which the boundaries of the modern city can be transcended. Doyce and his unnamed invention link the inhabitants of Bleeding Heart Yard with other communities and groups across London, whether this is the Clennams and the Meagles or the Barnacles and the Circumlocution Office. He also, however, provides a counter narrative to a sense of scale and commerce in Merdle's plot. Doyce's labour and his technology open up the scales of reference of the inhabitants of London in ways that Merdle's corruption served to shut down. To return to Gagnier's reading of hope, freedom and determinism in *Little Dorrit*, for Gagnier Doyce is the figure of hope in the novel. She describes how he "applies scientific knowledge for practical purposes to transform the environment" (336). I want to think about how the hope that Gagnier associates with Doyce is dependent upon him commercially exploiting the connections between nations and subsequently providing a link between London and the rest of the globe. Specifically, Doyce employs his "scientific knowledge" in a country referred to as "a certain barbaric Power with valuable possessions on the map of the world" (702) (often presumed by critics to be Russia). Although this is often read as a subplot or merely a narrative device (John Rignall describes it as only being "fleetingly" part of the narrative (239)), I argue that it holds a pivotal role in the representation of London and its relation to the rest of the globe in the novel.

In the final chapters of the novel Doyce returns from Russia a wealthy and successful man. Mr Meagles describes how “he [Doyce] is making out his case like a house on fire. [...] Dan is directing works and executing labours over yonder, that would make your hair stand on end to look at. [...] He’s medalled and ribboned, and starred and crossed, and I don’t-know-what all’d, like a born noble-man” (855). The profits that Doyce has made from his invention enable Arthur Clennam to leave the Marshalsea and marry Amy Dorrit. Thereby, the local, personal lives of those living in London are inherently tied up with the commerce and prosperity of nations far beyond their immediate community and network. The final lines of the novel describes the passage of Amy Dorrit and Arthur Clennam walking through the streets of London: “They went quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed; and as they passed along in sunshine and shade, the noisy and the eager, and the arrogant and forward and the vain, fretted, and chafed, and made their usual uproar” (859-860). This final sentence stands out as being wildly different from every other description of London that has come before it. Gone are the closed walls and deadly sewers and instead Dickens focuses on the movement of people. Gagnier identifies this closing scene as the most hopeful of the entire novel (341). It is only when actual commercial connections are made with other nations (not the abstract and false capital investments of Merdle’s world) that the scale of London is opened up and the movement of the people of London correspond to the pushing of social and commercial progress associated with modernity.

Having considered some of the various ways in which Dickens incorporates global scales within the everyday feelings of Londoners it becomes apparent that he does not offer one clear reading of how modernity was experienced across the city. Instead, the narrative of *Little Dorrit* provides fertile

ground for him to meditate on the various paradigms of geographical affect and social affiliation taking place across London. The instances in which the feelings experienced by characters do not match up to their global connections (whether they aggrandise their influence or reject their global connections) result in a fracturing of social bonds. The only example of a possible successful mode of social affiliation to be born out of global economic expansion is that which partakes in the physical forging and mechanical, inventive labour. The “very complex structure of feelings” (158) that Williams identifies as characterising Dickens’s London is revealed to be inherently tied up with how different individuals and communities attempted to create their own place in the global systems of commerce and finance.

In *Disorientating Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels* James Buzard holds that,

[a]gainst the backdrop of the nation’s increasingly visible entanglements elsewhere, which threatened to draw the nation out into (what Eliot called) ‘that tempting range of relevancies called the universe’, metropolitan autoethnography could bring the national ‘imagined community’ into view only through principled restrictions of view” (52).

In my readings of G. W. M. Reynolds and Charles Dickens’s readings of London communities I hope to have challenged such a view of nineteenth-century metropolitan fiction. Instead of restricting the range of views, I argue that both Dickens and Reynolds draw on and dramatise the confusing and conflicting forms of global, national, and local scales of social and economic connections to explore what it felt like to be part of modern London society. Both authors directly engage with narratives incorporated in global systems of trade,

commerce, and finance to animate the complexities of feelings experienced across the metropolis. *The Mysteries of London* and *Little Dorrit* explore the different ways in which these global scales of reference and opportunities were opened up or closed down to different individuals and the feelings that these prompted in response.

Despite both thinking of London in global and local terms, Dickens and Reynolds animate the ways in which circuits of finance, commerce, and trade are experienced by Londoners in very different ways. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Reynolds, usually labelled the more radical of the two writers, presents these modern systems as an overarching structure of the city, that people, other than through instances of individual melodramatic plots, could do little to challenge. Reynolds notes that the global systems and scales of modernity are experienced in ways determined by your class, gender, or occupation, but he suggests little alternative to these systems. Montague is able to make his way in the financial world, but it is only because he holds these connections to begin with. For the people experiencing the 'misery' of the East End, there is little suggestion that they can profit from the global systems of trade any more than their daily labour with imported goods. Dickens, by contrast, offers a much more malleable rendering of global modernity. Although he also seems to first signal that financiers are the ones with the leverage in this world, he later goes on to present a view that favours the engineering forms of trade. This resistance to abstract finance, but promotion of engineering, depicts a somewhat idealistic view of global nineteenth-century commerce and trade. In *Little Dorrit* Dickens seems unwilling to marry together finance and invention, but what is apparent by the end of the narrative is that for Arthur Clennam and Daniel Doyce to make any headway in the "noisy and the eager" (859) modern

world that these two forms of global trading will need to consolidate in order to form any sort of stable niche.

This chapter has also demonstrated the concerns that both Reynolds and Dickens shared with the nineteenth-century visual and exhibition cultures. In both *Little Dorrit* and *The Mysteries of London* scalar perspectives, whether panoramic or microscopic, are animated in such a way that demonstrates the different geographical affects that exist in the metropolis and the various ways in which these alter and shift in response to processes of global expansion. At times these visual scales are drawn on explicitly by Reynolds and Dickens, such as with the depiction of the microscope at the Polytechnic Institution, at other times these scales are depicted through aesthetic or literary devices. In both cases, however, the scalar perspectives contribute to the confusing and unnerving geographical affect that Dickens and Reynolds associate with life in the modern metropolis. The range of influences and connections that different individuals share across the city and outwards across the globe are depicted as throwing individuals and social groups into a confusing matrix of influences, desires, affiliations, and possibilities.

Section Two

The Countryside

The second section of this thesis is concerned with the representation of economic expansion and geographical affect in mid-Victorian fiction set in countryside communities. Both Chapter Three, on rural fiction, and Chapter Four, on regional and provincial fiction, insist that in the mid-Victorian literary imagination the countryside played a dynamic, energetic, and vital part in the extension of global marketplaces. In the novels and short stories of Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, and Charlotte Brontë countryside communities did not experience capitalist modernity second hand or at a slower rate than urban communities. But whilst challenging historical understandings that rural communities existed on the peripheries of capitalist expansion, it is necessary to point out the uneven development that characterises the various ways in which different individuals and communities experienced modernity in the countryside.³⁶ Continuing the readings of scale and geographical affects from Section One, the readings in the following two chapters argue that through depicting contrasting and conflicting scalar perspectives Martineau, Eliot, and Brontë give shape to the complicated ways in which market expansions were plotted in the imagination of members of countryside communities.

There are, however, a number of important and significant ways that the second half of this thesis differs from what has come before. The countryside fiction included in this section asks very specific questions regarding marketplace connections, expansions, and the relationship between a local a community and the surrounding land, environment, and geography. Although

³⁶ Diffusionist understandings of rural modernity and how they have featured in literary criticism are discussed further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

each chapter is concerned with a different genre of countryside community, rural, and regional and provincial respectively, there are certain research questions that run throughout this section: how do you feel about produce yielded from your land when it is being consumed across the globe? How did enclosures change production and feelings of affiliation with local landscapes featured in fiction? How can the unpredictable booms and busts of capitalist market exchange be consolidated with the seasonal and pastoral rhythms of the countryside? In different ways the three writers examined in this section pull together diverse responses to these concerns and in doing so bring to the fore the complicated ways in which the mid-Victorian countryside registered the impacts of lengthening commodity chains and expanding economic connections.

At the core of each of the following two chapters, then, is a preoccupation with how markets are imagined by different people. Although this is a concern that runs throughout this thesis, it is particularly pertinent to this current section as in their portrayals of small countryside communities the authors included here frequently evoke market relations in a similar way to those depicted by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (discussed in the introduction to this thesis). Such local imaginings of known market relations are often depicted against the anonymous expanses of global marketplaces. Discussing how market expansions are understood in contemporary society the social scientist Craig Calhoun explains that, “markets may be the most widespread of all historically made connections. Markets do not precisely coalesce into a single global totality [...] they too link imperfectly and incompletely [...]. We need to see global markets as relationships among actors: people, places, institutions (including states)” (112). It is exactly this friction that is present in the fiction in this section. It is the shifting relationships between the

people, places, and institutions prompted by market expansions that provides the tension in countryside fiction. In each instance markets are not imagined as static or pre-ordained structures, they move and fluctuate depending on where capital is invested and where it is circulating.

While the fiction examined in the first two chapters of this thesis is easily demarcated by their geographical locations (the industrial north and the metropolitan south), the fiction included in the following two chapters is somewhat more ambiguous in imagined locations. There are clearly cross overs in the categories of rural, regional, and provincial. This is evident in the fact that George Eliot features in both the rural and the provincial chapter, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch* respectively. As such, it is useful to lay out my reasoning for placing some fiction in the chapter on rural fiction and others in the chapter on regional and provincial fiction. The chapter on rural fiction, focusing on Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832) and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) considers broad questions regarding the ways in which agricultural modernisation featured in nineteenth-century fiction. Through giving shape to different perspectival scales of local, regional, national, and global the rural fiction of Martineau and Eliot demonstrate the ways in which for rural communities the experiences of modernity were disjointed and unsettling. Chapter Three also interrogates how the term 'rural' has been evoked in literary criticism in recent years and how my reading of geographical affect contributes to the on going debates regarding rurality in Victorian fiction. I understand Chapter Three to establish some of the key themes and concerns that are carried over to the readings of provincial and regional novels.

The fourth, and final, chapter of this thesis examines global economic expansion as depicted in two regional and provincial novels, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) and George Elliot's *Middlemarch* (1871). This chapter is concerned with how these two genres, often omitted from studies on Victorian expansion, present depictions of geographical affect that are integral to an understanding of literary responses to globalised modernity. Regional fiction is defined by its focus on specific topographical or geographic characteristics of an area; provincial fiction, by contrast, is often defined by its unidentified location, its "nowheresville" characteristics (Plotz 'The Semi-Detached Novel' 407).³⁷ The final chapter of this thesis asserts that these two genres are far more engaged with and critical of the expanding connections that drew Britain's range of interests and investments across the globe than often assumed.

³⁷ The introduction to Chapter 4 provides a more sustained interrogation into the uses of these two terms and the aesthetics associated with both genres.

Chapter Three

Rural Fiction: Harriet Martineau *Illustrations of Political Economy* and George Eliot *The Mill on the Floss*

Introduction

In his recent work on globalisation Roland Robertson explains that “[g]lobalisation as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (8). In a similar manner, Anthony Giddens explains in his study *The Consequences of Modernity* that globalisation can “be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events many miles away and vice versa” (64). Robertson and Giddens both bring to the fore the ways in which globalisation is increasingly understood as a process that actively incorporates different localities into a worldwide network of social relations; it is not simply that localities are lost in these processes, but that they are a dynamic part of global changes. Giddens goes on to explain that,

Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. Thus whoever studies cities today in any part of the world, is aware that what happens in a local neighbourhood is likely to be influenced by factors – such as world money and commodity markets – operating at an indefinite distance away from the neighbourhood itself (64-65).

Although both Robertson and Giddens are speaking of contemporary society, their arguments have much relevance to the questions that this thesis

associates with nineteenth-century concerns regarding local communities, individual and shared feelings, and global processes of expansion. In particular, the focus on local communal transformations in periods of globalisations in both Robertson and Giddens's works bears a striking resemblance to the portrayal of rural modernisation in Victorian fiction. By examining Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* the following readings aim to demonstrate the ways in which rural geographical affect is plotted in terms of expanding market connections. This chapter argues that in the rural fiction of Harriet Martineau and George Eliot the countryside and its communities are depicted as energising forces active in the processes of modernity.

In the decades covered by the fiction in this chapter (1830-1860) rural Britain underwent dramatic changes that irrevocably altered the social, agricultural, and physical landscape of the countryside. Continuing from the eighteenth century, the Enclosures Acts took place on a "massive scale", rigidly dividing previously unhedged fields or large common ground in order to "increase the efficiency and output" of agricultural products (Beckett 34). Debates surrounding the Corn Laws had a dramatic effect on how British farmers produced and traded both within Britain and across the world as a whole; in *Agricultural Revolution in Britain* Mark Overton notes that, "[b]y the nineteenth century, the vast majority of agricultural production was for the market – for exchange rather than for use by the farmer and his family" (134). This market extension was aided in no small part by the expansion of railway networks across the nation that "restructured rural landscapes spatially, economically, and politically" (Goodman and Mathieson 2). These changes in agricultural modernisation effected a large proportion of the British population; A.

N. Wilson calculates that in the 1830s “at least half the population” were employed in labour that was “essentially rural in base” (31). The three narratives included in this chapter, ‘The Hill and the Valley’ and ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’ from Martineau’s *Illustrations of Political Economy* and Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*, all engage with debates surrounding social and economic changes to the countryside. In different ways Martineau and Eliot critique what it means and how it feels to be part of a rural community that is becoming increasingly detached from the seasonal and pastoral rhythms of the local environment and ever more implicated in the unpredictable booms and busts of global capitalist marketplaces.

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is situated as a response to the recent global and spatial turns witnessed in Victorian studies. One area of study that is noticeably absent in many of these works is that of rural fiction. This chapter aims to apply the same critical enquiries discussed in the first section of this thesis to rural narratives. There are certain reasons that may account for the omission of rural fiction from studies of modernity. First, rural fiction is both a capacious and an expansive category. What is included in and what characterises a rural narrative differs depending on where the story is set; so, a rural setting in Cornwall will be very different from that set in the north of England, or Wales, or Scotland. Second, there has been a tendency in fields of literary criticism to associate rurality with nostalgia or a dream of social stability. As Barry Reay explains in *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century*, “[t]he rural has been a constantly moving signifier. It has served as a refuge from the pressures of modernity. It has been a site for fashioning ideals of domesticity and femininity. It has become the contested and refashioned essence of Englishness” (9). This chapter aims to present a different reading.

By focusing on Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* I have deliberately chosen fiction that presents rural communities as participating in networks of trade, communication, and technology linking rural workers' daily routines with other communities across the world. They both also portray complex depictions of scales and perspectives in order to present the changes taking place in feelings of affiliation and loyalty within rural communities. George Eliot has received much previous criticism on her portrayal of feelings, affect, and social relations in local communities. This chapter seeks to bridge these readings with the recent advances made in global Victorian studies to argue that Eliot's understanding of local rural communities is inherently bound up in an understanding of a bigger geopolitical reality. In the past decade Harriet Martineau has received ever increasing levels of critical attention. This reading of 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' and 'The Hill and the Valley' will contribute to these debates and will also demonstrate the ways in which Martineau's fiction did more than simply offer a didactic reading of the principles of political economy. Seen together the fiction included in this chapter places the Victorian countryside and rural communities firmly within the context of globalised modernity.

In order to address these themes the following chapter is split into three parts. First I will explain how this reading contributes to and develops recent historical and literary scholarship on nineteenth-century rural communities. Second, I will turn to Harriet Martineau and explain how her fictional portrayals of British villages contain many of the same concerns as those addressed in her writings on political economy and imperialism. This will help to unpick the ways in which Martineau places the feelings and geographical affects of local communities in a far broader context of global economic, imperial, and

technological processes of expansion. Finally, I will address George Eliot and *The Mill on the Floss*. The focus here falls on the literary devices employed by Eliot to depict the complicated perspectives of scale associated with rural communities' engagements with national and global marketplaces. In each instance the emphasis is on the manner in which the local transformations of the Victorian countryside are always implicated within the social, economic, and scalar changes associated with modernity taking place on a global scale.

Rural Fiction and Nineteenth-Century Modernity

In his seminal work *The Country and the City* Raymond Williams explains how

On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light [...] the city as a place of noise, worldliness, and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation (1).

In line with this remark scholars have tended to turn to the urban and the industrial as settings in which to explore Victorian literature's relationship to globalised modernity. This chapter argues that in the fiction of George Eliot and Harriet Martineau the countryside is characterised by the same 'noisy, worldly, and ambitious forces' that Williams locates in the city. Moreover, this chapter argues that the rural fiction included in this study offers a very particular depiction of the feelings associated with local transformations and processes of

expansion. The following paragraphs trace the ways in which recent criticism in Victorian scholarship has reassessed the representation of the countryside in nineteenth-century fiction. I will use these debates to establish a historically and critically informed theoretical framework in order to examine the complicated ways in which Eliot and Martineau depicted rural communities and their engagement with global marketplaces.

Before going on to examine contemporary criticisms of Victorian rural fiction, it is useful to first examine in more detail William's understanding of the construction of the categories of the country and the city. Williams highlights the manner in which the country and the city have been understood in contradistinction to one another; however, he also examines how these two categories are inherently bound up with and implicated in each other. Writing specifically about the effects of the Enclosures Act on rural communities Williams notes that,

The essential connections between town and country, which had been evident throughout, reached a new, more explicit and finally critical stage. It was characteristic of rural England, before and during the Industrial Revolution, that it was exposed to increasing penetration by capitalist social relations and the dominance of the market, just because these had been powerfully evolving within its own structures. By the late eighteenth century we can properly speak of an organised capitalist society, in which what happened to the market, anywhere, whether in industrial or agricultural production, worked its way through to town and country alike, as part of a single crisis (98).

These 'essential connections' between urban and rural communities implicate all those living in England in the same networks of capitalist market expansion.

As Williams explains, “whenever I consider the relations between country and city [...] I find this history active and continuous: the relations are not only of ideas and experiences, but of rent and interest, of situation and power; a wider system” (7). Following from William’s *The Country and the City*, this chapter aims to address the ways in which this ‘wider system’ of organised capitalist society is expressed in mid-nineteenth-century rural fiction. Much in the same way as the contemporary theorists of globalisation quoted in the introduction to this chapter note an interdependence between different localities in capitalist trading, Williams’s reading of the country and the city places them within the same processes of expansion and susceptible to the same profits or shortfalls of moments of economic boom and bust.

It is the contention of this chapter that a fresh approach to this reading of the countryside is needed in fields of Victorian studies. Williams’s study, now published over forty years ago, lends itself to many of the debates currently gaining momentum in nineteenth-century scholarship. It is surprising, therefore, that until recently the categories that Williams highlights between the country and the city remain prevalent in critical works on rural scenes. The debates have moved on slightly to consider these questions in more nuanced manners, but there is still room to develop the ways in which we understand rural fiction’s engagement with the processes this thesis associates with globalisation and the British economic expansion. In order to do this, however, the focus of the readings of rural fiction needs to fall more firmly on questions of space, scale, and geographical affect. This enables a more intricate reading of the connections and interdependencies between urban and rural communities.

One of the most influential studies to be written on nineteenth-century rural fiction in recent decades is Elizabeth Helsinger’s *Rural Scenes and*

National Representation: Britain, 1815-1850 published in 1997. In this work Helsinger traces the changing place the rural narrative came to hold in British literary culture in the mid-nineteenth century. She notes that the rural scene could both stand as a nostalgic dream of a Britain now lost or as a critique of the changing relationship the nation had with the land. On the one hand,

[r]ural scenes are increasingly deployed as portable icons of England for those who have left home – urban dwellers with real or imagined rural origins, colonist and imperial administrators in South Africa or India [...] Often these are representations of a past that is dead: frozen, stylized, and reproduced to unite those who can be brought together on the common ground of this image for a lost past (7).

Yet, by the middle decades of the century, “falling prices, unemployment, and social unrest are sufficiently visible to make the contemporary countryside no longer available as an image of serene retirement [...] or of an agriculturally based British power and prosperity” (7). Helsinger concludes that rural scenes are “the site of a contest for possession and definition of the country – in both local and national senses” (7). By tracing rural depictions in the works of Constable and Tennyson through to Brontë and Eliot, Helsinger’s study argues that, whether through reinforcement or critique, all of these writers and artists to some extent used their rural scenes to engage with the idea of the countryside as a symbol of nationhood. In such a way Helsinger’s reading of rural fiction advances an understanding of the genre that engages with the socio-economic concerns of the nation as a whole. A nation, she argues, “must be able to imagine itself in a certain kind of space, a space that is located and bounded,

demarcated by natural and political boundaries separating it from other nations” (15). And, for Helsinger, it is rural fiction that aids this imaginative project.

Another study that considers rural fiction along similar lines to Helsinger is Roger Ebbatson’s 2005 work *An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature 1840-1920*. Ebbatson explains that his work “seeks to unmask some of the ideological aspects of landscape representation, reading against the grain to reveal the gender, race and class implications that haunt the political unconscious” of the writings of Tennyson, Jefferies, Hardy, and Brooke (3). Ebbatson argues that, “[i]f modernity and the industrial revolution cut humanity off from persistence and continuity, creating a rift between the self and the environment, in favour of mobility and dynamism, any imagined return to place is fraught with a sense of the ghostly or the archaic” (3). Ebbatson is clear in *An Imaginary England* that he is concerned with ‘landscape’ literature; fiction that does not see landscape as an industrial “system”, or “does not simply represent some ‘reality’ of nineteenth-century rural life”, but “create[s] meanings in ways that problematize the act of writing and produce[s] texts of deep political and philosophical ambivalence, resonance and complication” (4).

As useful as Helsinger and Ebbatson’s studies are in highlighting the often tense ideological and political contexts present in nineteenth-century rural fiction, they do not do much to move the debate away from the dichotomy identified by Williams between literature set in urban and countryside settings. The present study aims to continue their readings of relationships between the rural fiction and the nation, but also to advance them so as to accommodate more recent developments in global studies. My choice of fiction also sets this study apart from Helsinger and Ebbatson. As quoted above, Ebbatson deliberately selected fiction that he defined as ‘landscape fiction’; fiction that

does “not simply represent some ‘reality’ of nineteenth-century rural life” (4). By contrast, my choice of Harriet Martineau and George Eliot was motivated precisely by their concern for the feelings and affects associated with rural communities undergoing processes of agricultural modernisation and economic expansion. As such, my focus is somewhat different from those of the critics considered in the proceeding paragraphs; I want to demonstrate that for the Victorian literary imagination the rural town, village, or hamlet was not only representative or symbolic of a national identity, but was implicated in and engaged with the unsettling processes that this thesis associates with modernity.

The following readings of Harriet Martineau and George Eliot are more firmly aligned to readings that have come to the fore in the past five years in Victorian studies. In 2014 Charlotte Mathieson and Gemma Goodman published a collected work on rural settings in nineteenth-century fiction: *Gender, Space, and Rural Britain: 1840-1920*. The introduction to this work establishes Mathieson and Goodman’s aims in their study: we need to understand the nineteenth-century countryside as “representing a diverse set of gendered and classed perspectives on a range of rural geographies” (1). They go on to more explicitly lay out the contribution they aim to make to Victorian scholarship:

[...] rural environments were sites of active and dynamic change, yet, while this has been acknowledged in historical and geographical accounts of rurality, in literary analysis rural environments have often been understood in relation to their urban counterparts – as spaces where traditional values and codes were upheld and, in the case of discussions of modernity and gender relations, typically overlooked by a focus on cities as the sites of active and progressive change. [...] Equally,

we recognise that while it cannot be denied that the link between the country and the city is culturally prevalent, rural spaces form sites of cultural interest away from a totalising urban perspective or through their connection to the urban as other and inferior, and thus we seek to resituate ruralities as important centres rather than peripheries, for literary and historical studies (6-7).

It is a similar aim that I undertake in my readings of Harriet Martineau and George Eliot. Goodman and Mathieson highlight the tendency of literary critics to think about rural communities along the lines of diffusionist modes of economic and social development, as peripheries rather than centres. As the essays included in *Gender, Space and Rural Britain* demonstrate, rural communities can be understood to take place in any number of locations or communities.³⁸ One of the ways in which such a reading can be disrupted is through attention to the effects of differing scales employed by authors in rural fiction. As my readings of Martineau and Eliot argue, rural communities may be depicted as geographically isolated from other communities, but they are not imagined as entirely detached or divorced from the influence of other localities.

A fresh approach to rural fiction that focuses on scale enables this study to draw out the different global, national, regional, and local paradigms of affiliation. Although the communities depicted in these works are small – far smaller than those in the industrial or metropolitan narratives – the same concerns regarding how people respond to the increasingly connected world around them is still present and pertinent to the depiction of the geographical affect. Moreover, these rural narratives ask questions regarding the ways in

³⁸ See Charlotte Mathieson ‘Wandering Like a Wild Thing’: Rurality, Women and Walking in George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*, Katherine F. Montgomery ‘I Never Liked Long Walks’: Gender, Nature and Jane Eyre’s Rural Wandering’, and Lynsey McCulloch ‘Drowned Lands’: Charles Kingsley’s *Hereward the Wake* and the Masculination of the Fens’ all from *Gender and Space in Space in Rural Britain 1840-1920*.

which local relationships to land and the environment alter in the global marketplace. The geographical affects of Martineau and Eliot's rural narratives are informed by the extending market connections and the information that new communication links bring from other places and communities, but they also draw on specific earthy images of the local environment. It is the various ways in which these two aspects of nineteenth-century rural modernity, the global networks and systems of modernity and the traditional seasonal rhythms of countryside labour, are presented that informs the complex scales and perspectives of these narratives.

Anthony Giddens argues that globalisation is defined by the ways in which

[...] the relations between local and distant social forms and events become correspondingly 'stretched': Globalisation refers essentially to that stretching process, in so far as the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions becomes networked across the earth's surface as a whole (60).

What the fiction in this chapter can be understood as dramatising, then, is how it feels to be a part of this stretching process. How did it feel for people whose lives were becoming increasingly intertwined with and dependent on communities they did not know? In her 2015 study *Mobility in the Victorian Novel: Placing the Nation* Charlotte Mathieson notes that following the introduction of the railway network, "the locale has no option but to succumb to the demands of a wider national network which will reproduce the space according to a new order, disrupting the labour system and agricultural mode of production of that area" (11). While I do not dispute the manner in which the 'wider national network', as

Mathieson terms it, had dramatic impacts on rural spaces and their labour systems, I do think, however, that a more balanced reading of the ways in which the locale responded to the need to 'succumb' to national demands as depicted in fiction is needed. The following readings of Martineau and Eliot consider how rural communities are drawn into global processes of expansion, but how they also locate moments of localised communal feelings that withstand the forces of modernity.

Harriet Martineau 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' and 'The Hill and the Valley' from *Illustrations of Political Economy*

Writing in 1832 in her Preface to the first volume of *Illustrations of Political Economy* Harriet Martineau establishes her aims in writing the series: to provide a fictional dramatisation of the various doctrines of political economy, accessible to all readers. In the opening pages to what would become a collection of twenty-five stories Martineau explains her reasons for positioning her fiction as a response to the increasing levels of interest in political economy in her contemporary society:

It is natural that the first eminent book on this new science [political economy] should be very long, in some parts exceedingly difficult, and, however wonderful and beautiful as a whole, not so clear and precise in its arrangement as it might be. This is the case with Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, - a book whose excellence is marvellous when all circumstances are considered, but which is not fitted or designed to teach the science to the great mass of people [...] what we want is its *picture* [...]

We cannot see why the truth and its application should not go together, - why an explanation of the principles which regulate society should not be made more clear and interesting at the same time by pictures of what those principles are actually doing in communities (x-xii).

In this introductory section Martineau aligns her works to Adam Smith's theories of trading, but she also signals that she is going to do something more complicated than simply reiterating his economic principles, she is going to dramatise what they are "actually doing in communities" (x). The use of the word '*picture*' to describe her stories is a key indication of the focus on the affective, illustrative, and aesthetic approach to the doctrines of political economy in her fiction. The first volume of *Illustrations of Political Economy* features three narratives concerned with the impact that the growth of global marketplaces had on rural communities: 'The Hill and the Valley' set in south Wales, 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' set in an English village, and 'Life in the Wilds' set in a settler community in South Africa. In different ways each of these narratives interrogates what it means to be a part of a rural community that is becoming increasingly involved in, and dependent on, global systems of trading and exchange. Here the focus falls on the British stories, 'The Hill and the Valley' and 'Brooke and Brooke Farm', and it demonstrates how these narratives plot growing markets as a means of exploring the various feelings Martineau associates with the impacts of the modern world system.

Illustrations of Political Economy were hugely successful in Martineau's contemporary society; it is estimated that the series had a readership of 144,000 (Logan 34). Despite this popularity, however, for much of the twentieth century Martineau's writings were omitted from many studies of Victorian

fiction.³⁹ For the most part, those studies that did include Martineau's fiction examined her non-fiction writings, such as her letters, journalism, economic writings, and sociological critiques. In 1999 Claudia Orazem published *Political Economy and Fiction in the Early Works of Harriet Martineau* in which she argues that Martineau's literary dramatisations of the theories of political economy are "strictly scientific and [...] value-neutral [...] the product of a process of strictly logical reasoning of the highest intellectual standards" (100). Although complimentary towards Martineau's 'intellectual standards', such understandings of her writings as 'strictly scientific' leave little room for critical or literary analysis. The following reading of *Illustrations of Political Economy* approaches Martineau's fiction from a critically and literary informed theoretical standpoint. By thinking through Martineau's depictions of political economy and theories of global marketplaces alongside the recent global and spatial turns witnessed in Victorian studies it is possible to advance new readings of Harriet Martineau's fiction and her literary aesthetic.

Certainly, Orazem and the works of others such as Valerie Sanders and Deidre David, are some several decades ago; and recent years have seen an increase of critical interest in Martineau's works. In 2004 Deborah Anna Logan published *Illustrations of Political Economy: Selected Tales by Harriet Martineau* with Broadview Press. This collected work brings together a selection of the stories included in the *Illustrations* that up to this point had only been available in volume format. Martineau's literary works have also started to be placed alongside other nineteenth-century novelists in comparative studies such as Lesa Scholl's *Translation, Authorship, and the Victorian Professional Woman:*

³⁹ For more information see Janet Courtney *Freethinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, 1920, Deidre David *Intellectual Women and the Victorian Patriarchy* 1987, Susan Hoecker-Drysdale *Harriet Martineau: First Woman Sociologist* 1992, Valerie Sanders *Reason over Passion: Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel*, 1986.

Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot published in 2011. To a certain extent, this current study undertakes a similar premise, by placing Harriet Martineau's fiction alongside the well-known novels of her contemporaries it aims to reassess Martineau's place in the landscape of Victorian literature. It also, however, argues that Martineau presents a very particular imagining of the impact of global marketplaces in her fiction; one that is couched in the discourses and theories of political economy, but is also sensitive to both the individual and shared feelings of characters experiencing these changes.

As stated, in this chapter the focus falls specifically on her rural narratives. Martineau is a writer who could easily be described as having global concerns: many of the stories in *Illustrations of Political Economy* are set in countries as diverse as New Zealand, South Africa, and the West Indies; she wrote extensive factual pieces on the British Empire; she spent years travelling abroad and published her experiences in works such as *Society in America*; and she was a vocal commentator on slavery and the Abolition Act. Recent critical works such as Deborah Anna Logan's *Harriet Martineau, Victorian Imperialism, and the Civilising Mission* and Ella Dzelzainis and Cora Kaplan's edited collection *Harriet Martineau: Authorship, Society, and Empire* have brought this global aspect of Martineau's work to the fore.⁴⁰ Many writers in these two works note that Martineau's relationship to global topics such as empire, imperialism, and slavery are often complicated and contradictory. However, there has yet to be a study on how these global influences and

⁴⁰ See Cora Kaplan 'Slavery, race, history: Harriet Martineau's Ethnographic Imagination', Lauren M. Goodlad 'Imperial woman: Harriet Martineau, Geopolitics and the Romance of Improvement', Isobel Armstrong 'Harriet Martineau and India: On Not Writing Accusatory History' and Catherine Hall 'Writing a History, Writing a Nation: Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*' all from *Harriet Martineau: Authorship, Society and Empire* Ed. by Ella Dzelzainis and Cora Kaplan for more information on Martineau's writings and views on empire, imperialism, and race.

concerns manifest in her rural fiction depicting British communities. In the following readings of 'The Hill and the Valley' and 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' I argue that these narratives present rural British communities as responding to and taking part in the same global processes of modernity that feature elsewhere in Martineau's writings.

But it is more complicated than simply mapping global influences onto local communities. The tension that drives the narratives of both 'The Hill and the Valley' and 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' resides in characters' conflicting opinions on how they should incorporate processes associated with global capitalist marketplaces into the daily routines of the community of rural villagers. In both narratives the impact of global modes of production and consumption, whether this is the importation of new goods and commodities or the development of agricultural technologies so as to increase levels of exportation, are repeatedly presented alongside depictions of local seasonal and pastoral images, such as orchards and harvest festivals. In this manner imaginings of global marketplaces are consistently cut across by the immediate, tangible, and comprehensible rhythms of local rural traditions and systems. Therefore, I argue that instead of presenting a simple depiction of Adam Smith's vision of smooth economic expansion, Martineau provides a nuanced reading of the unsettled ways in which rural communities responded to the impacts of global modernity. In the same way that critics have noted the complexities of Martineau's views on global topics, as featured in her writings on empire and slavery, I assert that a similarly nuanced view is presented in her dramatisations of the experiences of local communities participating within global marketplaces.

I start this reading with 'Brooke and Brooke Farm'; a narrative that dramatises a community's response to the Enclosures Act and the social

tensions and uncertainties associated with agricultural modernisation. To return to *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams pinpoints the introduction of the enclosures as the start of what he terms the 'myth' of urban industrialism:

[...] there is a sense in which the idea of the enclosures, localised to just that period in which the Industrial Revolution was beginning, can shift our attention from the real history an element of that very powerful myth of modern England in which the transition from a rural to an industrial society is seen as a kind of fall, the true cause and origin of our social suffering and disorder (96).

As Williams goes on to explain, “[i]t is difficult to overestimate the importance of this myth, in modern social thought” (96). The Enclosures Acts were closely aligned to the extension of capitalist systems of markets and exchange: “[i]n getting rid of the surviving open-field villages and common rights, in some of the most populous and prosperous parts of the country, they complemented and were indeed often caused by the general economic pressure on small owners and especially small tenants” (97). But what I want to think about the depiction of the effects of the Enclosures Act in ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’ is the manner in which Martineau animates this shift through a complicated matrix of different communal affects. It is not simply a tale of fall from an ‘organic’ or ‘natural’ social order, although this view does arise at times, but it is also a tale of new connections being forged with the English locality of Brooke and other diverse localities across the globe, afforded by the profits of the enclosure. It is a story that meditates on the alternating perspectival scales and geographical affects produced by the Enclosure Acts in order to consider their implications on both a local and a global scale.

Writing in 1867 in *Capital* Karl Marx refers to the Enclosures Acts as “[t]he parliamentary form of robbery [...] which the landlords grant themselves the people’s land as private property” (681). Marx claims that by the nineteenth century “the very memory of the connexion between the agricultural labourer and the communal property had, of course, vanished” (681). Considering her overt alignment to the theories of Adam Smith, it is perhaps not surprising that Martineau presents a different reading of the effects of enclosure in her work to the views held by Karl Marx. However, there are a number of ways in which ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’ presents a dramatisation of the Enclosure Acts that provides room to consider the multiplicity of responses to the social, economic, and environmental changes that these Acts incur to rural communities. By focusing on the geographical affect of ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’ it becomes apparent that Martineau’s imagining of the individual and shared feelings associated with rural communities departs from a view point informed strictly by political economy to one that considers a more meditative view of rural modernisation: what it means to have a relationship to the local land in periods of globalised trading. How is the global marketplace constructed out of diverse localities across the world? And, to what extent do rural communities’ bonds of social affiliation and loyalty change when placed in the networks of global trading?

Despite the complexities of the content of ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’, the narrative commences depicting a village seemingly independent from outside trading and commerce. In the opening lines Martineau describes the village of Brooke as consisting of “one long, straggling street where the blacksmith, the publican, the grocer, and the haberdasher live; their houses being separated by some gardens, others by cowsheds or pigsties” (1). At the end of the street lies

the 'Wither's Arms' "the only public house in the place" (1). In a similar manner to Adam Smith's depiction of a small-scale trading of "the farmer, the shoemaker, and the tailor" in *The Wealth of Nations*, Martineau structures the village around local and knowable social relations (400). The 'cowsheds and pigsties' separating the houses would provide food for the local residents and the public house would be the communal meeting place. The narrative that follows, however, departs from Adam Smith's smooth, obstacle-free imagining of extending market connections. The social relations of the village do not simply extend indefinitely without upset, but are fractured with local disquiet and uncertainty about how to respond to or accommodate the changes associated with enclosures.

In the early chapters of 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' Martineau depicts the communal responses to the enclosures in way that may at first appear fitting to Marx's critique of the acts. In the following passage Lucy, the narrator of the story and daughter of a local landowner, recounts the response of the villagers to the division of the common lands:

There were many women; but they were neither cutting furze nor tending their cows. Men were arriving from all sides, seeming disposed to see what was going forward, rather than sit down to dinner at home.

[...] The variety of countenances plainly declared how various the feelings with which proceedings were viewed. [...] I could not wonder at some of their lamentations I heard around me, or at the sour looks with which the strangers were regarded (28-29).

The strangers in this passage are those men hired to divide the land into strips for agricultural production. What is telling about this section is the manner in

which the actions of the villagers associated with the enclosure, the cutting of the furze and the tending of cows, are centred on labour and methods of production. Martineau does not present the pre-enclosed village as sort of pastoral rural idyll, but one that is active and self-sufficient. This productivity is reiterated later in the narrative when Sir Henry, the landowner instigating the enclosures, experiences difficulty in convincing the local tenant and farmers of the benefits enclosures could bring:

Sir Henry had had a world of trouble in laying his plans about these plantations; for, in addition to the discontents of the people about the common, he had met with opposition from other quarters. Every arable cultivator grumbled over Malton's pastures and Whither's woods by turns. Every shepherd looked upon every spot occupied by a tree as so much food taken from his flock (56).

Instead of seeing the potential that the enclosed methods of agriculture could bring to the village, the arable cultivators and the shepherds see only how they use the land. In the first half of the narrative, 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' focuses on the manner in which the local people of Brooke feel that they are being severed from the connections they once held with the land and the methods of labour, production, and consumption dependent on the local environment. This is not a pastoral eulogy of a lost 'natural' relationship with nature, but a critique of the social relations and feelings that occur as a result of changes in methods of production.

However, when the local people are required to work on the planting and cultivation of the new enclosures a different affective response is presented. Instead of depicting scenes of mass agricultural production and modernisation,

Martineau imagines these scenes in terms that are strikingly similar to the local traditions detailed early in the narrative:

Few rural employments are more interesting to the by-stander than that of planting. I have stood for hours with my brothers, watching the people at their work. First a labourer took off with his spade about a foot of turf, and laid it aside, while he dug the pit, and broke the clods, and loosened the soil near. Then his wife, if he had one, or his boy, placed the plant just brought from the nursery, in the earth and spread the roots abroad in their direction, taking especial care not to twist or bruise the tender fibres which draw nourishment from the soil (60).

The process of planting focuses the feelings of the people on the environment and the ground around them; they are 'careful' not to damage the roots or fibres of the crops they are planting. The 'rural employment' of planting is depicted as a skilled form of work, one that is dependent on a close relationship between the people and the local natural environment. The scales of reference in this passage root the workers firmly in the locality of Brooke. Despite the Enclosure Act pulling Brooke into a wider and wider marketplace and network of connections, here, Martineau depicts the local relationships that it produces as depending on local knowledge and local skilled labour.

But, this is not to suggest that in 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' Martineau eschews the debates regarding the various ways in which the Enclosure Acts drew local communities into a wider network of trade. Reflecting on the profits that the enclosure could bring to Brooke, Lucy notes that,

I began this winter by admiring Sir Henry's benevolence to future generations more than I saw reason to do afterwards. I imagined that he would reap none of the fruits of his present outlay of trouble and capital, and that all that he did in planting was for the sake of his children and his country. He did consider both. He was well aware of the value of an ample supply of timber to a nation like ours, whose naval resources can never be too plentiful, and whose magnificent works of art create a perpetual demand for the treasures of the forest. He was mindful, also, of the vast increase to the value of his estates which he might provide by planting his inferior lands; but, with all this, he hoped, as it is fair that he should, that his own revenues would be improved by the same means, perhaps before he had passed the middle of his life (62).

The profits of the Brooke's enclosure move away from the individual cultivating of crops as described in the earlier paragraphs on to the progress of the nation as a whole. Interestingly, the profits detailed in this paragraph focus initially on the naval defence and the cultural development of the nation, rather than the economic or monetary gain it could bring to the country or the community. The only capital accumulation featured in this description is ascribed to Sir Henry, the landowner, rather than the people of the village. The geographical affect that Martineau associates with the enclosure and agricultural modernisation are deliberately vague or confusing; in the space of the first half of the narrative Martineau has simultaneously depicted the communal feelings based on knowledge and care of the local land, while also depicting Sir Henry's individual profits from the process. It is important, however, not to dismiss this narrative simply as a political economist's fantasy of communal work and individual profit; what occurs in the second half of the narrative reveals the ways in which this tension is part of larger, global processes of modernisation.

Discussing the ways in which the Enclosure Act has changed agricultural labour in Britain and in Brooke, Lucy is told by her father that these changes must be considered as taking place across the world:

‘It is one of the most interesting employments I know of’, said my father, ‘to trace how the same principles lead men to directly opposite or widely different modes of conduct’ [...]

‘Any one of our labourers would be prejudiced if he blamed an Indian for waste for burning a whole pine tree at once; and that Indian would show himself ignorant if he laughed at Sir Henry for spending so much time, and labour, and money in planting trees, of which the Indians have more than they know what to do with’ (64-66).

Both Sir Henry and the Indian labourer respond to different methods of agricultural production in the way that will increase their yield; for Sir Henry he needs trees and timber to export to the rest of the nation, for the Indian he has ample trees and can sacrifice forest space to produce other goods. This passage suggests that modernisation has created what contemporary theorists have called an “intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 8). Local people in Brooke are able to compare their systems and methods of agriculture with those in other nations, but this is a comparison that focuses on the differences rather than the similarities between agricultural modes of production across the globe. It is also important to note that it is India and the Indians whose work is placed in comparison with the rural workers of Britain. Unlike *Mary Barton* in which Gaskell concludes with the idealised depiction of British emigration to rural Canada, Martineau uses the global paradigms associated with extending markets to consider the local, traditional

modes of agricultural labour across the globe. This is not a case of market expansion being based on British emigration and domination, but on a more nuanced meditation of how the global marketplace can benefit from numerous forms of local knowledge and modes of production.

To a certain extent this depiction of global trading aligns itself to Adam Smith's eighteenth-century depiction of international trading and the potential mutual economic profit it could bring to all nations. However, Martineau again troubles this reading with the chapter 'What Joe Harper Saw Abroad'. This chapter expands the narrative to social conditions across Europe and Asia; Joe Harper, a soldier recently returned to Brooke, discusses the changes that have taken place in his home village in the context of agricultural labour across the world. In the following extract Joe Harper and a retired Sergeant explain to the local villagers how lucky they are to live on such fertile land:

'I have seen more misery than I could easily give you an idea of: by that, too, in spite of the most indefatigable industry. In Languedoc, a province of France, there are mountains which are cultivated to the very top, by means which no one dreams here. But those who cultivate them are miserably poor, because each possesses a piece of ground which can never, by the best management, be made to maintain a family. I have seen people carrying earth in baskets on their backs to the top of a mountain which was itself too rocky for anything to grow upon it.'

'That puts me in mind', said the Sergeant, 'of what I have heard about China. The people there are too numerous for the produce of the land, and therefore many are in the lowest depths of poverty. I am told that it is no uncommon thing there for a man to take possession of a ledge of rock which cannot be got at but by his companions letting him down on a rope from the mountain top. They let down baskets of earth to him, which he spreads to sufficient thickness, and then sows his seed,

and he and his neighbours share the produce. There he hangs, poor creature, in the heat of the day, toiling on the burning rock [...]’ (116-117).

By detailing the hardships that other rural communities across the globe experience, Martineau places the agricultural modes of production in Brooke in contrast to the difficulties faced by people living in other geographical environments. This global comparison between different rural communities prevents Martineau’s imagining of agricultural expansion from depicting a homogenisation of methods of production. Enclosures, so frequently understood as forcing rural communities to succumb to centralised methods of labour, are here presented as contributing to a diverse global market place, one that is informed by the varieties of labour, production, and environment that make up local communities across the world.

So, over the course of ‘Brooke and Brooke Farm’ Martineau refrains from depicting a clear narrative of how enclosures effect local communities; she draws together numerous scales of reference spanning from the landowners, to the local workers, outwards to the global marketplace. These different scales and the geographical affects they produce are integral to understandings of this story. The diverse patterns that are overlaid in this narrative highlight the complicated ways in which localities are drawn into globalised networks of trading. While the “intensified consciousness of the world as a whole” (8), the trait that Robertson identifies as characterising modernity, is present, so too is an intense awareness of the local ground and the local environment and local labouring methods – this does not change with the introduction of the enclosures.

The closing scene of the narrative does not attempt to offer a reconciliation to these competing sources of interest. Rather than concluding with an image of the globalised networks to which Brooke now contributes, Martineau finishes 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' with a pastoral image of the local harvest festival celebrations:

How goodly looked the last waggon, laden with golden grain, as it turned out of the field at sunset, leaving a few ears dangling from the sprays for the gleaners as it creaked along the lane! Merry were the sounds from the train that followed. The songs which should have been kept for the harvest-supper began to burst forth already, the deep bass of a manly voice making itself heard above the shrill laughter of children. This was truly the music of glad hearts.

We saw the long tables set out for the harvest feast, and went through our annual speculations about how so much good cheer was consumed (135).

In a story that has been so centred around the extension of economic connections experienced by a rural community, it is noteworthy that in the closing pages of the narrative Martineau eschews a global perspective and instead presents a pastoral, seasonal scene of local celebrations. The images of goodly 'last waggon, laden with golden grain' and the 'long tables set out for the harvest feast' present an opulent reading of the spoils gained by the agricultural modernisation. But there is an interesting interplay here between the spoils of market trading and traditional communal celebrations. Thinking in terms of scale and geographical affect, 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' demonstrates how Martineau invokes global scales associated with economic expansion, but the geographical affect of the narrative is always firmly rooted in the local

environment of Brooke. The 'global village' of Smith's eighteenth-century imagining of global trading is replaced here with a decidedly localised, pastoral view of village life. It is in this way that Martineau presents such an ambiguous image of rural British life in the context of global trading; rural villages contribute to the global marketplace, whilst also maintaining their sense of local, communal identity.

The complication of different scales and different patterns of affiliation and loyalty also feature in another story published in the first volume of *Illustrations of Political Economy*: 'The Hill and the Valley'. The narrative of this story follows a similar structure to 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' as it traces the changes experienced by a small, rural community that becomes increasingly dependent on and incorporated within the global marketplace. The village transforms from a remote community set in the hills of this "wild district" (1) to an industrial trading centre that exports the region's natural resources of iron across the nation and the globe. Again, this reading of Martineau's work will examine how rural seasonal rhythms and traditional communal social relations are presented as becoming increasingly amalgamated into the broader networks of global trading. In a similar manner to 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' the geographical affect of this tale falls on various characters' attempts to consolidate local responses to the changes in agricultural production and exchange with the economic booms and busts of the global marketplace. I argue that it is the rural setting of this narrative that informs the scales employed by Martineau to depict the impact of processes of global economic expansion on local communities. The geographical affect of the story meditates on the various ways in which people feel about their place in the world as a

result of their previously isolated rural community becoming increasingly connected to and implicated within the actions of other unknown communities.

'The Hill and the Valley' opens with the chapter 'Every Man His Whim' which details the everyday life and routine of John Armstrong. Armstrong lives alone in the rural surroundings of the village in south Wales and appears to lead an almost Robinson Crusoe-like existence. He consumes only what he can produce himself: the "baking and churning [and] the rearing and killing of fowls done at home" while "his garden supplies the table" and he only "generally went twice a year to town, which was four miles off" (10). These early pages of the narrative act out a fantasy of self-sufficiency as Armstrong cultivates his garden and the surrounding land to support his solitary lifestyle. John Armstrong's daily routines are disrupted with the arrival of Mr Wallace, a manufacturer who sees an opportunity to exploit the local environment with the construction of an iron works. When Armstrong voices his doubts about the changes that this will incur in the local countryside and to the community who live there, Wallace suggests that he needs to understand the concept of a community in wider terms. He explains that, "I trust that when you see some hundreds of human beings thriving where there are now only woodcocks and trout, you will be reconciled to change" (20). This notion of thinking about local developments on a wider scale is reiterated a few pages later when, during the construction of the iron works, the narrator explicitly links the production of iron in south Wales with the happiness and prosperity of communities living across the nation and the globe: "It gave the workers great pleasure to remember that the productions of their labour would promote the comfort and the convenience of many hundreds or thousands more in distant places to which the iron of the district was carried" (21). The language used by Mr Wallace to convince Mr Armstrong of the need

for broader frames of reference refers not to the material or monetary gains, but to the affective, felt responses.

As such, the workers are motivated to work not in order to increase their own individual wealth, but to improve the living conditions of other communities living elsewhere, who they do not know. This affective relationship between different communities inverts the links between individual gain and communal prosperity as understood in theories of political economy. In *The Wealth of Nations* Smith explains that the concept of self-interest is understood as “the uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition” this principle is “frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things toward improvement” (306). But, for Smith, this relationship between individual self-interest and the progress of society usually goes unnoticed:

The wages of the labourer, as it has already been shown, are never so high as when the demand for labour is continually rising, or when the quantity employed is every year increasing considerable [...] But though the interest of the labourer is strictly connected with that of the society, he is incapable either of comprehending that interest or understanding its connection with his own (230-231).

In a recent study on nineteenth-century theories of political economy and the novel Catherine Gallagher notes that, “it might seem the basic plot linking the individual to the group would be relatively straightforward: people would compete and thereby grow the total amount of wealth so that increasing amounts of people would probably find enjoyment: wealth would be converted into enjoyment and enjoyment into wealth” (*The Body Economic* 50). What

Martineau does in 'The Hill and the Valley', however, is to complicate this narrative so as to think about its effects in communal terms.

In the early chapters of the narrative the workers in the iron district of south Wales do not align themselves to Smith's reading of self-interested workers, instead Martineau presents them as being motivated by the idea of contributing to a global village. The connections between communities are seen to be only beneficial to those involved. Mr Wallace, the manufacturer, explains to Mr Armstrong it would be unwise to resist these changes:

You would have no spade, no scythe, no bucket for your well, no chain for your bucket, no newspaper in the morning, and no Farmers' Journal in the afternoon. Since you owe all these things and a thousand others to the co-operation of capitalists and labourers, my dear sir, it seems rather ungracious to despise such a union (40).

This argument is repeated in a following chapter with Mr Wallace's claim that "You enjoy the fruits of the labour and capital of others, - you drink your tea from the East Indies and your coffee from the West; you read your newspaper, which is the production of a hundred brains and pairs of hands" (77). Wallace points to the ever increasing processes of exchange on which the lives of the people in south Wales are dependent. Even the tools needed by Armstrong to cultivate his land, or the food needed to sustain him are part of a complex and widening network of market relations.

Thinking about the ways in which processes of expansion affected local communal bonds, Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Rise and Spread of Nationalism* that nineteenth-century networks of communication and information had a profound impact on how

communities were conceived. Anderson explains that “[i]t [the concept of a nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lies the image of communion” (6). This imagined union between individuals is created through the formation of print culture. Anderson notes that this enabled an “extraordinary mass ceremony” (35) among the new reading public. For Anderson the proliferation of newspapers that occurred in the nineteenth-century produced an idea of a connected national community in the minds of the readers. In ‘The Hill and the Valley’ a similar idea of an imagined community is presented; however, this is an imagined community that stretches beyond the boundaries of the nation to all those living across the world contributing to the global marketplace.

The changes that Martineau depicts taking place in ‘The Hill and the Valley’, changes such as the introduction of industrial methods of labour, the greater distribution of newspapers, and the global exchange of goods, commodities, and capital, may at first appear to bring the world into a networked global village. However, Martineau questions the ways in which these connections could withstand the moments of economic boom and bust; as such, the global trading community or ‘discourse network’ is revealed to be weaker than envisioned by Mr Wallace. The prosperity that has come to the village has swollen the community until it contains “upwards of eleven hundred labourers [that] were now employed in the works [...] Many a farmer threw up his farm, and went to South Wales to find a more profitable settlement” (80):

The political state of various countries was unsettled, and trade in general, therefore, disturbed. The quantity of iron produced by the flow of

capital and labour to that department had met more than the immediate demand, and there was a glut in the market [...] there was much doubt whether the demand for bar-iron from South Wales would ever again be as extensive as formerly, for the Welsh iron-masters had now rivals abroad. In America and in various parts of Europe, establishments for the preparation of iron were beginning to flourish at the expense of those of longer standing in our own country (84-85).

The community falls into turmoil as unemployment hits all those who work in the iron works. The discontent in response to this economic turn grows “hourly”, but this is a discontent that is confused; it is “divided between the American and the French iron-works, the rivals in the government of the country, and the whole body of customers who would not give so high a price as formerly for their iron” (84). In this sentence Martineau identifies the competing sources of identity experienced by members of the village communities in Wales. The wide spanning paradigms of social affiliation that Mr Wallace promoted in early chapters of the story are now what destroys any idea of communal sympathy or understanding.

The geographical affect of this scene demonstrates the complication that is associated with the extension of market connections. Despite the production of iron in south Wales continuing at a steady rate, the competition with America and Europe decreases demand. Interestingly, however, it is this glut in the global market that effects the local feelings of the workers towards their community. The notion that they are working for the good of society as a whole has broken down as the economic downturn reveals the economic imperatives that were maintaining the bonds between the different communities. The network of information, communication, and trade that was perceived to unite

the communities proves to bring no lasting connections between the different nations. The sense of scale between local communities and global marketplaces, here, is fragmented to reveal the geographical distances and communal differences that exist between areas, despite all belonging to the same global marketplace.

In a similar manner to 'Brooke and Brooke Farm', the concluding chapter of 'The Hill and the Valley' does not present a neat conclusion to this tension. Instead of presenting a depiction of communal harmony, Martineau ends 'The Hill and the Valley' with an image that returns to the start of the narrative, Mr Armstrong alone in his orchard:

Armstrong handed the lady gently down to the chaise. When it was out of sight, he was a long time tethering the gate; and the housekeeper observed that he drew his hand across his eyes and turned into his orchard plot (139).

The focus on the individual, alone in his orchard seems to be at odds with the global connections that have characterised much of the proceeding narrative. Instead of looking forward into a globalised world of connected traders and societies, the reader is left instead with the image of an elderly figure, alone, covering his eyes. The seasonal rhythms of the local orchard replace the unpredictable ups and downs of industrial production in countries across the world.

As demonstrated in both 'Brooke and Brooke Farm' and 'The Hill and the Valley', Martineau's imagining of rural communities places them firmly within the global landscape of modernity and capitalist trading. However, to suggest that

she presents them as succumbing to the forces of these networks without resistance or contemplation would be to overlook the nuanced ways in which Martineau portrays the changing patterns of feeling taking place in rural communities. She overlays multiple and at times competing paradigms of social affiliation and loyalty so as to critique the complicated ways in which rural communities engaged with processes of agricultural modernisation. In thinking about the complex manner in which Martineau plots the connections between rural communities and the global marketplace, it becomes possible to advance a more balanced reading of Martineau's literary works. These stories are not simply reiterations of Adam Smith's principles or of the doctrines of political economy; they present intricate meditations on the multi-faceted ways in which different people living in the same community responded to the forces of modernity.

George Eliot *The Mill on the Floss*

In a recent study on the novels of George Eliot Josephine McDonagh claims that "the central questions to which all her [Eliot's] works return are to do with social and cultural change: what are the mechanisms for change? how is change generated? and how is it incorporated into people's lives?" (*George Eliot* 7). Similar questions are at the fore of the following reading of *The Mill on the Floss*. This chapter argues that the mechanisms and social effects of changes associated with processes of expansion are depicted in *The Mill on the Floss* through a complex range of scales and perspectives. The literary aesthetics and linguistic devices used by Eliot to portray these effects differ

somewhat from those in Martineau's rural fiction that have already been examined in this chapter. It is Eliot's emphasis on perspective and felt responses to the changes that inform my reading of the geographical affect of the town of St Ogg's. How do characters respond to the feeling of the local land? How does this inform their understanding of the world around them? How do characters imagine their community to be changing as a result of increased connections with other areas? Much critical material has been written on Eliot's portrayal of feelings and intense psychological states, likewise there has been a renewed attention to the ways in which Eliot portrays different forms of communities. This chapter aims to bridge these two areas of scholarship through a reading of the diverse range of scalar perspectives associated with Mr Tulliver, Maggie and Tom Tulliver and other inhabitants of St Ogg's.

This reading addresses the ways in which Eliot depicts the feelings of suffocation, isolation, uncertainty, and excitement in different characters experiencing the processes of agricultural modernisation. As stated in the introduction to this section, Eliot features in two chapters in this thesis. It is therefore necessary to first outline how this rural reading of *The Mill on the Floss* differs from the provincial reading of *Middlemarch* in Chapter Four. It is also useful to note the reasons why I have chosen *The Mill on the Floss* over some of Eliot's more overtly pastoral novels such as *Adam Bede*. The second part focuses more closely on the linguistic devices and literary images used in *The Mill on the Floss* to represent scale and how it functions to demonstrate the complicated ways in which different characters experience the effects of rural modernisation and processes of economic expansion. These readings consider the complex depiction of geographical affects that these scales produce in characters living in the same geographical community. Seen together these

three aspects will bring together a reading of *The Mill on the Floss* that will incorporate both the global and spatial concerns of the novel, whilst also paying attention to the affective and emotional portrayals of characters.

Writing in 1970 Henry Auster notes that *The Mill on the Floss* should not be read as a rural novel due to its focus on economic and social concerns. He explains that,

Whereas Adam's [in *Adam Bede*] world has been richly pastoral – organic and stable in structure, shrewdly practical but amiable in daily intercourse, and in moral attitudes upright, naturally devout, but sensible and tolerant – Maggie's world is provincial rather than rural, constricting rather than coherent, ignorant and superstitious, rather than naive or Christian. As the references to money, property, and advancement that stud the book's pages make clear, St. Ogg's is almost exclusively concerned with economic gain and social position. It makes its moral and personal judgements according to worldly success alone (143).

It is the aim of this chapter, in part, to question such readings of rural fiction that omit works that concern references to economic gain or 'worldly success'. While I agree with Auster that *The Mill on the Floss* does not present the same scenes of bucolic idylls as *Adam Bede*, I am slightly more hesitant to draw such a hard distinction between rural and provincial. In fact, it is exactly the instabilities and uncertainties that Auster uses to exclude *The Mill on the Floss* from readings of Victorian rurality, that I argue is the defining characteristics of both Eliot and Martineau's representations of the nineteenth-century countryside. This thesis sheds new light on these aspects of *The Mill on the Floss* and brings to the fore aspects of the novel that draw attention to the complex portrayal of geographical affect that appear on its pages. Characters' responses to the local

area and the community are drawn from a diverse range of influences, such as their established social relations, their families, but also trade, and the mechanisation of agricultural labour. As such, rural communities are not, in my understanding, 'organic and stable', but disjointed and unsettled.

This current reading is more aligned to Terry Eagleton's argument in *Criticism and Ideology*. In this work Eagleton notes the economic context informing the plot of *The Mill on the Floss*:

The rural society of the *Mill* [is] one of struggling tenant farmers becoming enmortgaged and forced into ruin by the pressures of urban banking and agricultural industry [...] As urban capital penetrates into the countryside, those conflicts suggested yet suppressed in *Adam Bede* erupt to provide one of the *Mill's* central images – the financial collapse of Dorlcote Mill itself (115).

I want to examine Eagleton's argument that 'urban capital penetrates into the countryside' in *The Mill on the Floss*. My reading thinks about how such a 'penetration' takes place and the ways in which different characters respond to its impacts. In 'Imaging Locality and Affiliation: George Eliot's Villages' Josephine McDonagh notes that "[i]n all Eliot's novels, characters' affiliation to their locality is a fundamental strand in their ethical make up" (356). I argue that *The Mill on the Floss* dramatises the ways in which characters' 'ethical make ups' alter when the concept of locality is brought into national and global networks of trading and communication.

At the core of Eliot's depiction of affiliation of the people of St Ogg's to their local environment are the effects associated with concepts of the historical, the spatial, and shared sense of communal feeling. These three aspects are all

present in the opening description of the town St Ogg's and its surrounding countryside. On the first page of *The Mill on the Floss* George Eliot presents the town of St. Ogg's through a focus on scale, but it is not simply scale as geographical distance, it is scale as a felt sense of perspective:

A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the black ships – laden with the fresh-scented fir-planks, with rounded sacks of oil-bearing seed, or with the dark glitter of coal – are borne along to the town of St Ogg's, which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and the river brink, tinging the water with a soft purple hue under the transient glance of the February sun. Far away on each hand stretch the rich pastures and the patches of dark earth, made ready for the seed of the broad-leaved green crops, or touched already with the tint of the tender-bladed autumn-sown corn. There is a remnant still of the last year's golden clusters of bee-hive ricks rising at intervals beyond the hedgerows; and everywhere the hedgerows are studded with trees: the distant ships seem to be lifting their masts and stretching their red-brown sails close among the branches of the spreading ash (9).

This passage is defined by images of the spatial and the temporal; just in the first sentence the reader is presented with the a sense of space and movement that is 'wide', 'broadening', 'hurrying', 'rushing', and 'impetuous'. These images continue throughout the paragraph as the forces of commerce and trade meet the 'aged roofs' and 'low wooded hill' of the town of St. Ogg's. But this is not a meeting resulting in conflict or animosity; the speed and rush of the trading river match the seasonal rhythms of the town. The town is surrounded by 'rich'

'stretching' pastures and filled with 'broad-leaved green crops' and 'autumn-sown corn'. Immediately Eliot depicts the rural town as interacting with and incorporating different systems of trade and commerce. This is not a community resisting the speed of change. The geographical affect of St Ogg's is defined by the meeting of these different temporal and spatial understandings taking place within the same specific regional locale.

Unlike Martineau, who in her opening description of Mr Armstrong's home in 'The Hill and the Valley' details the exact distance (4 miles) of the nearest town, Eliot does not offer a precise location of St Ogg's. The location of the town is presented in *The Mill on the Floss* through a portrayal of the felt perspective of different characters. I use the term 'perspective' deliberately as it refers to the ways in which understandings of distance can alter, change, or prove to be illusionary between different characters' views of the world. Such a notion of a 'trick' of perspective is detailed in the final clause of the opening paragraph: "the distant ships seem to be lifting their masts and stretching their red-brown sails close among the branches of the spreading ash" (9). The verb 'seem' in this sentence is integral to understanding the ways in which Eliot presents distances and scales throughout *The Mill on the Floss*. The 'distant' ships, and the commercial exchanges that they bring to the town, appear not only to be closer to the town, but to be part of the rural, natural landscape of the ash trees. Visually, the masts of the ships and the trees surrounding St Ogg's become interchangeable with one another, the sails mirroring the autumn leaves. In this image the local and rural and the global and maritime are folded in on one another; the global trading world is not somewhere 'out there' beyond the rural inhabitants of St Ogg's imagination, but it is ever present in how they view their surroundings.

Eliot's engagements with scalar categories of perspective feature in works other than her novels; they also appear in her interest in science and natural history. In 'Recollections of Ilfracombe' from 1856 Eliot recalls how "every day I gleaned some little bit of naturalistic experience, either through G's calling on me to look through the microscope or from hunting on the rocks" (Harris *The Journals of George Eliot* 266).⁴¹ The close, detailed observation of the coastline of Ilfracombe is indicative of how Eliot presents the world in her fiction. Although much has been written on Eliot's use of optical and scientific imagery in *Middlemarch*, there has been significantly less attention paid to how similar themes appear in *The Mill on the Floss*.⁴² It is my contention that scalar perspectives and how they provide new observational standpoints on the world form a crucial part of her depiction of expanding economic and material connections. I argue that these contrasting perspectives feature in her work as an attempt to both give shape to and plot the new market connections that spread across the nation and the globe. Through focusing on the close, specific details of local customs and neighbourhood relations alongside the broadening horizons of marketplace trading Eliot animates exactly the uneven products of capitalist development. By playing with the different ways that scalar categories pull different characters understanding of the world around them in different directions, it is possible to advance a new reading of the ways that the rural community of St. Ogg's imagined the impacts of expanding marketplaces.

Also in 1856, only four years prior to the publication of *The Mill on the Floss*, an article by George Eliot was featured in *Westminster Review* on fiction and rural villages. 'The Natural History of German Life' details Eliot's views on

⁴¹ For more information on nineteenth-century microscopes see Chapter Two of this thesis and the discussion of scale and optical cultures.

⁴² See Chapter Four of this thesis and the reading of *Middlemarch* for a more detailed reading of optical tropes in this novel.

the literary depictions of rural peasantry in British fiction through a comparison with the books of the German author Wilhelm Heinrich von Riehl. In this article Eliot notes that “the influence of idyllic literature, which has always expressed the imagination of the cultivated and the town-bred, rather than the truth of rustic life” (269). She goes on to argue that rural fiction should depict the true feelings of agricultural labourers rather than simplified tropes: “The selfish instincts are not subdued by the sights of buttercups, nor is integrity in the least established by that classic rural occupation, sheep-washing. To make men moral, something more is requisite than to turn them out to grass” (270). What is of interest to this study on scale, however, is Eliot’s critique of the ‘modern generalisations’ on the relationship between rural workers and their neighbours. She argues against “[t]he tendency created by the splendid conquests of modern generalisation, to believe that all social questions are merged in economical science, and that the relations of men to their neighbours may be settled by algebraic equations” (272). It is this idea of the “relations of men to their neighbours” that is the concern of the following paragraphs. Instead of thinking about these in terms of ‘algebraic equations’ *The Mill on the Floss* provides ways to think about felt relations between neighbours and communities.

But in order to account for these responses it is necessary to place them within the social and economic context of rural modernisation. Although Eliot dismisses the ‘modern generalisations’ of ‘economical science’ she does not divorce the feelings of her rural characters from the movements towards agricultural modernisation that are taking place around them. In ‘Water rights and the ‘crossing o’ breeds’: Chiastic Exchange in *The Mill on the Floss*’ Jules Law notes that “water and mill are the two central symbols in the novel, yet both are on the verge of historical transformation. Between 1825 and 1845, steam

engines were beginning to compete with natural hydraulics as a power source for mills” (58). The narrative of *The Mill on the Floss* dramatises the manner in which these changes in the agricultural system are experienced by those who have lived with the older hydraulic forms of labour. As Law again explains, “part of the novel’s dynamic [...] depends on the radical uncertainty surrounding a new technology and its legal and social ramifications” (64). The differences in how people respond to this modernisation of agricultural labour forms the crux of the geographical affect of *The Mill on the Floss*. For some characters the new connections and trade associated with mill open up their horizons of opportunity to connect with the rest of the nation, for others it threatens to rupture any sense of local social relations being shaped by the rural environment.

Reflecting on the changes that a new system of irrigation will bring both to the town and to his family’s mill, Mr Tulliver explains that, “Dorcote Mill’s been in our family a hundred year and better, and nobody’s ever heard of Pivart meddling with the river, till this fellow came and bought Bilcom’s farm out of hand, before anyone else could so much as say ‘snap’” (163). In a similar way Mrs Tulliver evokes ideas of the supernatural and local beliefs to argue against the irrigation changes, she prophesises that “it’s allays unlucky when Dorlcote Mill changes hands, and the water might all run away” (263). But Eliot does something more complicated with the Tullivers’ feelings towards agricultural modernisation than only couching them in archaic local traditions. In the following passage Eliot describes the ways in which these traditional understandings of the local environment are troubled when placed in the context of imaginative understandings of processes of expansion:

Our instructed vagrancy which has hardly time to linger by the hedgerows, but runs away early to the tropics and is at home with palms and banyans – which is nourished on books of travel and stretches the theatre of its imagination to the Zambesi can hardly get a dim notion of what an old fashioned man like Tulliver felt for this spot, where all his memories centred and where life seemed like a familiar smooth-handled tool that the fingers clutch with loving ease.

‘The old mill ‘ud miss me, I think, Luke. There’s a story as when the mill changes hands, the river’s angry – I’ve heard my father say it many a time.’ (277).

This paragraph highlights the complicated ways in which Eliot places the feelings of the inhabitants of St Ogg’s in a wider perspective of the world as a whole. The passage starts with a reference to the bounded ‘hedgerows’, an image of decidedly hemmed-in understanding of rurality, before expanding outwards to the exotic and tropical landscape of Zambesi. The link between these two locations is not, however, one that is forged through trade, commerce, or any other form of physical or communicative exchange; it is formed in the minds of people who have read travel books about these countries. The understanding of these areas, as Eliot presents it, are purely imaginative. For Mr Tulliver, however, his understanding of the world around him is based on his feelings of the local world around him. His response towards the local environment is compared to the feeling of a ‘familiar smooth-handled tool’. In comparison to the imaginative flights of other peoples’ imaginations, this image of Mr Tulliver’s understanding of his local world focuses on the workful, everyday routines associated with rural life.

In contrast to Mr Tulliver’s practical understanding of the local world around him, resistant to the imagined connections he may share with locations

across the globe, his children, Maggie and Thomas, present a very different affective reading to the rural community of St Ogg's. When describing the lives of the children, Eliot notes the frustration that they both experience

Perhaps something akin to this oppressive feeling may have weighed upon you in watching this old-fashioned family life on the banks of the Floss, which even sorrow hardly suffices to lift above the level of the tragi-comic [...] You could not live among such people; you are stifled for want of an outlet towards something beautiful, great, or noble: you are irritated with these dull men and women, as a kind of population out of keeping with the earth on which they live – with this rich plain where the great river flows for ever onward, and links the small pulse of the old English town with the beatings of the world's mighty heart (283-284).

The 'oppressive' and 'stifled' feelings that they experience would at first suggest a diffusionist model of modernity; the sense that modernity is something that is going on out there, beyond the horizon. However, as the passage progresses another model is brought to the fore: the anatomical model of the river's beating pulse and the world's mighty heart. This paragraph then presents two paradigms of rural experience of modernity; on the one hand, Maggie and Tom feel as though they have been left out of the progresses of modernity, they feel 'oppressed' by local traditions, on the other hand Eliot positions St Ogg's as part of the national anatomy of trade. There is a disconnection here in the perspectives of the young people who live in St Ogg's, and how they feel about their place in the world, and the actual connections that the rural community shares with trading nation. Eliot later describes Tom and Maggie as being stifled by an "oppressive sense of narrowness" associated with the local community

which “tied them by the strongest fibres of their hearts” to the generations before them (284).

In a similar way to Harriet Martineau in *Illustrations of Political Economy*, George Eliot does not present one clear reading of the geographical affects of St Ogg’s and the process of agricultural modernisation. There are clear trading links with the rest of the nation, and as the opening description suggests, the world as a whole, but these do not necessarily characterise the geographical affect of the local community. There are moments of resistance or reluctance to participate in these new networks, but then there are also characters who are unaware or unable to visualise how these connections link them with other communities. It is this that makes Eliot’s portrayal of a rural community so important to any study on the nineteenth-century countryside; it highlights both the dynamic ways in which agricultural communities contributed to the nation’s marketplace, whilst also depicting the unsettled ways in which these changes were received and registered by local communities. Or to put it another way, this is not a community succumbing to the pressures and forces of modernity, but neither is it an imagining of a bucolic idyll divorced from the socio-economic concerns of the period.

One possible reason for the omission of *The Mill on the Floss* from many studies on nineteenth-century agricultural modernisation may lie in the novel’s concluding apocalyptic scenes of the river flooding St Ogg’s and drowning Tom and Maggie Tulliver. Previous critics have addressed this scene from the angle of gender and the relationship between the siblings; however, there has been a notable lack of readings that considers the trade implications that are inherent in

its events.⁴³ In the epilogue the events following the flood are described in terms that stress the agricultural productivity of the area:

Nature repairs her ravages – repairs them with her sunshine, with human labour. The desolation wrought by that flood, had left little visible trace on the face of the earth, five years after. The fifth autumn was rich in golden corn-stacks, rising in thick clusters among the distant hedgerows; the wharves and warehouses of the Floss were busy again, with echoes of eager voices, with hopeful lading and unlading (543).

In images that echo the opening paragraph of the novel, Eliot places St Ogg's as a thriving trading centre. The town is 'rich' in corn that spreads to the 'distant hedgerows' and the warehouses are full with the products that will allow it to trade with other communities. It may appear odd that the drowning of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, a scene of such high emotional and melodramatic intensity, is followed by a description of local trading prosperity. I argue, however, it is this mixing of individual tragedy and later communal prosperity that highlights the complicated way in which Eliot mixes the scales of local and global frames of reference in the novel.

It is of particular relevance, I argue, that it is the river that causes the death of Maggie and Tom Tulliver: the local tragedy of the Tulliver children becomes subsumed in the waters that connect trade between the village with the wider world. In the final pages of the novel Eliot again troubles the ways in which trading connections between rural villages, and the lives of the people who live in them, can be accommodated into the broader networks of processes

⁴³ See Gilbert and Gubar and Knopfmacher for readings of the closing flood scene that focus on the gender and familial implications of the event.

of expansion. There is an important interplay throughout the novel in the ways in which agricultural modernisation, and the economic connections this affords, is dependent on the natural resources of the local area. In the final lines of the novel Eliot focuses on the sustained and thriving links that St Ogg's shares with other communities. It is of crucial importance that it is feelings of 'hopefulness' that Eliot ascribes to workers of the Floss. Following the personal tragedy of the drowning of the Tulliver children, Eliot does not present an image of a community retreating back to older forms of market exchange, but of embracing and profiting from the possibilities of extending market connections outwards.

At the start of this chapter I quoted Charlotte Mathieson and Gemma Goodman's claim that in the nineteenth-century "rural environments were sites of active and dynamic change" (6). In this chapter I have examined how the dynamism of rural communities is expressed in the countryside fiction by Harriet Martineau and George Eliot. For both authors, the countryside towns and villages are conceived of as areas undergoing dramatic social, economic, political, and environmental changes. However, these are not changes that are passively accepted or subsumed by these communities; rural populations are depicted as interrogating, debating, and engaging with these changes. The local transformations that take place in *Illustrations of Political Economy* and *The Mill on the Floss* both demonstrate an awareness of the connections that their localities share with areas across the globe, but also the tensions that these connections produce in local inhabitants. In all three narratives feelings of anxiety, confusion, and unsettledness are presented alongside the promises of wealth and prosperity that increased global trading could bring to local communities.

Fundamental to this study, however, is the extent to which both Harriet Martineau and George Eliot resist presenting the processes of agricultural modernisation along one line of rural development. Both authors animate multiple paradigms of social affiliation, loyalty, and economic expansion so as to intersect the different and competing views of the world as they existed in the confines of small rural communities. In the introduction to this chapter I noted the difficulties in defining fiction as 'rural'. What makes the three narratives included in this reading rural, I argue, is the way in which they animate feelings of locality on a small scale, both in terms of geography and population, but also how they expand this to consider the links with other communities spread across the world. As such, I hope that this chapter has shed new light on what could be understood as 'rural fiction' in Victorian studies and to have reconsidered how it could be featured in debates of nineteenth-century globalised modernity.

This thesis opened with Adam Smith's imagining of the frictionless expansion of economic and social connections between a local rural village are expanded ever outwards until they stretched across the globe as a whole. While much previous literary criticism on mid-nineteenth-century rural fiction has denied or overlooked the presence of economic expansion and capitalist development, the readings featured in this chapter have revealed the vitally important part that these topics played in understandings of Victorian rurality. While processes of expansion are present in these works, it the ways in which Martineau and Eliot both plot the uneven development of capitalist development that make them of crucial importance to this study's focus on the geographical affects of economic expansion.

Chapter Four

Regional and Provincial Fiction: Charlotte Brontë *Shirley* and George Eliot*Middlemarch*

Introduction

“The historical processes of British modernisation – the imperialist expansion of trade, the ‘industrial revolution’ – have changed the terms of space and time by which locality is constituted” (319). So writes Ian Duncan in ‘The Provincial or Regional Novel’ and in doing so outlines one of the main contentions of this thesis; the idea that nineteenth-century British processes of economic expansion dramatically reshaped regional, national, and global social landscapes. In his essay Duncan notes that these changes in ideas of locality can be identified in the genres of provincial and regional fiction that exploded in popularity over the course of the Victorian period:

These categories, and the relations between them – regional and provincial [...] – are defined, above all, by their relation to an accelerated rate of historical change, registered both at the particular level of everyday life and as abstract, universal processes. Historical change – modernisation – is the condition through which the province and or region become narratable (323).

However, according to Duncan, these two genres respond to the pressures and tensions associated with ‘British modernisation’ in very different ideological and aesthetic ways. Examining the works of writers such as Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, and Maria Edgeworth, Duncan argues that regional fiction

depicts a “positive” portrayal of a specific locality, while provincial fiction presents “generic” localities in which any “provincial setting may take the place of any other” (322). Duncan’s essay has prompted much critical discussion in recent Victorian scholarship: how these two terms are used; the connotations associated with categorisation of regional and provincial fiction; and how these genres contribute to understandings of the global contexts of British Victorian fiction.

This chapter aims to contribute to these debates. I argue that integral to an understanding of the ways in which regional and provincial fiction engaged with the changing landscapes of British modernisation and global expansion is their differing portrayals of perspectives, scales, and geographical affect. Continuing the discussions from earlier chapters in this thesis, this reading argues that the global context of economic and material expansion is featured in Victorian fiction not simply in descriptions of foreign countries or narratives of global exploration, but also in the ways in which people living in local British communities experience changes in the fabrics of their daily lives. This reading opens up ground to consider fiction and genres that have not previously been included in readings of Victorian globalisation; as such, regional and provincial fiction form an important part of this study. By reading Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* and George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* through the critical lens of scale and geographical affect it becomes possible to approach these novels as works that engage with complex questions regarding patterns of global expansion and localised feelings of belonging, affiliation, and loyalty. The following chapter addresses first the regional genre in *Shirley* and then moves on to consider the provincial in *Middlemarch*, with the aim of pulling out both the differences and similarities in their formal and aesthetic approaches. Before looking at the fiction,

however, it is necessary to outline in greater detail Duncan's reading of these terms and critical responses to his argument.

Ian Duncan explains that "fiction distinguished by its regional or provincial setting flourished in the nineteenth century", but the preoccupation with these genres could be taken to signify a number of concerns (322): "The province or regional may represent an authentic site of national identity – a distillation of the nation; or it may take the place of a larger national identity that has failed; or it may register a wholesale disintegration of the categories of home: origin, community, belonging" (322). In a similar vein to the discussion of the category of the rural in the preceding chapter, regionalism and provincialism carry many cultural connotations. Duncan sets out to clarify the differences in the two genres in terms of how they are presented in relation to other communities:

Regional fiction specifies its setting by invoking a combination of geographical, natural-historical, antiquarian, ethnographic and/or sociological features *that differentiate it from any other region*. A provincial setting is defined more simply by its *difference from the metropolis* – by the fact that it is not London (or, secondarily, not Edinburgh or Manchester). Thus, while 'regional' implies a neutral or even positive set of multiple local differences, 'provincial' connotes a negative difference, based on a binary opposition, expressed as a generic or typical identity, within which any provincial setting may take the place of any other (322).

Reading these literary categories along Duncan's lines, then, places the regional novel as a literary form that responds to the economic pressures and transformations associated with modernity, while the provincial novel is more

backward looking and insular in its approach to broader economic and social concerns.

Writing in response to Ian Duncan's chapter, Josephine McDonagh argues in her 2013 article 'Rethinking Provincialism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Fiction: *Our Village* to *Villette*' that provincialism is a far more complex literary form than afforded by Duncan's definition. She holds that "the provincial in the mid-nineteenth century is not the subordinate partner of a metropolitan/provincial binary, but rather is a term that is rooted from its beginning in emerging global networks" (401). Elaborating on this argument McDonagh explains how

provincial fiction in this period is not the marginal, backward-looking, globally and economically detached genre characterised by Duncan and others, but rather shares with the regional novel a responsiveness to the economic and social trends of the time and was an influential and widely consumed medium through which to imagine forms of affiliation at a time of demographic flux. In a formal sense, regional and provincial novels are less distinct than Duncan would have it. Both respond to the 'global historical economy' (Duncan 329), yet with distinctive social and spatial effects (401).

It is this idea that provincial fiction presents the 'global historical economy' of nineteenth-century modernity through 'distinctive social and spatial effects' that provides the starting point for the current reading of regional and provincial fiction. Elaborating on this point McDonagh holds that,

[c]ommentators have often overlooked the complex and robust networks through which provincial geography linked places with each other and connected them to the wider world, principally through the production of newspapers and the associated networks of transport and communication – roads, railways, postal networks, and telegraphs (403-404).

‘Rethinking Provincialism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Fiction’ stresses that the context of the provinces needs to be understood as “nodes in a complex web of communication, diffuse and separate, yet joined together in mutually beneficial relations” (404).

Both Ian Duncan and Josephine McDonagh’s articles highlight the need to reassess the ways in which regional and provincial fiction are understood in fields of Victorian scholarship. Rather than assuming the two genres are detached from the national and global networks of modernity and economic expansion, critical readings of these novels need to engage with the complex ‘social and spatial effects’ that are present in their narratives. While Duncan and McDonagh disagree in their readings of provincial fiction, the differences between their definitions of the genres opens up space for a deconstruction and interrogation of these categories. The following reading of Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* and George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* first aims to demonstrate the ways in which both the regional and the provincial engage with the social, spatial, and, of greatest importance for this thesis, scalar effects of national and global modernity, and second to pull out the specificities and differences in literary depictions of regional and provincial geographical affects. Therefore, this final chapter does something different from the chapters that have come before in this thesis. While the previous three chapters have each addressed the

depiction of one area in fiction, this chapter has a dual concern for how different authors depicted the impacts of modernity through the different literary aesthetics of differing genres. Throughout this chapter I will come back to the debate between Duncan, McDonagh, and other literary critics in order to interrogate in greater depth my understanding of the categories of the 'regional' and the 'provincial'.

Charlotte Brontë *Shirley*

Developing Ian Duncan's argument that in the Victorian imagination the region was "enmeshed" in the "great web" of the world, this chapter asserts that in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* geographical areas and regional communities are always tacitly posed against the larger networks of the nation and the globe (403). I argue that *Shirley* is a novel that is directly concerned with the impact of global marketplaces on localised regional communities in Britain. Over the course of the following reading I will demonstrate the manner in which Brontë overlays specific depictions of the local countryside, traditions, dialects, and social relations of the north Yorkshire community in the West Riding, with world-wide political and economic events, such as the Napoleonic Wars and fluctuations in the global marketplace. The literary effects employed by Brontë to pull together these different scales of reference present a complicated portrayal of a community; one in which diverse voices and literary styles are drawn on and no single narrative voice dominates overall. As one contemporary review in the *Examiner* put it in 1849, the whole is "presented to us less in the manner of a continuous tale [...] than in a series of detached and independent pictures, dialogues, and soliloquys" (qtd. in Allott 127-128). Such a reading has

characterised critical responses to the novel up to the present day; Heather Glen argues that “this novel appears to have none of the strong imaginative coherence of the great diagnoses of the state of English society being produced by Charlotte Brontë’s contemporaries [Dickens, Gaskell, and Thackeray]” (123). In my reading, however, the multiplicity of voices and styles employed by Brontë are understood as an attempt to present the complicated range of influences and modes of social affiliation that were experienced by local regional communities as they became increasingly implicated in wider networks and systems.

Shirley depicts the social and economic effects of global marketplaces on a specific region in Yorkshire: the Hollow, a community in the West Riding district. It is interesting to note that despite setting her novel in a distinct locality, *Shirley* has often been overlooked or mentioned only in passing in studies of regional fiction.⁴⁴ One reason for this may reside in the fact that *Shirley* features none of the melodramatic settings of the Yorkshire moors as featured in *Jane Eyre*, or Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights*. But to overlook *Shirley* on that count would be to miss the detailed portrayal of a community undergoing seismic social changes as a result of an increasingly globalised modernity. *Shirley* presents an imagining of a regional community that, while being defined by specific geographical locations and topographical details, questions how a sense of locality can be achieved or maintained in a period of increasing economic and commercial interdependence. My reading suggests that within the historical context of the machine breaking riots of 1811-1812 and the Napoleonic wars Brontë was able to closely examine the relationship between

⁴⁴ In both ‘Regional and Provincial in Victorian Literature’ by Robin Gilmour and in K. D. M. Snell’s collection of essays *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1990* Charlotte Brontë is omitted entirely.

local feelings of unrest and discontent and broader national and global events in order to draw parallels with her contemporary society. The following reading has three main areas of focus: first, an examination of Brontë's regionalism in *Shirley* and the complicated amalgamation of pastoral and industrial imagery that contributes to the regional geographical affect; second, the narrative interventions and the extent to which these construct a global framework for the novel; and, finally, the scenes of machine breaking and social reconciliation. *Shirley* features many of the literary aesthetics and tropes associated with regional fiction, the "combination of geographical, natural-historical [...] and/or sociological features", but they are invoked in such a way that presents a troubling image of effects of global connections on localised communities (Duncan 322).

In the opening page to his 1988 study *Regions of the Imagination* W. J. Keith asks what may be included in a definition of 'regionalism' or 'the regional novel'. He surmises that as critics of this literary genre

[w]e are concerned, surely, with fiction set in a distinctive locality – one that takes on, through the power of literature, an independent imaginative existence which renders the setting at least as important as (and possibly more important than) any of the more traditional elements of the narrative (3).

But, as Keith goes on to argue over the course of his study, this seemingly definitive definition of regionalism as a genre opens up as many areas of uncertainty as it provides solid outlines. How large is a region; is the north of England or Scotland a region, or is it a smaller, more specific locality? What is the difference between rural regions and industrial regions? Can an imaginative

region, such as Hardy's Wessex, be categorised alongside fictional dramatisations of exact locations, such as Gaskell's Manchester? The guiding principle for Keith's study is provided by the *OED* definition of 'Region': 'A large tract of land; a country; a more or less defined part of the earth's surface, now esp. as distinguished by certain natural features, climatic conditions, a special flora or fauna, or the like [...] An area, space or place, of more or less distinct character' (qtd. in Keith 4). In Keith's study this vagueness ('more or less') provides room for him to interrogate the relationship between geographical areas and social communities as represented in Victorian fiction. In the following paragraphs I want to apply a similar interrogation of geographical and social regionalism to Charlotte Brontë's fiction; however, I will both develop and depart from Keith's study in a number of ways. Published in the 1980s *Regions of the Imagination* focuses on the national aspects of regionalism in Victorian literature, in my study I will consider how the recent global turn in Victorian scholarship can shed new light on the representations of regional communities in global marketplaces.

Recent criticisms of the social and economic context of *Shirley* have questioned its role in the regional genre. In her seminal work *Industrial Reformation in English Fiction* Catherine Gallagher explains that she did not include Brontë's novel in her study as "industrial conflict in *Shirley* is little more than a historical setting and does not exert any strong influence on the form" (xi n1). Terry Eagleton, in his Marxist study *Myths of Power*, suggests that "*Shirley* chooses to ignore contemporary conditions, imaginatively translating them to an earlier phase of the Yorkshire class-struggle negotiating its feelings in relation to the past rather than to the present" as the "contemporary class-struggle was still too fraught and precarious an issue to render it an ideal context" (45). It is true

that the industrial context of this novel is more opaque than in the Condition of England novels by some of her contemporaries.⁴⁵ In his article ‘Networked Manufacture in Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley*’ Peter J. Capuano argues that “we really *should* pay attention to the industrial element of *Shirley*” because “Brontë’s treatment of manufacturing in the novel connects or networks two very different constituencies: hardened Luddite machine breaking and dispossessed middle-class women for whom professional opportunities outside the home were extremely limited” (231). I want to take forward Capuano’s argument that the manufacturing narrative links together characters in the Hollow in unexpected ways, but I also suggest a reading that is more closely focused on the idea of communities and feelings of affiliation and loyalty. Capuano’s reading rests on the dual depiction of manufacturing in the novel; as he explains, “a surface-level line of inquiry into manufactured objects reveals an inverted network from the mill to the parlour; that is, a redundancy of human hands caused by mechanisation in the mill is concurrent with a surplus of female handiwork in the novel’s middleclass homes” (231).

Sally Shuttleworth argues in *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* that *Shirley* is a “novel about overstocked markets, surplus commodities, and blocked circulation” and the extent to which the lives of the whole community of the Hollow are “governed by the harshness of market economy” (183-184). For Shuttleworth’s study the main focus is on how these economic tensions correlate with the individual psyches and states of different characters:

⁴⁵ There has been some critical debate over the extent to which Brontë intended this novel to be read as an industrial narrative. Capuano discusses this debate at length in ‘Networked Manufacture in Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley*’. In a letter to her publisher in February 1849, Brontë wrote that “in reading *Mary Barton* (a clever though painful tale) I was a little dismayed to find myself in some measure anticipated in both subject and incident” (qtd. in Hook 9).

Circulation proves the key to the intersection of the economic and psychological dimensions of the text. Brontë's depiction of Caroline's illness follows the language and diagnoses of Victorian medical accounts of the 'female economy'. Obstructed circulation leads to a breakdown of the system. While social and medical writers drew frequent attention to the correlation between the nation's political and psychological health, Brontë takes the correlation one stage further, pinpointing a precise causal relationship between the political and economic state of the nation and the physiological and psychological health of her heroine (186).

It is a similar idea of circulation that is integral to my understanding of *Shirley*. However, unlike Shuttleworth, who considers this topic alongside the historical context of Victorian psychology, I want to think about it more in terms of the literary depiction of affects and shared communal feelings. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, I am concerned with the aesthetics employed by Victorian authors to depict the feelings of different social groups and individuals regarding changes taking place in the world around them. It is this approach to geographical affect that reveals the complicated ways in which Brontë interweaves regional traditions, landscapes, and customs and the unpredictable fluctuations of global marketplaces.

In the opening chapters of the novel Brontë firmly locates the setting of the plot to take place in the confines of "a certain favoured district in the West Riding of Yorkshire" (6). Describing the landmarks of the local area Brontë picks out "the spire of Briarfield church; further on, the lights of Redhouse. This was an inn [...] the glow of the fire through a half-curtained window, a vision of glass on a round table, and of revellers on the settle" (19-20). The fields surrounding the town are "level and monotonous" (19-20). The people who populate the Hollow are defined by genealogical roots to the region: Mr Yorke, a local

landowner, is described as a “Yorkshire gentleman [...] par excellence, in every point [...] His forehead was broad, not high; his face fresh and hale; the harshness of the north was seen in his features, as it was heard in his voice; every trait was thoroughly English, not a Norman line anywhere” (44). At this early stage in the narrative the regional is defined both in terms of the specificities of the landscape, the houses, and even the visages of the local people. On the opening page of the novel, Brontë appears to stress in great detail the manner in which her concerns lie only with the everyday lives of local people:

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, something cool, and solid, lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake themselves with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto [...] it shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs, and no roast lamb (5).

But this insistence on the “real [...] cool [...] and solid” aspects of everyday life in Yorkshire early in the narrative is complicated over the course of the novel as characters are drawn into the unsettling effects of European war, global market blockages, and local class conflict (5).

The interplay between region, affect, and commerce is presented shortly after this opening description. Describing the route Malone, an Irish curate living in the Hollow, takes on his evening walk, Brontë sets out the landscape in terms that focus on the horizons and boundaries of the region. The sky is described

as “a muffled, steaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro’ iron-works threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon” (19). Malone did “not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and the planets were gone, or to regret the ‘black-blue’ serenity of the air-ocean which those white islets stud; and which another ocean, of heavier and denser element, now rolled below and concealed” (19). The Hollow is presented as a “muffled, steaming vault” (19) shrouded by cloud and a ‘heavy’ and ‘dense’ atmosphere. This opening image of the region is one that is claustrophobic and closed off. The only thing that is breaking through these barriers is “the furnaces of Stilbro’ iron-works” and the “tremulous lurid shimmer” that it casts across the horizon (19). This is an important passage to consider when thinking about the connections that Brontë imagines between the Hollow and the broader networks of trade and commerce that follow throughout the novel: the region remains geographically isolated from other areas, but the iron works threaten to break through the geographic barriers.

The industrial narrative of *Shirley* centres on the arrival of Robert Moore, a French mill owner, who moves to the Hollow to exploit the region’s textile trade. He is described as a “man who has been brought up only to make money, and lives to make it, and for nothing else, and scarcely breathes any air other than that of mills and markets” (119). The positioning of Moore’s mill in Yorkshire highlights the complex way in which Brontë figures regions and global connections:

When he came to Yorkshire, he – whose ancestors had owned warehouses in this seaport and factories in that inland town, had possessed their town-house and their country-seat – saw no way open to

him but to rent a cloth-mill, in an out-of-the way nook of an out-of-the-way district; to take a cottage adjoining it for his residence, and to add to his possessions, as pasture for his horse, and space for his cloth-tenters, a few acres of the steep rugged land that lined the hollow through which his mill-streamed brawled (28).

The area surrounding the Hollow is perceived to be “an out-of-way nook of an out-of-the-way district” (28) and the life style he intends to lead is one of a rural idyll. The references to his cottage, the surrounding pastures, and the ‘steep rugged land that lined the hollow’ places the industrial trade of the mill in images of the regional and the pastoral. It is this contrast between the ‘brawling’ mill and the ‘rugged’ landscape that establishes the tension that Brontë maintains throughout of the narrative. In couching the first description of the mill in such descriptions specific to the Yorkshire countryside, Brontë plays with the way in which established notions of regional communities as being out-of-the-way nooks can also accommodate sites of commerce and industry.

It is also the positioning of the Hollow and the Yorkshire mills as ‘out-of-the-way nooks’ in the nation’s network of industry that enables Brontë to examine the ways in which blockages in trade are felt by industrial communities that are not situated in the urban centres such as Manchester. Early in the narrative Moore and Malone discuss the state of his trade and the possibility that the machine breaking riots that have started in the industrial cities may spread to the Hollow:

‘I only wish the machines – the frames - were safe here, and lodged within the wall of this mill. Once put up, I defy the framebreakers: let them pay me a visit, and take the consequences: my mill is my castle. [...]

What these fellows have done to others, they may do to me. There is only one difference: most of the manufactures seem paralyzed when they are attacked. Sykes, for instance, when his dressing-shop was set on fire and burned to the ground, when the cloth was torn from his tenters and left in shreds in the field, took no steps to discover or punish the miscreants: he gave up as tamely as a rabbit under the jaws of a ferret. Now I, if I know myself, should stand by my trade, my mill and machinery’.

[...]

‘But you are rich and thriving, Moore?’

‘I am very rich in cloth, I cannot sell. You should step into my warehouse yonder, and observe how it is piled to the roof with pieces. Roakes and Pearson are in the same condition: America used to be their market, but the Orders of Council have cut that off’ (24-25).

Moore’s recognition that he is ‘rich’ in cloth that he cannot sell establishes one of the reoccurring questions that runs throughout the narrative; how can wealth or even prosperity be measured when you are dependent upon economic forces and fluctuations that you cannot control or even predict? Moore, according to Malone, is ‘rich and thriving’ because he can produce goods and his mill is working, but as Moore explains this does not necessarily equate to capital and monetary gains.

It is not, however, through the discussions between characters that Brontë fully explores the tensions and pressures experienced in the Hollow as a result of fluctuations in global marketplaces. As stated in the introduction to this reading, *Shirley* has often been criticised for its awkward narrative interventions. This reading argues that it is through the breaks in the narrative that Brontë attempts to place the regional concerns and anxieties of the Hollow within the framework of globalised trading. Following the discussion between Moore and

Malone the story breaks and a lengthy description of the global state of trade and the impacts of the Napoleonic War on British commerce is inserted into the chapter:

The 'Orders of Council', provoked by Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees, and forbidding neutral powers to trade with France, had, by offending America, cut off the principal market of the Yorkshire woollen trade, and brought it consequently to the verge of ruin. Minor foreign markets were glutted, and would receive no more. The Brazils, Portugal, Sicily, were all overstocked by nearly two years' consumption. At this crisis, certain inventions in machinery were introduced into the staple manufacturers of the north, which, greatly reducing the number of hands necessary to be employed, threw thousands out of work, and left them without legitimate means of sustaining life. A bad harvest supervened. Distress reached its climax. Endurance, overgoaded, stretched the hand of fraternity to sedition. The throes of some sort of moral earth quake were felt heaving under the hills of the northern countries. But, as is usual in such cases, nobody took much notice. When a food-riot broke out in a manufacturing town, when a gig-mill was burnt to the ground, or a manufacturer's house was attacked, the furniture thrown into the streets, and the family forced to flee for their lives, some local measures were or were not to be taken by the local magistracy; a ringleader was detected, or more frequently suffered to elude detection; newspaper paragraphs were written on the subject, and there the thing stopped (29-30).

Reading this section Heather Glen comments that "social and economic processes are figured, here, as abstract and inexorable law, rebellion as natural disaster ('the throes of some sort of moral earthquake') and suffering as the will of God" (155). Glen concludes that the syntax of this paragraph demonstrates the "conflicting languages through which Charlotte Brontë's contemporaries

sought to make sense of the society in which they lived” (156). I agree with Glen that the conflicting images highlight the complex ways in which Victorians attempted to think through the dramatic changes taking place in the world around them, but what I want to draw attention to is the particular scales of reference that are featured in this section. It spans from the markets of “Brazils, Portugal, [and] Sicily” through to manufacturing towns in the north of England. However, unlike Adam Smith’s imagining of a globally trading world that brings together these disparate locations into mutually beneficial relations, this passage highlights the fact that globalised trading risks overlooking the discontents of small, localised communities.

Integral to this passage, and to Brontë’s subsequent depictions of machine-breaking, is the claim that ‘nobody took much notice’ of the discontents of the machine workers in the northern districts of England. It is this claim that is at the crux of the tensions that Brontë associates with rural communities becoming increasingly implicated within the networks of globalised trading. In their historical study of empire and globalisation Andrew Thompson and Gary Magee outline the transition from trading on a local scale with known contacts to trading on a global, largely anonymous, marketplace:

Why, in the economic sphere, would rational, self-interested individuals prefer to interact with particular cultural or ethnic groups? In pre-modern times, when reliable market institutions were weak or did not exist, economic actors had little option but to rely on personal connections – the risks of dealing with strangers were high, whereas those whom you knew were felt more likely to be trustworthy. [...] [B]y the nineteenth century, when the workings of impersonal markets had become ensconced [...] economic behaviour could now surely become culturally

neutral. After all, to those engaged in trade, it was the exchange itself that mattered, not the identity of those with whom they did business (6).

Thinking about this reading of global trading alongside *Shirley*, it becomes apparent that what Brontë's regional novel articulates is the way in which this anonymity of trading can threaten to rupture, or at least shake, local or national feelings of affiliation. Describing the workers' response to the glut in the global market place and the subsequent lack of work in the local mill, Brontë describes how "[m]isery generates hate: these sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the buildings which contained those machines; they hated the manufacturers who owned those buildings" (30). Not knowing where to direct their hatred, or who to be annoyed with, the local workers in the Hollow take aim at those in their local, immediate vicinity, culminating in a riot at the textile mill.

Analysing the machine breaking in *Shirley*, Terry Eagleton argues that Brontë depicts the workers in the Yorkshire mill as "freaks or disembodied roars" (50). The uprising is witnessed by Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar and is described in apocalyptic terms similar to those used to describe the block in the global market place.

A crash – smash – shiver – stopped their whispers. A simultaneously-hurled volley of stones had saluted the broad front of the mill, with all its windows; and now every pane of every lattice lay in shattered and pounded fragments. A yell followed this demonstration – a rioters' yell – a North-of-England – a Yorkshire – a West-Riding – a West-Riding-clothing-district-of-Yorkshire rioters' yell. You never heard that sound perhaps, reader? So much the better for your ears – perhaps for your heart; since, if it rends the air in hate to yourself, or to the men or

principles you approve, the interests to which you wish well, Wrath wakens to the cry of Hate: the Lion shakes his mane, and rises to the Howl of the Hyena: Caste stands up, ireful against Caste; and the indignant wronged spirit of the Middle Rank bears down in zeal and scorn on the famished and furious mass of the Operative Class. It is difficult to be tolerant – difficult to be just – in such moments (325).

While it is true that the workers are not given a voice other than that of a ‘yell’ in this description, and the events are witnessed by onlookers rather than detailing the motivations or feelings of the workers themselves, there is, however, an important way in which the regional experience of processes of expansion is registered in this work. It is not any yell that Shirley and Caroline hear, but a regionally specific yell of the workers of the Hollow’s iron works: “A yell followed this demonstration – a rioters’ yell – a North-of-England – a Yorkshire – a West-Riding – a West-Riding-clothing-district-of-Yorkshire rioters’ yell” (325). This is not a yell of distress from an anonymous working class mass, as critics such as Eagleton have claimed, but a regionally specific outcry. The direct address to the reader, “You have never heard that sound perhaps”, reiterates the claim made in the earlier passage that ‘not much notice’ was taken of the discontents of the workers in the northern districts.

The tension in *Shirley* resides in how this specific regional cry can be presented as an outcome of the processes of global marketplaces. As noted at the start of this reading, the majority of criticism levied against *Shirley* has focused on its supposed lack of a coherent focus and lack of a clear narrative voice. This is obvious in the description of the machine breaking examined above, the scene is presented in its historical context, but then the narrative voice switches and address the paragraph outwards directly to the reader.

However, in the same way as with the earlier description of global markets, it is these narrative insertions, I argue, that enable Brontë to present the regional specificities of the Hollow within the broader framework of global marketplaces. The feelings of anger and resentment experienced by the workers, the incoherent yells during the machine breaking, express a frustration at not being able to understand their place in the world order as constructed by capitalist trading. This regional community, unlike the urban communities examined in Section One of this thesis, do not witness the movement or circulation of people or information; they seem to be held at a distance from the networks of modernity, hemmed in by the rugged hills that surround the Hollow. Therefore, despite the narrative voice at times jarring with the dialogue of characters it is a fundamental formal aesthetic of this novel. It allows Brontë to place her literary depiction of the regional community in the systems of modernity, whilst also highlighting the inability of regional communities to fully comprehend their position in the world.

It is also this narrative voice that provides the final descriptions of the region and the profits it may gain from its place in the expanding world market. In the closing paragraphs of the novel Brontë focuses on the impacts of the repeal of the Orders of the Council that opened trade with Europe:

On 18th of June 1812, the Orders of Council were repealed and the blockaded ports thrown open. You know very well – such of you as are old enough to remember – you made Yorkshire and Lancashire shake with your shout on that occasion: the ringers cracked a bell in Briarfield belfry; it is dissonant to this day. [...] Some of the American merchants felt threatenings of apoplexy, and had themselves bled: all, like wise men, at this first moment of prosperity, prepared to rush into the bowels of

speculation, and to delve new difficulties, in whose depths they might lose themselves at some future day. Stocks, which had been accumulating for years, now went off in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; warehouses were lightened, ships were laden; work abounded, wages rose: the good time seemed come. These prospects might be delusive, but they were brilliant – to some they were even true (598-599).

In an essay on Brontë's Tory pessimism Lucaster Miller notes that in *Shirley* capitalism is "cynically presented as bringing with it inevitable cycles of boom and bust: the economic prosperity restored at the conclusion of the novel is seen as fragile, random or illusionary" (xxiii). It is the idea that the prospects of capitalism seem 'delusive', or 'illusionary', which is integral to this reading. Again, the people living and working in the Hollow are not aware of the precarious position that they still hold within systems of global trading. The geographical affect of the Hollow is as uncertain and unsettled as it was earlier in the narrative with the scenes of the machine breaking; a disconnection still exists, in Brontë's imagining of regional communities, between the localised knowledge and feelings towards their place in the world, and the broader anonymous systems of trading and commerce.

The two final paragraphs of the novel return to the opening scenes of the regional landscape. However, unlike the first pages of the novel that present the Hollow as bordered in by its rugged landscape, this closing image depicts a landscape transformed into an industrial centre:

I suppose Robert Moore's prophecies were, partially, at least, fulfilled. The other day I passed up the Hollow, which tradition says was once green, and lone, and wild; and there I saw the manufacturer's day-dreams embodied in substantial stone and brick and ashes – the cinder-

black highway, the cottages, and the cottage-gardens; there I saw a mighty mill, and a chimney, ambitious as the tower of Babel (607).

The image of the tower of Babel is important in the final pages of this novel; gone are the descriptions of the localised community distinct in its dialects, traditions, and peoples, and in their place is the looming presence of increased industrial connections that threaten to tear apart the community. This is reiterated in the closing words of the novel that are spoken by a local housekeeper who, up until this point, has not played a part in the narrative:

‘Ay, she said, ‘the world has had queer changes. I can remember the old mill being built – the very first it was in all the district; and then, I can remember it being pulled down, and going with my lake-lasses (companions) to see the foundation stone of the new one laid [...] Different to what it is now; but I can tell of it clean different again: when there was neither mill, nor cot, nor hall, except Fieldhead, within two miles of it [...] A lonesome spot it was – and a bonnie spot – full of oak trees and nut trees. It is altered now (607).

The transition that the housekeeper narrates here from regional, rural idyll through to industrial trading centre shares many similarities with the Harriet Martineau stories examined in Chapter Three of this thesis. Separating *Shirley* from the more rural-focused fiction of the preceding chapter, however, is the complicated ways in which Brontë positions the specific regional characteristics, both topographical and social, of the Hollow within the networks of modernity.

Out of all the fiction included in this study *Shirley* presents the most pessimistic view of the impact of processes of economic and commercial

expansion on pre-existing local communal relations. This, I argue, is one of the ways in which regional fiction's engagement with global modernity differs from some of the other genres already examined in this thesis. Regional fiction constantly places the specific relationships that characters share with their local environment, whether through local dialects or topographical landscapes, in contrast to the changes that could occur with increased connections with other areas. Thinking about regional fiction in this way, then, enables a more nuanced reading of the claims made by critics such as Ian Duncan that regional fiction presents a "positive set of differences" from the metropolis. As my reading of *Shirley* has demonstrated, these differences although positive in terms of presenting clear differentiations between the Hollow and other areas, are not necessarily positive in the sense of being affirmative. The differences that Brontë depicts between the Hollow and other areas are always threatened to be engulfed by the process of capitalist modernity. The geographical affect of the region of the Hollow is determined by the local people being prevented from fully comprehending the role that they, and the region they live in, plays in the global structures of capitalist trading.

George Eliot *Middlemarch*

George Eliot's 1872 novel *Middlemarch* is subtitled *A Study of Provincial Life*. Early in the narrative Eliot inserts a meditation on how British provincial life has changed over the course of recent history:

Old provincial society had its share of this subtle movement: had not only its striking downfalls, its brilliant young professional dandies who ended

up by living up an entry with a drab and six children for their establishment, but also those less marked by vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. [...] Municipal town and rural parish gradually made fresh threads of connection – gradually, as the old stocking gave way to the savings-bank, and the worship of the solar guinea became extinct; while squires and baronets, and even lords who had once lived blamelessly afar from the civic mind, gathered the faultiness of closer acquaintances. Settlers, too, came from distant countries, some with an alarming novelty of skill, others with an offensive advantage in cunning (96).

In this description of the transformation of ‘old provincial societies’ in England George Eliot outlines many of the social and economic changes that this thesis argues characterises the effects of economic expansion. The references to ‘threads of connection’ weaving together the municipal towns and rural parishes and the ‘settlers’ from other countries share many similarities with the descriptions of changes in other fiction examined in this study. Eliot goes on to explain that it is the “movement and mixture” that took place in provincial towns that connected them with other communities across the nation (96). Thus, in Eliot’s rendering, provincial communities are not detached from broader national, and even global, social and economic changes. This chapter brings to the fore the ways in which Eliot gives shape to the ‘movement and mixture’ of a provincial community through the geographical affect of *Middlemarch* and in so doing plots the various communal and individual responses to extending commodity chains and expanding marketplaces.

As such, this reading continues and develops many of the themes set out in Chapter Three of this thesis regarding Eliot’s deployment of perspectival

scales in order to depict different understandings of communal and social bonds. *Middlemarch* provides any number of depictions of how people position themselves in the changing and expanding world around them. It is a novel that is furnished with characters taking up different vantage points of perspective; some, like Bulstrode, think of their view as being like a “diorama” (553), segmenting each of their memories into different images, for others, like Lydgate, knowledge of the world is garnered by close scientific inspection and dissection, “I was early bitten with an interest in structure” (179). Elsewhere, the narrator, discussing Mrs Cadwallader’s habit of gossiping, draws on the optics of a microscope:

Even with a microscope directed on a water-drop we find ourselves making interpretations which turn out to be rather coarse; for whereas under a weak lens you may seem to see a creature exhibiting an active voracity into which other smaller creatures actively play as if there were so many animated tax-pennies, a stronger lens reveals to you certain tiniest hairlets which make vortices for these victims while the swallower waits passively at his receipt of custom (57).

In each instance the various scalar perspectives associated with dioramas, microscopes, and dissections are evoked in order to give shape to the different ways that individuals viewed and made sense of the world around them. I argue that this concern with how people attempted to understand their place in the world relates to themes of expanding social and economic connections and the movements of people, capital, and commodities. The heuristic scales of *Middlemarch* plot how a provincial community is implicated in broader national and global networks and connections. This chapter focuses on the ways in which different characters experience feelings associated with the pressures

and opportunities arising from the 'movement and mixture' of a nineteenth-century provincial society. By engaging with recent critical readings of *Middlemarch* I use this section to challenge understandings of this novel, and the provincial genre more generally, that place provincialism outside of the concerns of economic expansion.

For example, in his seminal work *Criticism and Ideology* Terry Eagleton notes that "*Middlemarch*, one might say, is an historical novel in form with little substantive historical content. The Reform Bill, the railways, cholera, machine-breaking: these 'real' historical forces do no more than impinge on the novel's margins" (120). Drawing on recent critical works on space and place theories, historical studies on nineteenth-century global economic expansion, and literary studies of Eliot's portrayal of psychological and emotional states, this reading sets out to dispute Eagleton's placement of the effects of historical 'forces' on the novel's margins. In light of the critical readings of scale and geographical affect established in earlier chapters of this thesis, I argue that it is possible to read the provincial setting of *Middlemarch* as integrally connected to and situated within a global landscape. Although *Middlemarch* may not detail the effects of global economic expansion in the same overt manner as some of the other examples of Victorian fiction included in this study, I am convinced that in her portrayal of space, scale, and affect Eliot presents a meditation on the complicated ways in which local communities responded to the new networks of modernity.

Through thinking about *Middlemarch* in terms of a global sense of scale, this chapter will draw on and contribute to recent debates in Victorian studies regarding understandings of the term 'provincial'. In my earlier study of Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* I argue for a more global reading of Victorian regional

fiction, I present a similar line of argument for nineteenth-century provincial fiction. Moreover, through positioning *Middlemarch* as the final novel examined in this thesis I hope to demonstrate the ways in which similar concerns to those articulated in urban, industrial, and regional fiction are present in the pages of this provincial novel. Despite sharing notable and important similarities with the works of Dickens, Martineau, and Gaskell in its meditation on global and local scales of reference and affiliation, it is the aim of this reading to set out the particularly provincial ways in which George Eliot employs these aesthetics. This chapter presents re-readings of some of Eliot's well-known natural and 'organic' metaphors and images and argues that they can be understood as critiquing the ways in which distances and perspectives are felt or experienced in provincial communities in response to globally expanding markets. I am also interested in interrogating the very 'ordinariness' that is understood to characterise provincial fiction, the assumption that in provincial fiction any town could stand in for any other provincial town, and the extent to which this presents a portrayal of local responses to processes of global expansion unlike the fiction included in any other chapter of this thesis.

The following paragraphs set out how understandings of the term 'provincialism' have featured in literary and critical debates since the nineteenth century. Here, however, I want to outline the reasons why I understand provincialism as a distinctly scalar genre in both its aesthetics and its concerns. By focusing on the events and social relations in one specific community, I understand provincial fiction to make the abstractions of globalised modernity comprehensible to the reader. This chapter argues that provincial fiction in general, and *Middlemarch* more specifically, depicts what it feels like to be part of a local community as it experiences the pressures and changes of modernity.

To this degree, my reading of provincial fiction shares many of the characteristics of scales and geographical affect with the other literary genres included in this thesis; however, there are certain aspects of provincialism that differ from those novels that have been studied before. The ordinariness and the indistinct geographical details that are often associated with provincial narratives enable an interrogation of modernity that imagines both its broad universal aspects and the specific localised aspects simultaneously. In order to think through these two different facets of modernity, I argue that Eliot uses the provincial genre so as to depict the complex scalar alterations between individual's perspectives on the world and shared communal feelings of belonging and affiliation.

It is exactly the array of alternating perspectival scales that I understand as defining the geographical affect of *Middlemarch*. Many of the plots in the narrative centre on moments when character's perspectives on the world around them fail to take into account, or conflict with, the perspectives of other people. I argue that *Middlemarch* can be understood as a novel that gives shape to the tensions and conflicts between local affiliation and the global interconnectedness; or feelings of groundedness and rootlessness, or feelings of being an insider or an outsider. Informing each of these tensions are the problems that are created when different individuals' or social groups' scalar perspectives do not correspond with one another. It is my contention that Eliot interlocks these perspectives so as to plot the various ways in which the geographical affect of a provincial community expresses the uneven impacts of modernity. This reading sets out to interrogate how the tensions in scalar perspectives feature in different ways throughout the narrative of *Middlemarch*; scales of perspectives change and alter depending on the individual's gender,

class, or occupation. Crucially, how people respond to extending connections and how these responses change over the course of the novel inform Eliot's depiction of a provincial community as playing an active and dynamic role in processes of expansion.

In 1864 Matthew Arnold published 'The Literary Influence of Academies' in the *Cornhill*. Discussing the literary culture of Britain in comparison to that in France, Arnold suggests that there is a distinct "note of provinciality" (165) in his contemporary society. For Arnold, this influence of the provinces or "the provincial spirit" is defined in the following way:

For, not having the lucidity of a large and centrally placed intelligence, the provincial spirit has not its graciousness [...] it has not urbanity, the tone of the city, of the centre, the tone which aims at a spiritual and intellectual effect, and not excluding the use of banter, never disjoins banter itself from politeness, from felicity (165).

Commenting on Arnold's definition of the term 'provincial', Josephine McDonagh notes that "[t]his provinciality has little to do with locality; rather, it is associated with the uncivilised and the primitive, the very negation of culture" ('Rethinking Provincialism' 402). It is important to note that Arnold's definition of provincialism is firmly rooted in the print culture of provincial periodicals; however, as McDonagh has highlighted, his emphasis on the uncivilised or uncultured rather than locality has influenced many critical works on provincialism as a literary genre.

In 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Towards a Historical Poetics' Mikhail Bakhtin describes this genre as depicting the "petty-

bourgeois provincial town”, with its “commonplace, philistine, cynical, [...] vicious and sticky [...] ancillary time” (248):

In the provincial novel we witness directly the progress of a family-labour, agricultural or craft-work idyll moving into the major form of the novel. The basic significance of provinciality in literature – the uninterrupted age-old link between the life of generations and a strictly delimited locale – replicates the purely idyllic relationship of time to space, the idyllic unity of the place as locus for the entire life process [...] The provincial novel has the same heroes as does the idyll – peasants, craftsmen, rural clergy, rural school teacher (299).

Until relatively recently Bakhtin’s reading of provincial fiction has characterised many critical responses to the genre. As already discussed, Ian Duncan views provincial fiction as defined by a “negative difference, based on a binary opposition” (322). Robin Gilmour echoes this view with his claim that ‘provincial’ and ‘provincialism’ are often used as “pejorative terms: they imply narrowness, dilution, a smug satisfaction with the local and the loss of due proportion that goes with it” (51).

Writing in 2011 in an article titled ‘The Semi-Detached Provincial Novel’ John Plotz engages with Bakhtin’s definition of provincialism and challenges its placement of provincial fiction as detached from the modernity. He uses the phrase ‘semi-detachment’ to explain the notion of “an aesthetic work capable of generating a sense of semi-detachment from one’s daily life is linked to the way that mid-Victorian culture increasingly came to be defined by a network of vicarious attachments” (407):

The experience of semi-detachment that comprises a fully realised provincial life – that is, living a life far away from everything that ‘matters’ in the metropolis, yet still connected to it – is in important ways analogous to the sort of semi-detached relationship to the reader (half leaning on the stone bridge, half still back at home in an armchair) is meant to have to the text itself. At the heart of the provincial novel, then, lies not triumph of the local over the cosmopolitan (Little-Englandism), but a fascinating version of *magnum in parvo*, whereby provincial life is desirable for its capacity to locate its inhabitants at once in a trivial (but chartable) Nowheresville and in universal (but strangely ephemeral) everywhere (407).

In a similar manner to Josephine McDonagh’s claim that the provincial novel is “not the subordinate partner of a metropolitan/provincial binary” (401), Plotz argues for reading of the provincial novel and its engagement with concerns outside of its local setting. Along similar lines, I argue that Eliot animated the daily feelings and routines of the characters in *Middlemarch* in a way that asks pertinent questions about what comprised a community or a sense of communal feelings in her contemporary society. The ‘Nowheresville’ aspect of the novel, as Plotz terms it, enables Eliot to interrogate the geographical affects associated with modernity in a way that highlights the uneven characteristics of development; the processes of modernity and economic expansion appear as both universal and distant depending on the scales of perspective of the character being described.

There has, however, in recent years been a turn in Eliot scholarship to consider how *Middlemarch* could be situated alongside some of Eliot’s more globally inflected works. In her 2002 study *George Eliot and the British Empire* Nancy Henry explores the often overlooked influence that empire had on Eliot’s writings. Through examining biographical details of Eliot’s life and her financial

investments in colonial stocks, such as the 'East Indies' railway stock, Henry argues that Eliot's knowledge and engagement with the empire is present both in her fiction and non-fiction writings. However, this knowledge was, according to Henry, 'abstract' and 'patchwork' and as such is represented in sometimes complicated and veiled ways (9). A similar reading of the disjunction between local, provincial concerns and Eliot's broader range of knowledge is presented in Gillian Beer's 2006 essay 'What's Not in *Middlemarch*': "The town of Middlemarch is provincial, the writing of *Middlemarch* is urban, cosmopolitan even. The concerns of the people are local, of the writing polymathic" (17). Beer goes on to examine how in the novel's original publication the narrative would have been surrounded by advertisements for colonial goods and commodities, such as tobacco and chocolate, which she argues bring "the colonies closer to the text" (21). While these two works provide a valuable insight into the publication and biographic context of Eliot's writing of *Middlemarch*, there is still much that can be examined regarding the literary aesthetics of the novel itself.

As stated in Chapter Three, George Eliot is famed for her depictions of characters' internal psychological states and emotions. In recent years critics such as Brigid Lowe, Forest Plye, and Tom Sperlinger have all recently examined Eliot's conception of sympathy, sensitivity, or empathy in her novels.⁴⁶ Sperlinger notes how "*Middlemarch* is the novel that most successfully embodies Eliot's ideal of sympathy: it is a grand project of containment, in which different centres of self are given sympathy at the same time" (266). In a similar vein, George Levine holds that "[t]he intensity and formal complexity of George Eliot's novels [...] must be credited in part to her refusal to disentangle

⁴⁶ See Brigid Lowe *Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy* for a broad reading of how sympathy functions in mid-nineteenth-fiction. For a more specific reading of sympathy in Eliot's works see Forest Plye's article 'A Novel Sympathy: The Imaginative Community in George Eliot'.

representational precision, psychological states, formal coherence, and moral significance” (9). I add to this list the portrayal of the complicated spatial and affective responses to the physical environments. It is this aim to place Eliot’s representation of affective states alongside the broader forces of economic and social change that places this study apart from previous critical works on Eliot’s portrayals of feelings. This reading will interrogate the ways in which Eliot marries the feelings of different characters living within *Middlemarch* with the more ‘universal’ concerns and preoccupations of her contemporary society regarding communal boundaries, borders and identity. As such, the following paragraphs pull together many of the threads from proceeding chapters in this thesis and ask how anxieties regarding the social pressures and tensions associated are with processes of expansion registered in the literary aesthetics of mid-Victorian prose fiction.

In order to demonstrate the complicated ways in which scale, space, and affect are presented in *Middlemarch* it is useful to start with one of the most quoted passages of the novel:

I at least have so much to do unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed across the tempting range of relevancies called the universe (145).

Writing about this metaphor in 1958 Raymond Williams argues that the web image “tends to represent social – and indeed directly personal – relationships as passive: acted upon rather than acting” rather than actual social relations in which “every element in the complicated system is active” (*Culture and Society*

108). In Williams's reading of the web, then, it is suggested that all points on the web are flat and exist on a plane-like expanse on which goods, information, and exchange merely pass through them. I want to suggest, however, that a far more complicated reading of scale, spatial distances, interconnectedness and perspectives is represented in this image of the web; a reading that speaks to the themes of geographical affect and the malleable nature of provincial communities that runs through the novel more broadly. A web is constructed through uneven connections, some points sharing more links than others. As such, rather than thinking of the web as a passive structure, it is possible to read it alongside recent critical debates on the complicated and uneven way in which provincial communities were integrated within broader networks of exchange, communication, and information.

So as to think through this re-reading of the web more thoroughly it is useful to return to Terry Eagleton's reading of *Middlemarch* in *Criticism and Ideology*. In this work Eagleton presents an in depth reading of the various ways in which the web image could be understood:

The web is a *derivative* organic image, a mid-point between the animal imagery of *Adam Bede* and some more developed theoretical concept of *structure*. The complexity of the web, its subtle interlacing of relatively autonomous strands, its predatory overtones, the possibility of local complication it permits, accommodate forms of conflict excluded by the more thoroughgoing organicist imagery of *Adam Bede*. But at the same time the web's symmetry, its 'spatial' dehistoricising of the social process, its exclusion of levels of contradiction, preserve the essential unity of the organic mode. The web's complex fragility impels a prudent political conservatism: the more delicately interlaced its strands, the more the disruptive consequences of action can multiply, and so the more

circumspect one must be in launching ambitiously totalising projects. Yet conversely, if action at any point in the web will vibrate through its filaments to effect the whole formation, a semi-mystical relationship to the totality is nevertheless preserved (119-120).

I agree with much of Eagleton's reading of the web; its amalgamation of organic and theoretical imagery, the potential for local complication and conflict. I am not, however, convinced that it can necessarily be equated with a 'prudent political conservatism'. The "'spatial' dehistoricising' that Eagleton associates with the web is what I want to challenge in this reading. In my understanding of the image it speaks to the tensions that this thesis has located in writings of numerous nineteenth-century authors regarding how distances between places and communities can be understood in a society that was increasingly implicated within the networks of economic and global expansion. The spatial confusion of the web, the way in which different points are connected to one another in unequal and complicated ways, and the fact that it is this image that Eliot uses to represent social relations, challenges the idea of a harmonious global village that is featured in the works of Eliot's contemporary political economists. In my reading of *Middlemarch* Eliot interrogates the images of society as provided by Adam Smith and his followers. I argue that Eliot presents a meditation on the ways in which Smith imagines societies to connect in a period of global trading.

Writing about *Middlemarch's* engagement with theories of political economy, Imraan Coovadia argues in 'George Eliot's Realism and Adam Smith' that Eliot's "later novels borrowed extensively from Smith" (819):

Smith articulated for George Eliot the 'ground up' quality of a modern society: that in the emergence of its large-scale institutions from the day-to-day interactions of its citizens [...]

I suggest that George Eliot remembered Smith's language as her understanding of realism evolved in the sequence of novels from *Silas Marner* to *Middlemarch*. [...] the uses to which George Eliot puts Smith help to pick out a number of her central literary and imaginative prejudices in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*. In a real sense [...] George Eliot deepens Smith's conviction that society makes itself from below (819).

Although not directly thinking about the web metaphor, Coovadia's reading of Eliot's engagement with Adam Smith's theories of the construction of societies provides room to interrogate the connections that *Middlemarch* draws between the fragility of the spider's web and the construction of social bonds. According to Coovadia, Eliot's imagining of modern day society considers large-scale institutions as emerging from the day-to-day interactions between individual citizens. I argue, however, that unlike Adam Smith, who depicts this transition between the individual and the institution, as smooth, seamless and without obstacles, Eliot presents something far more complicated. I suggest that the web, with its fragility and distances between various connections reflects how different individuals in *Middlemarch* feel regarding their place in the modern society. In order to examine this in more detail the following paragraphs address four characters' responses to their place in Middlemarch society: Mr Brooke, Caleb Garth, Timothy Cooper, and Dorothea Brooke. In different ways the narratives of these four individuals highlight the complicated ways in which members of provincial communities felt regarding the social, economic, and political changes taking place in their society. The four characters all share

familial, sentimental, and physical links with the geographical locality of Middlemarch, but they all also express their feelings of hope and anxiety in terms that expand beyond their local world.

Much of the narrative of *Middlemarch* surrounds local debates on the impact that the Reform Bill would have on the local community, but even this narrative of local politics is situated within broader frameworks of global trading. In an attempt to convince Middlemarchers of the benefits that the Reform Bill could bring to their community Mr Brooke presents an expansive speech that links the society and trade of the provincial town out to the global marketplace spreading across continents. In language mirroring that of Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* Mr Brooke draws on the economic connections forged by commercial interaction between nations:

‘I am a close neighbour of yours, my good friends – you’ve known me on the bench a good while – I’ve always gone a good deal into public questions – machinery, now, and machine-breaking – you’re many of you concerned with machinery, and I’ve been going into that lately. It won’t do, you know, breaking machines: everything must go on – trade, manufacturers, commerce, interchange of staples – that kind of thing – since Adam Smith, that must go on. We must look all over the globe: - ‘Observation with extensive view,’ must look everywhere, ‘from China to Peru,’ as somebody says – Johnson, I think, ‘The Rambler,’ you know. That is what I have done up to a certain point – not as far as Peru; but I’ve not always stayed at home – I saw it wouldn’t do. I’ve been in the Levant, where some of your Middlemarch goods go – and then, again, in the Baltic. The Baltic, now’ (535).

The scalar effects of this speech increase from the known interactions of Mr Brooke with the Middlemarch community– “a close neighbour” – close both in

the sense of locality, but also in the sense of friendship, outwards to the Baltic. Brooke encourages his neighbours to think wider than their immediate circle of acquaintances in order to consider the manner in which they are already incorporated into wider processes of exchange that spread across the globe. Brooke's draws on the transport of the Middlemarch produced goods outwards to communities in different countries and continents. Before this dramatisation can fully expound the mutual benefits of global trading, however, Brooke is interrupted by a protest in the crowd:

At one and the same moment there had risen above the crowd, nearly opposite Mr Brooke, and within ten yards of him, the effigy of himself; buff-coloured waistcoat, eye-glass, and neutral physiognomy, painted on rag; and there had risen apparently in the air, like the note of the cuckoo, a parrot-like, Punch-voiced echo of his words [...] By the time it said, 'The Baltic, now,' the laugh which had been running through the audience became a general shout, and but for the sobering effects of party and that great public cause which the entanglement of things had identified with 'Brooke of Tipton', the laugh might have caught his committee (535-536).

In this moment Eliot evokes the difficulty that I have identified in much of the fiction included in this thesis: the tension in aligning moments of global economic expansion and development and how they are registered or felt in local communities. At the very moment that Brooke appeals to his community to expand their imaginative horizons outwards to the places with which they share economic or commercial bonds, he is brought back to his immediate locality with the mocking-puppet of him mimicking his own words. This is a pivotal moment in the portrayal of the point at which the global and the local are

brought into contact and summarises the tension that runs throughout *Middlemarch*: characters attempt to articulate their feelings about their place in the larger world – whether positive or negative – but, they are consistently brought back to the more immediate local connections and relations surrounding them.

Reading this description of the conflict between Brooke's global views and the people of Middlemarch's local resistance to this image, James Buzard asserts that it presents Eliot's focus on the domestic, rather than global, scales and circles of duty:

In this diabolic parody of the autoethnographic process in which Eliot herself is engaged, departure from mere locality ('I've not always stayed at home') does not lead to a productively alienated grasp of the community's whole shape and to a redemptive return, but only to aimless ramblings across the expanse of an exhausted Enlightenment universalism, invoked through the half-remembered citation of Johnson's 'The Vanity of Human Wants' (285).

Buzard notes that in this section "once underway, the rhetorical voyager [Brooke] quickly loses his compass and begins casting wildly about the whole world for a theme" (285). I argue that it is possible to advance a more nuanced reading of this scene. Brooke is not 'casting wildly about', but is trying to pull together the local people in the crowd into a recognition of the place their town occupies in the global marketplace. This is not an 'exhausted Enlightenment universalism' as Buzard reads it, but an attempt to articulate the way that the provincial community of Brooke is implicated within the global horizon of trade. It is important to note that this appeal does not inspire feelings of excitement,

anxiety, or uncertainty, as featured in other fiction included in this chapter, but a reversion to a mocking local tradition. Such a tension between the expanding markets to which the people of Middlemarch contribute and the reluctance of the local people to recognise this, highlights Eliot's imagining of provincial geographical affects. The broader horizon of globalised modernity provides the backdrop to the town, but it is a backdrop that the local people appear unable to recognise.

As stated, Mr Brooke's appeals to his neighbours to understand Middlemarch's market connections as taking place on a global scale are not dissimilar those expressed by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*. In a similar framework to Smith's globally trading village discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Brooke thinks about the expansions between the local and the global as smooth and obstacle free. What Eliot does with Mr Brooke that differs from Smith, however, is to focus on the potential shortfalls of overlooking the local in favour of the global. As discussed, Mr Brooke is unable to fully explain his plans for the global expansion of the Middlemarch marketplace before he is brought back to the mocking of local people. He has not fulfilled his duty of a landlord in his local community and as such his jumps between scalar perspectives are supported or substantiated by any communal support. In Chapter 39 of the novel Dagley criticises Mr Brooke for not performing his responsibilities as a landlord to his local tenants: "You've got no call to come an' talk about sticks o' these primises, as you woon't give a stick towar't mending" (418). This is an integral aspect to perspectives of scale and feelings of interconnectedness in *Middlemarch*; the tension between the individual's view point and the feelings of the community.

Certainly, *Middlemarch* is a novel that provides a plethora of characters from different social and economic positions, and Eliot devotes many pages of the narrative to their internal thoughts and feelings regarding their place in the local community. Equally, characters such as Dorothea Brooke, Mr Casaubon, and Will Ladislaw actively travel away from Middlemarch. It may then seem odd to focus in this reading on characters that appear relatively infrequently in the narrative, only have limited dialogue, and are depicted as firmly rooted in their local communities. I argue, however, that through local characters such as Caleb Garth and Timothy Cooper that Eliot presents the most nuanced meditation on Middlemarch's place in the national and global networks of modernity. Characters who are seemingly marginal to the plot of the novel, and to the community of Middlemarch itself, are in fact those who resist the mocking crowd of Brooke's speech and present a more meditative view of provincial social relations. It is through their relationships with local labour and land that Caleb Garth, a surveyor and manager of local estates, and Timothy Cooper, a farm worker, are placed as characters at the centre of Eliot's depiction of the provincial geographical affect of the *Middlemarch*. The first reading of Garth focuses on affective, imaginative responses to the relationship between labour and land in the provincial community, the second focuses on the material changes occurred to provincial communities by the introduction of the railway.

Caleb Garth has often been read as representing a "stock type of rural organism" who is "decidedly muted and marginal within the novel's structure" (Eagleton *Criticism and Ideology* 118). Barbara Hardy describes Caleb Garth as a "minor character". She notes that although he is

[...] very much more prominent in the story and in the moral scheme [than other minor characters such as Henrietta Noble], but possessing all kinds of attributes which bring him to life as a character yet have no obvious moral relevance – his simplicity, his slowness, his inadequate speech, his brusqueness, his tremendous enthusiasm, and his great respect for his wife – which can on occasion surprise us by being transformed into unquestionable husband authority (80).

It is only more recently that scholars have reassessed Garth's place in the narrative. In her 2012 article "'Myriad-Headed, Myriad-Handed': Labour in *Middlemarch*" Chinnie Ding argues that "[m]ediating learning and labour as much as he negotiates the natural and the social (and classes within the social), he occupies a variety of crucial interstices – the very seams where monetary value raises into being" (927). It is my reading that it is the 'variety of crucial interstices' that Garth occupies that informs his ability to present a complex imagining of different scales of perspective that contribute to provincial communities' sense of identity.

For much of the narrative Garth is presented as a character who finds it easier to express himself through his physical expression rather than through language. He is frequently described as finding it difficult to articulate himself, described as "stretch[ing] out the fingers of his left hand, according to a mute language of his own", "throwing much unutterable language into outstretched hands", or "look[ing] at the ground [...] while each finger moved in succession, as if it were sharing some thought which filled his large quiet brow" (294, 508). Examining this imagery Ding notes that the "organic simile, a deliberate image of absorption and immersion, affirms Garth's deep faith in language as anchored in reference – as it does his rootedness in the land" (920). I agree with this reading of Garth's 'rootedness in the land' but I want to think about how

this is coupled with his affective feelings towards the labour of the land. Garth is represented on a local and a sublime level simultaneously; unlike Mr Brooke whose undoing is created by his tendency to overlook his local responsibilities in order to think about connections that could be forged beyond the horizon, Caleb Garth's position, by contrast, is expanded outwards on to a sublime scale precisely because he is so concerned and involved with his work and labour on the local land.

In Book II of *Middlemarch*, 'Waiting for Death', Eliot describes how the Garths "lived in a small way" (264). It is necessary to unpick what Eliot means by this phrase and how it posits the tension in thinking about people who laboured on the land and their scales of affective response. I argue that in using this phrase, and in placing it in quotation marks, Eliot is questioning, if not critiquing, what it means to 'live in a small way' in a period of extending economic and market connections. On the one hand the idea that the Garths live in a 'small way' is relating to Caleb Garth's reluctance to undertake labour that is associated with capital: "He gave himself up entirely to the many kinds of work which he could do without handling capital" (264). But when describing Garth's both affective and physical response to labour a different sense of scalar effect is presented:

Caleb Garth often shook his head in meditation on the value, the indispensable might of that myriad-headed, myriad-handed labour by which the social body is fed, clothed, and housed. It had laid hold of his imagination in boyhood. The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal shouts of the workmen, the roar of the furnace, the thunder and the splash of the engine, were a sublime music to him; the felling and lading of timber, and the huge trunk vibrating star-

like in the distance along the highway, the crane at work on the wharf, the piled-up produce in warehouses, the precision and variety of muscular effort wherever exact work had been turned out, - all these sights of his youth had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets, had made a philosophy without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology. His early ambition had been to have as effective a share as possible in this sublime labour, which was peculiarly dignified by him with the name of 'business;' and though he had only been a short time under a surveyor, and had been chiefly his own teacher, he knew more of the land, building, and mining than most of the special men in the county (263).

In this section Garth's affective response to labour is thought through in terms of wide scales of feeling that effect all the sensory responses: whether it is the 'echoes of the great hammer; the 'roar of the furnace', or the 'huge trunk vibrating star-like in the distance' the sounds and sights Garth associates with labour are thought of on a grand scale. The idea of 'sublime labour' is simultaneously thought of in terms of a poetic or philosophic endeavour, whilst also being linked to the capitalist dream of 'piled-up produce in warehouses'. Although Garth may be a character who is seemingly defined by his locality and his detailed knowledge of the local land, his imaginative understanding of the place in the world displays a far more expansive comprehension of volume and the output of his labour.

In Chapter Two of this thesis I discussed Charles Dickens's representation of Daniel Doyce in *Little Dorrit*. It is through his hard work, ingenuity and knowledge of mechanical engineering that Doyce is able to successfully forge economic connections across the globe. I suggest that Eliot does something similar with the character of Caleb Garth. Although his labour

and his understanding of the products of his labour differ greatly from that of Doyce, Garth is presented in *Middlemarch* as representing a heroic type of labour. By this I mean that his knowledge and focus on the local land and his commitment to his daily work enable him to present a 'sublime' and organic form of labour. The vast expansions of scalar perspectives associated with Caleb Garth opens his horizons outwards from the local land of Middlemarch. I suggest that this reading of perspectival scales, ones based on knowledge and labour, contrast some of the other connections featured in the novel. In the following paragraphs I address the ways that the railway presents a different range of scalar perspectives to people living in Middlemarch.

Much previous criticism has been focused on the construction of the railway in *Middlemarch*. While some critics such as Eagleton, quoted in the introduction to this section, have read the railway as merely "impinging on the novel's margins" (120), others, such as Jessie Givner, argue that the railway is an essential trope in *Middlemarch* "a trope that is at once literary and historical" (226). I argue that the railway and the various responses that it prompts in characters in the community of Middlemarch is an integral part of Eliot's portrayal of provincial geographical affect and scale. Eliot dramatises the use of the railway in order to disrupt the narrative that railways would bring the whole nation into greater communication and instead demonstrates the complicated ways in which technological advances affected people's understandings of their place in the world. This thesis has been largely concerned with the complex ways in which mid-nineteenth-century fiction registered the increasingly complicated networks of connections created by global market trading.

In 'The Widow and the Wife', Book VI of *Middlemarch*, Caleb Garth and Timothy Cooper debate the changes that the construction of the railway could

bring to the local community. Timothy Cooper is described as "a wiry old labourer, of a type lingering in those times – who had his savings in a stocking-foot, lived in a lone cottage, and was not to be wrought on by any oratory" (592). Yet, it is Cooper that despite 'lingering in old times' provides the most complex response to the narrative of universal progress offered by railway proponents. In response to Caleb Garth's argument that "you can't hinder the railroad: it will be made whether you like it or not [...] the railway's a good thing" (591), Timothy Cooper argues that:

'Aw! good for the big folks to make money out on,' said Old Timothy Cooper, who had stayed behind turning his hay while the others had gone on their spree; - 'I've seen a lot of things sin' I war a young un – the war an' the peace, an the canells, an' the old King George, an' the Reagen', an' the new King George, an' the new un as has got a new ne-ame – an' it's been all aloike to the poor mon. What's the canells been t'him? They'n brought him neyther me-at nor be-acon, nor wage to lay by, if he didn't save it with clemmen his own inside. Times ha' got wusser for him sin' I war a young un. An' so it'll be wi' the railroads. They'll on'y leave the poor mon funder behind. But them are fools as meddle, and so I told the chaps here. This is the big folks's' world, this is. But yo're for the big folks, Muster Garth, yo are' (591-592).

In this passage Timothy Cooper expresses his anxieties regarding the construction of a railway line through Middlemarch. However, instead of simply presenting a fear of any changes taking place in the town, Cooper expresses his concerns regarding the possibility that certain social groups or individuals are left out of the networks of modernity. The idea that the poor man is left "funder behind" by the railways presents a complicated scalar imagining of

progress; Cooper highlights the ways in which processes of expansion that may bring certain social groups closer together does not necessarily bring everyone into the same system. Cooper imagines his place in world as being on a different scale to those wealthier than him who live in the same area.

To return to the image of the web, then, it is not only the connections between communities that are fragile and complex, but also the connections between individuals living within the same community. Cooper is aware that he is part of the same community as those rich people who will profit from the railway, but he is equally aware that they will overlook his thoughts and feelings about the changes they bring to the area. At the core of Eliot's depiction of scale in provincial fiction is a complicated presentation of the ways in which different characters envisage their place on the web of social connections. Eliot does not present all the characters as fully agreeable with where they see themselves in relation to others. As Mr Brooke, Caleb Garth, and Timothy Cooper demonstrate, individuals and social groups within Middlemarch imagine themselves to occupy different connections in relation to other areas or communities. It is this that makes Eliot's web-like portrayal of different perspectives of scale such an active and dynamic structuring point of the novel. The web is not overlaid onto characters as a way of controlling how they interact with one another, as earlier readings by Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton may suggest, but it allows characters to meditate on their interconnected role in society and to forge new or break old connections.

In the final reading of this section, I address the scalar perspectives associated with Dorothea Brooke. Over the course of the narrative Dorothea's understanding of the world around her, and her place within it, alters as her scales of perspective shift in response to her engagements with different people.

In the early chapters of *Middlemarch* Dorothea is unable to think of the world around her without putting herself in the centre of it. Her plan that “there would be nothing trivial” in her life and that “[e]veryday things [...] would mean the greatest things” speaks of her aims to lift herself above those around her and pursue grand and noble schemes (25). Later in the narrative, Eliot critiques such an ego-centric perspective through the image of the pier-glass:

An eminent philosopher among my friends, who can dignify even your ugly furniture by lifting it into the serene light of science, has shown me this pregnant little fact. Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially, and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent [...] (277).

This description of the pier-glass and the extent to which it mirrors the ego-centric ways that people view the world around them corresponds to the perspectives of Dorothea Brooke. Early in the narrative Dorothea is at odds with her scalar perspective; she wants to achieve greatness, but she is unable to fully understand her place in society. Eliot does not, however, present this as a condemnation of Dorothea’s self-centeredness; instead, it is presented as a reading of the limited perspectives allowed to woman in her contemporary society. In the third chapter of *Middlemarch* Dorothea is described as “struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed

nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither” (24). What Dorothea has to learn is to foster her affective connections to others beyond herself; or, to put it another way, to move beyond the pier glass where everything seems to be viewed in light of the self. Over the course of the novel she needs to expand her horizons beyond the limited scales of reference provided for her by patriarchal systems of education.

In the closing chapters of *Middlemarch* Eliot depicts Dorothea Brooke looking out of her window and observing the world around her. In a complex interplay of scale and perspective Eliot highlights the difficulty of observing both the local everyday happenings of a provincial community and the broad sweeps of national or global change:

She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond outside the entrance gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving – perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining (838).

Dorothea experiences the difficulty in thinking about her own place in the ‘largeness of the world’ and the lives of the ‘manifold’ people taking place far beyond the ‘bending sky’ of the horizon. It is the scaling in and scaling out of this passage that positions it in contrast with Adam Smith’s imagining of expanding connections in *The Wealth of Nations* examined in the introduction of this thesis. Instead of social and economic connections smoothly expanding

outwards, Eliot plots the lives of individual people with a broader sense of what is going on elsewhere in such a way that zooms in and out and complicates how different people feel about their place in the world. This is a helpful passage with which to think about the portrayal of geographical affect in the novel more broadly. The changing perspectives and the alternating sites of focus highlights the 'largeness of the world', as Eliot puts it, but also the extent to which it is impossible to separate oneself from the extending connections that were spreading outwards towards the horizons.

When read alongside the early descriptions of Dorothea's understanding of her place in the world, this shift in scale is triumphant in tone. Dorothea has changed her outlook on the world and is able to view it from a new vantage point. Following her marriage to Mr Casaubon, and his ultimately futile attempt to achieve greatness through his scholarly work, Dorothea repositions the scope of her ambitions. Understood in this context, the passage quoted above provides a grounded sense of sympathy that she is part of rather than seeing it as something outside of itself. The humanness of these expansions, the fact that she recognises the different ways that people work in the world, demonstrate the affective connections that she has come to recognise in the world around her. Unlike the pier-glass that places the individual at the centre of world, this description of scalar perspectives places all people as "a part of that involuntary, palpitating life" (838).

By focusing on the characters of Mr Brooke, Dorothea Brooke, Caleb Garth, and Timothy Cooper it becomes possible to assess the ways that Eliot depicts scales of perspective that alter depending on people's gender, class, and occupation. As such, the geographical affect of a provincial town is not made up of a single scalar perspective of seeing modernity taking place

elsewhere – although this is at times the case – it is made up of multiple different perspectives, perspectives that alter and shift according to the ‘movements and mixtures’ of communal life. The introduction of ‘outsiders’ to the town of Middlemarch and the movement of local people across regional, national, and continental boundaries, brings to the fore the dynamic, albeit uneven, ways that expanding connections influenced both individual and communal feelings of belonging, identity, and affiliation in a provincial town. It is therefore reductive to understand *Middlemarch*, and the provincial genre more broadly, as static, detached, conservative, or backward looking. Of course, they feature characters who are reluctant or uncertain regarding the impact that changes associated with processes of expansion would bring to local communities, but they also present characters who are excited or ambitious to profit from these changes. In a similar way to the urban fiction examined in Section One of this thesis, *Middlemarch* gives shape to the unevenness of nineteenth-century modernity.

In a recent article, ‘Is *Middlemarch* Ahistorical?’, Henry Staten challenges the critical assumption that “*Middlemarch* colludes with the repressive forces it represents, reflecting the period symptomatically rather than critically” (991). Staten argues that the novel needs to be read in such a way that brings the historical specificities to the fore:

For what the novel *shows* is history woven into the text in a scrupulous and critical fashion that overflows the narrator’s moralism. [...] But bracketing the narrator’s ethical stance begins to make visible the density of historical specification in the novel, and it then becomes possible to peel away the overlay of sentimentality from the showing – which

emerges, not as a symptomatic reflection of 'historical impasse', but as an intricate analysis of the ways in which this impasse is articulated (992).

While I am less concerned than Staten with the representation of historical specificities in *Middlemarch*, I agree with his contention that *Middlemarch* presents an 'intricate analysis' of the articulation of historical change. Through focusing on a reading of scale and competing perspectives it becomes possible to reassess the ways in which Eliot positions her provincial community in relation to wider changes taking place outside of the local communities' borders. Unlike some of the other authors included in this chapter, however, Eliot does not dramatise these changes through explicit references to other locations or through the circulation of foreign goods or capital, but rather in the gradual changes of local characters' imaginings of scale and perspective.

As such the provincial genre can be understood as a complicated meditation on how individual's feelings regarding their place in the world are a complex amalgamation of what is known and local, and what they believe may be going on elsewhere in the world. For certain characters this prompts feelings of ambition or excitement, for others it is associated with sentiments of anxiety or resentment. To return to John Plotz's reading of provincial fiction in 'The Semi-Detached Provincial Novel'; these novels allow "glimpses of a different set of axes or a new vantage point on different worlds, which [...] permit characters to continue, in some altered way, their old provincial life" (412). In Plotz's reading the focus falls largely on Dorothea and the middle-class characters more generally in *Middlemarch*. In this reading I hope to have demonstrated that a similar claim could be made of *all* characters living in the confines of the

provincial community. They all share an awareness of the fragility of their local community, what differs is the feelings they have towards this instability.

This chapter has addressed the different ways in which nineteenth-century regional and provincial fiction engaged with debates and themes regarding processes and paradigms of global expansion taking place in the authors' contemporary society. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, there has been a long held critical assumption that these literary genres, particularly provincial fiction, are to some degree divorced from or unconcerned with the broader social and economic concerns featured in *Condition of England* or urban novels. I hope to have shown the extent to which these novels do demonstrate the ways in which these concerns are featured in these narratives. Moreover, I have shown that it is through the formal and literary aesthetics that this thesis associates with scale and geographical affect that it is possible to reassess the ways in which Brontë and Eliot integrated these concerns into their regional and provincial narratives. The external forces of economic and imperial expansion may not be as overt as some of the other narratives included in this thesis, but in their nuanced inter-plotting of the global, the national, the regional, and the local both authors represent the often unsettling changes taking place in their society in ways that reveal the gradual ways in which then encroach on peoples' lives.

Of course, when considering nineteenth-century regional and provincial fiction there are any number of novels and stories that could be examined. And, even within the two novels selected there could be a reasonable criticism levied against this reading that I have only selected certain characters or certain narrative threads. I argue, however, that in focusing on specific moments of characters' or the narrative's meditations on changing perspectives that it

becomes possible to advance a reading that can later be applied more broadly to the genres and compared across novels. It is also important to note the historical context of both novels, both *Shirley* and *Middlemarch* are set several decades before their publications; however, this reading has demonstrated that although historical in context, they ask similar questions and share similar concerns with those novels set in their contemporary society. In fact, the historical settings of these two works are dramatised by Brontë and Eliot in such a way that enables them to reflect on the ways in which global changes, such as the market fluctuations in *Shirley*, are still present and still effect feelings of locality in the years in which they were writing.

At the start of this chapter I claimed that it was important to not only argue that both the regional and the provincial should be understood as globally informed literary genres, but also to pull out the differences between these two genres. I argue that the differences in each genres approach to scale and geographical affect can be understood through examinations of their formal, literary, and aesthetic structures and devices. For Brontë, the specificities of the regional landscape and location leads her to make explicit narrative interventions that place her imagined regional community within the actual forces of global economic and political uncertainty. By contrast, Eliot uses the universal aspects of her provincial town to present a more meditative portrayal of the affective changes taking place in structures of feeling in provincial communities. In both cases, however, the regional and the provincial community are characterised by feelings of uncertainty and insecurity.

Conclusion

This thesis opened with Adam Smith's imagining of the potential profits that an expansion of trading connections could bring to nations across the globe. According to Smith's understanding, the division of labour that takes place between the local neighbours in a small community – for Smith enacted through the characters of the tailor, the shoemaker, and the farmer – could be expanded to characterise trading relations between nations. Although this is a compelling account of globalised marketplaces, it is dependent on a smooth and frictionless expansion of scales. To support such an explosion of economic connections, it would be necessary that the individuals and social groups contributing their labour and capital to the processes of expansion respond to the exchange with other communities in a similar manner to the ways they trade with their neighbours. As this thesis has demonstrated, by the middle decades of the nineteenth-century the responses to global expansion of trading connections were somewhat more complicated than allowed for by Smith's descriptions.

'Economic Expansion and Geographical Affect in Mid-Nineteenth-Century British Fiction' has insisted that mid-nineteenth-century British fiction registers the nuances of the different responses to extending markets. The literature included in this study features narratives that question how people felt about the ways that they were becoming increasingly dependent on and variously impacted by increasingly world-level market forces and lengthening commodity chains. Rather than thinking through these connections in terms of a 'global village', the writers in this study approach the topic of processes of expansion in such a way that brings to the fore the highly uneven and

complicated processes that characterise economic development.⁴⁷ So, instead of imagining the extension of markets and material connections to seamlessly connect nations together, the works of Gaskell, Dickens, Reynolds, Martineau, Eliot, and Brontë focus on the way that contrasting categories of affiliation, loyalty, and perspective are folded in on one another when different people meditate on their place in the world.

Over the course of this thesis I have interrogated the complicated ways in which scalar categories feature in fiction written by a diverse range of authors and set in a wide array of communities located across Britain. The scalar perspectives range from local neighbourhood communities, to regional and national networks of information and communication, outwards to the global circulations of commodities, capital, and people across the world. These scalar categories, however, are not static or set; they feature in different ways in the works of different authors and even within the same narratives. As such, scalar categories are shaped in these works as representations of people's heuristic attempts to understand the uneven impacts of globalisation. They concertina in on one another so as to plot the ways in which global economic connections appeared to simultaneously contract and expand distances between different geographical locations. The geographical affects of the fiction included in this study depicts the ways in which expanding economic and market connections prompted Victorian writers to reflect on how the fabric of people's everyday lives were changing and being shaped by events that were no longer located in their local neighbourhood communities.

⁴⁷ For a reading of ideas of 'global villages' in nineteenth-century culture and society see Duncan Bell 'Dissolving Distance: Technology, Space, and Empire in British Political Thought, 1770-1900'.

As such, this thesis provides a valuable contribution to recent critical and theoretical works on the development of capitalism and modernity. In 2015 Warwick Research Collective (WReC) published *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*.⁴⁸ They argue that the idea of combined and uneven development highlights how modernity did not take place in one part of the world and then filter out to other areas, but that all areas are incorporated into modernity's processes; however, they are incorporated in such a way produces unequal connections and dependencies:

Modernity is neither a chronological nor a geographical category. It is not something that happens – or even happens *first* – in 'the west' and to which others can subsequently gain access; or that happens in the cities rather than in the countryside; or that, on basis of a deep-set sexual division of labour, men tend to exemplify in their social practice rather than women. Capitalist modernisation entails development, yes – but this 'development' takes the forms also of the development of underdevelopment, of maldevelopment, and dependent development. If urbanisation, for instance, is clearly part of the story, what happens in the countryside as a result is equally so. The idea of some sort of 'achieved' modernity, in which unevenness would have been superseded, harmonised, vanquished or ironed out is radically unhistorical" (13).

This scholarship provides new readings of the spatial categories of modernity. It moves away from diffusionist understandings of the core and the periphery and advances, instead, a more nuanced reading of capitalist modernity's expansion. Although the concern of WReC is largely focused on contemporary fiction and culture, there is much cross over with the depictions of geographical affect and

⁴⁸ Warwick Research Collective (as discussed in the introduction to Section One of this thesis) consists of Sharae Deckard, Nicholas Lawrence, Neil Lazarus, Graeme Macdonald, Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, Benita Parry, and Stephen Shapiro.

scalar categories as expressed in nineteenth century fiction. This thesis has demonstrated the various ways in which Victorian authors plotted the complicated connections that spanned between Britain and the rest of the world over the course of the nineteenth century. These expansions, however, did not extend out-wards seamlessly and smoothly, rather, as identified in contemporary culture and society by WreC, they forged complicated feelings of interdependence and affiliation.

A similar reading of economic development is provided in this thesis. The mid-nineteenth-century authors included in this study did not present modernity as something that occurs in one central location and then filters out to other, less developed areas. As all four of the chapters in this study have demonstrated, economic modernity is inherently uneven in its characteristics and its effects. The urban fiction, both industrial and metropolitan, highlight how people can be living in close geographical proximity within the same town or city, but have widely different experiences of processes of expansion. But the works of Gaskell, Dickens, and Reynolds do more than simply point out that inequality exists, they meditate on how everyone – whether it is Bessy Higgins in *North and South*, Ellen Monroe in *The Mysteries of London*, or Sleary's Circus troop in *Hard Times* - are *all* implicated in the processes of economic expansion. Similarly, the countryside narratives examined in Section Two challenge understandings that the Victorian countryside existed on the periphery of urban development. They demonstrate how rural communities contributed vital goods, labour, and capital that were necessary to enable Britain to trade on the global marketplace. Moreover, they bring to the fore the various ways in which people living in countryside communities *felt* themselves to be modern.

As C. A. Bayly explains in *The Birth of the Modern World*, a vital part of being modern is “thinking you are modern” (11). This thesis has interrogated the different feelings that the idea of being modern prompted in a wide range of people from different economic and social standings. This is one way in which I understand this study to make an important contribution to recent historical and literary studies on nineteenth-century globalisation. Rather than thinking solely about the presence of foreign goods or commodities in Britain, this study has provided a new focus on how the presence of these objects, or other global changes such as increased levels of communication and transportation, prompted people to reflect on how they understand their position in the world. There have been recent calls in Victorian studies to consider the period from a more globally inflected or transnational standpoint, such as Lauren Goodlad’s claim, quoted in the introduction to this thesis, that there needs to be a “renewed attention to literary form, noting the range and intensity of Victorian fiction’s aesthetic engagements with global encounters” (*The Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic* 11). Or Priya Joshi’s argument that,

Like globalisation, the term ‘Victorian’ captures the unevenness intrinsic in transnational economic and cultural encounters. A term with a specific origin in nineteenth-century England, ‘Victorian’ today refers not only to historical boundaries, but more cogently to a set of interrelated cultural, intellectual, and social preoccupations that far outlive the originary moment” (38).

It is my contention that one way to approach these demands is to understand, as this thesis does, British Victorian fiction as responding to the genuinely global processes of expansion and how authors registered the social changes accompanying these processes.

In the final months of writing this thesis Britain was engaged in lively and heated debates regarding the nation's role in the European Union. Following the referendum held on 23rd June 2016 it was announced that Britain would no longer be a member of the EU. At the core of the debates surrounding the referendum were questions of free market relations, both in the EU single market and the global marketplace, and the free movement of people. While it still remains unclear what impact the Brexit decision will have on Britain's economic prosperity, what is clear is that it will prompt long-lasting structural changes that will demand a reassessment of Britain's future role in global economic trading relations. It is not far-fetched, I argue, to draw comparisons between the Victorian authors included in this study and the economic and political climate of contemporary twenty-first-century society. Both in the nineteenth-century and today, how economic market connections are imagined and registered by people has a great impact on how they feel about their place in the world.

It is the interaction between economic markets and felt, or imagined, responses that enables this study to contribute to current debates regarding the ways in which free trade, economic expansion, and global market places are supported and sustained through more incentives than purely economic imperatives. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, historians of nineteenth-century global expansion and modernity, such as John Darwin, C. A. Bayly, and James Belich, have put forward readings of Victorian economic developments that are sensitive to the social and cultural motivations that also drove the Victorians to forge connections across the globe. Writing in the afterword to a special edition of *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* on 'The Economics of the British World' Peter Cain notes that more attention

still needs to be paid to the “economic imagination” (98). I hope that the work done in this thesis on scalar perspectives and geographical affect can go some way to elucidating a more detailed understanding of how Victorian fiction thinks through the complex interactions concerning economic connections and feelings of aspiration, ambition, and excitement, but also feelings of loyalty, affiliation, and belonging.

Of course, when undertaking such an expansive study it is inevitable that certain areas of research could be further developed. I am aware that a criticism could be levied at this thesis regarding the limited examples of fiction included in each chapter. When devising this research project I decided to focus on a wide range of genres in order to demonstrate the prevalence of concerns regarding processes of global expansion and feelings of excitement or uncertainty. However, in this aim to demonstrate the scope of fiction that engages with these topics it was necessary to focus on a select number of authors and novels. But by examining a small number of narratives it is possible to provide a more sustained reading of the ways in which scale and geographical affect featured in these works. If this research were to be developed further, however, one of the first areas would be addressed would be to provide a more capacious reading of each of the genres included in this study.

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