

STIRRING IT UP:
THE CHANGING OF THE BRITISH NATION THROUGH FOOD

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One—Tea with Cream and Sugar: The Civilizing Ceremony of Afternoon Tea.....	28
Chapter Two—Ritual Transformation: Mixing the Colonial Out of Rum Punch	81
Chapter Three—What’s Yours is Mine: The Cultural Transformation and Rise of Anglo-Indian Food	137
Chapter Four—Cultural Fusion: Mixing Great Britain with its Colonies in Christmas Pudding	184
Conclusion	233
References	258

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – United Kingdom Tea Company, 1890.....	48
Figure 2 – Lipton Teas, 1894.....	50
Figure 3 – Twining’s Tea Advertisement	51
Figure 4 – McVitie’s and Prices, The Queen’s Dominions	190
Figure 5 - Victorian Christmas Card, 1843.....	191
Figure 6 – Empire Marketing Board, “Have an EMPIRE Xmas Pudding,” 1926.....	194
Figure 7 – Empire Marketing Board, “The Empire Christmas Pudding, ” 1926.....	196
Figure 8 – John Bull Showing the Foreign Powers How to Make a Constitutional Pudding, 1848	213

Introduction

Food is an integral part of life. It sustains us, inspires us, and pleases us. Societies often come together around it, using meals as a time to socialize, strengthen bonds, and create community. Our world is intimately tied to food, so much so that food often defines cultures and societies take pride in upholding specific culinary traditions. This intersection between food and culture has gained increasing attention recently as academic fields have taken interest in how food impacts a variety of fields, including art, science, and society. Specifically, the use of cultural food studies within these spheres shows how food—its creation, exhibition, and consumption—effects these scholarly areas. However, one cannot truly understand the importance of a particular foodstuff without delving into its past, and history scholars have been interested in the critical examination of food and have produced a significant amount of work regarding the intersection of cuisine and culture throughout history. This mode of study blossomed in the late 1990s with the publication of such texts as Alan Beardsworth and Theresa Keil's *Sociology on the Menu* (1997), Alan Warde's *Consumption, Food, and Taste* (1997), and Penny van Esterik's *Food and Culture* (1997). This attention has since spawned a wave of texts throughout the 2000s and 2010s, both scholarly and not, on the impact of food on society and the way in which food provides a means to analyze the different elements of a society.¹ The interest around food has spawned Food Studies degree programs at major universities like Syracuse University, the American University in Rome, and the Dublin Institute of Technology. While history scholars have championed cultural food studies within their field, only recently have literary scholars begun studying the effect of food descriptions within written texts. The

¹ Including Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food* (2008), Sarah Lohman's *Eight Flavors: The Untold Story of American Cuisine* (2016), and Laura Shapiro's *What She Ate: Six Remarkable Women and the Food That Tells Their Stories* (2017).

scholarship is minute in comparison to history-based texts, and only within the last few years have literary scholars begun to examine the impact of food within literature with the publication of texts such as Annette Cozzi's *Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (2015); Michael Parrish Lee's *The Food Plot in the Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (2016); and Mary Addyman, Laura Wood, and Christopher Yiannitsaros's reader *Food, Drink, and the Written Word in Britain, 1820–1945* (2017). There is still much to uncover and this dissertation seeks to continue the examination of cultural food studies within nineteenth-century literature and its effect on readers, society, and the creation of a national cuisine.

The use of food to examine and analyze the British Empire provides a fascinating look into studying the transformation of their society as the nation expanded and changed with the influx of colonial and global influences. Food is something that is globally relevant. Every society eats, and the consumption choices of these nations provides an interesting look into how specific dishes impact how a country relates to its citizens and to the world. The inclusion of a “national cuisine” is meant to differentiate one society from another. However, these “cultural” dishes are not static, but ever transforming as a society adapts and adjusts to the changing nation and world around them. The inclusion and exclusion of certain foods within a culture's cuisine represents the differing culinary influences present effect a country. Studying how colonial foodstuffs impacted England's eating habits provides another lens in which to examine the effect the British Empire and its colonial territories had on its citizens and their understanding of themselves as British and imperial subjects. The nineteenth century is also particularly appealing with its food history due to Great Britain's imperial expansion and its increased sustained contact with other far-flung cultures. In this vein, several questions arise: how did the British associate particular dishes with its colonies and which were reappropriated as British foods? Who

decided? How did Great Britain and its merchants promote particular dishes to citizens so they knew which dishes were “theirs”? Written scenes of eating showcased in nineteenth-century literary novels are strikingly familiar to modern day advertisements in utilizing food product placements common in today’s television and movies. An author’s use of sensory descriptors aids in tempting a reader to purchase or try the foods chronicled in these works much like the visual performances modern advertisers construct on screen. In *The Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, Cozzi argues that food is “one of the most fundamental signifiers of national identity, and literary representations...reveal how that identity is culturally constructed” (Cozzi 5). Food and its representation in literature constructs and reveals a nation’s cultural identity. Writers utilize literature to mirror culture and to construct specific food practices that readers may perform themselves. In this way, novels are integral to understanding the formation and continuation of a nation’s culinary habits and provide a fascinating look into why England still enjoys specific dishes that have become designated as “theirs.”

For England, the imperial endeavors of the British Empire drastically changed the way in which its citizens ate. The colonization of various territories—including the West Indies, South Africa, India, and Australia— provided Britons with a conglomeration of new foods and dishes brought back by traders, merchants, and travelers from these newly acquired dominions. Through the increasing availability of these foods, the British were able to experience other cultures and their continued connection to these nations through food creates a fascinating period in England’s food history. However, these inundations of new goods were not positively received as some saw the integration of foreign items as a sullyng of Great Britain’s superior culture. The British viewed the colonies as uncivilized and barbaric, in need of a guiding hand to lead them toward a more cultured existence. Yet, Great Britain’s reliance on its colonies and

international trade meant the influx of goods into the nation could not be halted. Instead, the British began to “civilize” the colonial commodities arriving into their country. A “ritual transform[ation of] the base acts of eating and drinking” improved the previously unadulterated product (Cozzi 136). Georges Poulet notes in *The Metamorphosis of the Circle* that “changes of meaning coincide with corresponding changes in the manner by which human beings represent to themselves that which is deepest in themselves, that is to say, the awareness of their relationship with the inner and outer worlds” of which they are members (Poulet vii). The process of metamorphosis enabled these foods to be “transformed into their subjective equivalents” by the transformer and to obtain new meanings unique to that culture (Poulet 251). England’s conscious transformation of these goods from foreign to domestic reshaped the cultural meanings associated with these imported commodities. In taking ownership of these foods, the British asserted their dominance over both the item and its country of origin and supported their claim as a superior power within the world. However, even though the British believed their transformations made these commodities acceptable for consumption within their society, these foods also encouraged England to change the cultural meanings associated with these goods as these foods became increasingly more common in British society.

To ensure that colonial foods were “safe” for British consumption, these goods underwent two important transformative processes. The first was the conversion of colonial items to domestic British products, such as rum into rum punch or the creation of Anglo-Indian dishes. The second method was Britons’ physical ingestion of these foods into their bodies. In removing the colonial signifiers that defined these foods through placing the civilizing imperial hand upon them, they were made acceptable for British consumption. If the ingestion of unrefined dishes had negative effects upon the genteel and delicate British constitution,

acceptable foods bore no ill effects. Literature aided in defining “acceptable” foods for British consumption.

Nineteenth-century British literature depicts food as an integral aspect of British domestic life. In “National Identity and Victorian Christmas Foods,” Tara Moore writes that the “history of any nation’s diet is the history of the nation itself, with food fashion, fads and fancies mapping episodes of colonialism and migration, trade and exploration, cultural exchange and boundary-making” (Moore, “National Identity” 143). A country’s culinary preferences communicate a great deal about its past, geographic area, and people, and the inclusion of colonial foodstuffs is vitally important to understanding the culinary and historical landscape of England during this period. Dishes that have become synonymous with British life—afternoon tea, Indian food, Christmas pudding, and rum punch—can all find their roots in colonialism. What sets them apart from their origins, however, are the methods in which the British Empire reappropriated these goods through ritual transformation. The reshaping of colonial goods ultimately demonstrated Great Britain’s mastery over its colonies. In changing these foods from foreign to domestic, the British took ownership of these goods and made space for them within their society, ultimately transforming specific items into newly “British” dishes.

Novels were one method that aided the reappropriation of indigenous food items into British culture. For many, novels are a means of entertainment or escapism from the everyday world and the interactions readers have with these texts influences their views of themselves and the world around them. In fact, Lennard J. Davis argues in *Resisting Novels* that this effect can be so detrimental that readers should actively remind themselves *not* to be influenced by what they are reading. Davis observes that “novels had an effect on people who read them and that somehow people who read novels were involved in the false notion that what they read was

linked to life” (Davis 12). All literature influences its readers, regardless of genre, gender, or age group. However, Davis’ opinion that everything portrayed in literature is an incorrect portrayal of life isn’t entirely accurate. Although fictional scenes aren’t truthful representations of an actual person, they do provide depictions—however fanciful—of how a society functions and exists. Many popular nineteenth-century novels were set in contemporary England, which allowed readers to easily identify and relate to the settings and characters of these texts. Novels ultimately helped establish cultural meanings around certain beliefs and mores, acceptable social actions, and even foods. “English” literary characters were members of the same nation in which the reader was a citizen. Fictional descriptions of characters eating and buying particular foods influenced readers’ purchases through the marketing of a specific way of life within England. Portraying positive scenes of culinary consumption can be influential in convincing readers that this is how their society and community functions. Novels then become a form of advertising through their encouragement and construction of a specific, favorable type of lifestyle in England. To say it is a false representation, however, isn’t entirely true. If readers have the ability to purchase the foods described in these novels and observe others doing the same, then this is not an incorrect portrayal. Even though the characters within these stories and the actions they take are fictional, they represent the society in which the reader exists. These illustrations actively encourage readers to partake in aspects of British society they may not have previously experienced within their local community through the creation of perceived national culinary habits. In situating these foods as already fixed within England, literary descriptions promoted their consumption as commonly practiced in the country and helped establish these dishes as part of the national cuisine of England.

Literature is a powerful tool and has the ability to transport readers from the world in which they exist into new realms. Novels “help humans adapt to the fragmentation and isolation of the modern world” by creating an imagined community in which readers can participate. The subject matter of fictional narratives is “heavily oriented towards the ideological” and “occup[ies] a special role in the development of our culture” through the creation of a belief system with which readers identify and desire to emulate (Davis 12, 4). Regardless of how outlandish the setting may be, readers conceive of themselves as participants in this world and find relational aspects to imitate within their actual lives. The establishment of these types of narrative fictional communities is what Benedict Anderson refers to as an “imagined community” that exists within a nation. In these groups, individuals form a connection to their country “even [though] the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them.” Instead, these individuals believe themselves intimately connected to their fellow citizens through this established “image of their communion” presented in “the convergence of capitalism and print technology” presented within a nation’s newspaper (Anderson 6, 46). Likewise, a newspaper’s unity of capitalism and print can be observed within the novel, which similarly embodies capitalism and nationalism in a printed format. The expression of British society in literature shows an idealized view of the nation in which readers seek to be a part. Novels, then, offer ways for individuals to lose themselves in a world both similar to but unlike their own. Authors included recognizable foods, activities, and social figures to connect with readers while providing an idealized world of community built through a sense of shared nationalism and culture. In associating certain foods with positive narrative experiences, readers are tacitly invited to recreate these favorable occurrences as a method to gain similar results, much as modern day consumers do with products marketed as community

builders, like Coca Cola or Pringles. It is, after all, partially thanks to Charles Dickens and his beautifully crafted scenes of Christmas festivities in *A Christmas Carol* that a resurgence of the Yuletide holiday in England resulted. The displays of certain foods like Christmas pudding, goose, and punch throughout the novella popularized these foodstuffs and reshaped how Britons celebrated and ate during the holiday. Though not all culinary transformations within England were as overt and immediate as the ones following *A Christmas Carol*'s publication, the transition of tea, rum, and Indian food from imported commodity to staple of the English home can be seen in a linear progression in popular nineteenth-century publications. The inclusion and promotion of certain foods and particular cooking methods in these novels are essential to understanding how and why British national dishes came to be. Novels also helped create imagined communities with British colonies by the incorporation of food; in effect solidifying the idea of Empire.

This dissertation project examines how tea, rum, Anglo-Indian food, and Christmas pudding became established as national symbols of Britishness within the British culinary tradition. These four foods, all with roots in colonialism, would not have been possible without the expansive nineteenth-century British Empire and the introduction and accessibility of foreign foodstuffs like spices, sugar, chili peppers, and mangos made available through the presence of the British within these nations. The growing imperial presence of the British around the world established both a global economy and citizens with a taste for foreign food. Great Britain's inability to grow certain foods within England encouraged the nation to utilize the global economy to obtain these goods. Rather than establish trade relationships with other nations, which could be costly or provide "inferior" products as with tea from China, the British Empire

sought to regulate their supply chain by producing goods from inception to sale within their colonial territories that could satisfy their specific trade needs.

Though the colonization of the British Empire's various territories was initially for the benefit of the Empire, the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies eventually became one of mutual need created by specific British policies. As the British Empire expanded around the world, it not only obtained new lands and people but also economies and trade. It was important that these new dominions were prosperous and an asset to the imperial economy. Maintaining the British Empire was an expensive venture and it was essential that the colonies didn't become a burden or drain economically on the nation. The Empire responded to this potential crisis of "capitalist accumulation" through "industrial capitalism's subsequent need to extend the commodity-form" through the formation of profitable trade and consumerism (Odih 7). To ensure that its colonies were lucrative, the British government needed to establish a consistent demand for these items. Encouraging British consumers to buy imperially-sourced products to build and increase market demand for these goods guaranteed a colony's economic and commercial success within the Empire.

The recipe creation for popular food and drink not only made these foods accessible on a national level and encouraged readers to create and try the dishes within their homes but also standardized the cooking practice. These instructions also ensured that consumers maintained certain production methods that not only created constancy in production but also differentiated foods from their original foreign sources through specific cooking methods. By establishing a standardized recipe, Britons established a culinary identity around the specific cooking, serving, and consumption practices associated with foreign foods. These eating methods are particularly noticeable in the performance of afternoon tea in which the brewed beverage is served in elegant,

expensive china cups, and accompanied by small cakes, sandwiches, and other treats for the host and her guests to enjoy as they establish and reaffirm community. The drinking of tea is rarely, if ever, a beverage consumed in isolation. Literary scenes of tea drinking established the drink as a social, and not solitary, beverage.

This dissertation examines these literary representations of food within the lens of “consumer culture theory,” the study of individual and group consumption choices and behaviors from a social and cultural point of view. In the two-decade study *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty years of Research*, Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson state that the theory “refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings” (Arnould and Thompson 868).² The society in which an individual resides impacts buying habits through the positive and negative connotations associated with particular products. This influence on consumer purchasing choices impacts the availability—or lack thereof—of certain goods within the marketplace. A person’s choice to buy and use these products challenges and modifies social opinions and utilizations through the introduction of these goods into society. The inclusion of these foods within British homes and the sharing of these items with family and friends establishes a precedence of normality around these commodities. And as individuals purchase and utilize these goods regularly within their own homes and lives, they further solidify the commodities’ use within the nation.

In *Advertising in Modern and Postmodern Times*, Pamela Odih argues, the “Victorian commodity culture reveals a distinct colonial sentimentality evident in nineteenth-century

² Consumer culture theory includes “activities associated with the purchase, use, and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer’s emotional, mental and behavioral responses that precede, determine, or follow these activities” (Kardes 8).

advertisement of the Empire and its ‘Others’” (Odih 7). Nineteenth-century British literature provide a fascinating look into the consumer habits of this period. The “consumption and commercialization of commodities were essential components of British colonialism” and the advertising of these goods “provided a means of packaging the geographic spaces, peoples and products of the Empire into exotic objects” that encouraged British consumerism (Odih 42). The expanding global market made once expensive goods available to a new group of people, which transformed British consumer practices through the ability to purchase previously unattainable items. Additionally, expanded trade routes brought new foreign foodstuffs into the English marketplace and increased the consumer base for these food items. The prosperous Industrial Revolution also grew the British economy and, subsequently, the size of the middle class and their understanding and want of the global marketplace. The influx of international products into England was cause for some concern, as some feared the inclusion of foreign goods could change the nation and what it meant to be British. Furthermore, the availability and buying of non-British sourced imported goods withdrew economic capital from British citizens, ultimately harming the growing British economy. To remedy this, the British Empire appealed to their citizens to help retain British wealth within England and its Empire because the nation “needed to ensure home markets [were] a source of investment capital” that ensured their prosperity at home and abroad (Odih 41). The nation still had competition from other colonial powerhouses, like France and the Netherlands, that were able to provide similar commodities. If Britons purchased goods from other international distributors they would deny the British Empire these funds as their competitors received more economic support for similar expansionary, mercantile, and economic designs upon the globe. To encourage English citizens to “buy British,” the Empire cultivated and supported consumer meanings around their product that encouraged

Britons to choose a British produced and imported good over one supplied by another nation. The creation of these sorts of national narratives around community and consumption ensured the British colonies were profitable. These illustrations of cultural consumption depicted in the period's literature were a vital if unacknowledged advertising tool in increasing English demand. Nineteenth-century authors' cultivation of distinct national narratives around particular foods helped establish a specific food culture in England that still remains a part of the nation's culinary tradition.

Understanding buyers' motivations allows sellers to successfully market their goods to potential customers by crafting their advertisements to these groups. Making sense of these influences is accomplished through a combination of pathos, ethos, and logos that exploits certain ideals, mores, and customs consumers possess and believe. In "Ethos, Pathos, and Logos of Doing Business Abroad," Ben Tran states that the "root of all countries' core ethos, pathos, and logos is its culture" (Tran 256). Regardless of whether the culture is individualistic or collective, "culture impacts the behaviors of buyers," especially in marketing specific items to these groups. Tran remarks that all cultures have differing "degrees of individualism and collectivism" that influence a nation's "readiness to adopt something new or to prefer waiting until many others have adopted" the newly introduced item (Tran 257). Victorian England definitely had both individualistic and collective tendencies, as seen in the nation's class system. The upper echelons demonstrated their distinction through a preference for French food, which was "more refined" than the dishes consumed by the lower classes who seemingly lacked a specific gentility and refinement. However, all social classes considered Christmas pudding a representation of the whole of England, regardless of social station. These perceived similarities and differences influenced residents' relationship with both their nation and fellow citizens.

National collectivism heavily influenced Britons' consumption habits and their desire to be part of the imagined national community present within England. Additionally, the country's individualism as a superior and civilized nation influenced the creation of specific national dishes that differentiated them from the rest of the world and established unique culinary traditions.

British merchants and producers understood England's unique culture and sought to market their products appropriately to obtain and increase English business. Their utilization of ethos, pathos, and logos largely impacted English buying choices and encouraged Britons in distinct ways to purchase imperial goods. Specifically, Victorian advertisements and novels rely predominately on social mores and beliefs (ethos) and the rationality behind maintaining these ideals domestically and globally (logos). Sellers cultivated the ideology of a "plentitude in the abundance of commodities" that became a "driving force of imperialist domination" and prosperity for nineteenth century Great Britain (Odih 41). Novels, periodicals, and advertisements that depict the domination of the British Empire provide evidence of this philosophy. Victorian marketing strategies inundated the nation's consumers with appeals to their national identity, belief system, and support of the Empire. Like advertisements, the inclusion of certain commodities in nineteenth-century novels similarly "drove home this new imperialism and its attendant endeavour to transform commodities from a necessary utility to the 'extra-ordinary profusion of an indigenous industry'" produced within the British Empire (Odih 41). These marketing tactics created a cultural meaning around imperial productivity and the duty of English citizens to support the British Empire through their specific buying habits. Throughout the century, novels followed and substantiated the perception and cultural changes

around tea, rum, Anglo-Indian food, and Christmas pudding cultivating positive experiences around these commodities exploited consumers' beliefs and ideologies.

Through ethos, the most commonly used appeal to market products to nineteenth-century British consumers, marketers "attempt[ed] to gain the audience's support . . . by portraying the [marketer] as the type of person the audience would be likely to listen to and believe" and be an authority on the product and the audience. Constructing the right ethos for successful marketing was a "matter of showing the audience that the marketers know the audience and that there are good reasons why the audience should listen to marketers and their messages" (Tran 257-258). Nineteenth-century English advertising relied heavily on Victorians' sense of virtue, superiority, and the imperialist quest to "civilize" their new colonial subjects. Britons drawn to these ideals and beliefs would have supported companies that emphasized these ideologies by purchasing their goods. This particular advertising ethos fostered "an ideology which equated economic wealth with the growth of the British Empire" and its principles around the world (Odih 41). The understanding of Victorian beliefs allowed sellers and advertisers to harness these strong cultural and social convictions, including the culture's substantial faith in the Empire's supremacy and morality, and develop the best suited marketing tactics. The period's authors recognized and included these same traits within their novels as a means to connect with their readers.

Marketers often utilize multiple appeals at once to better advertise their wares to potential consumers. Whereas ethos was a prevalent strategy to entice English consumers to purchase British colonial goods, logos also finds a common place within nineteenth century advertising tactics notable for their ability to appeal with reason and rationality to potential buyers. Out of the three appeals, logos is the "most involved appeal to explain and the most straightforward to apply" as it petitions an audience's reason and illustrates "why the position taken is logical"

(Tran 258). This appeal was often used in nineteenth-century Great Britain because “Victorian economists and politicians fostered the culture of abundance and channeled it into an ideology of the Empire,” emphasizing that their prosperity and affluence was a direct result of the profitability of the Empire and its continued success (Odih 41). This marketing strategy simultaneously appeals to logos and ethos convincing British consumers that purchasing imperial goods supported the Empire economically (logos) and spread British beliefs around the world (ethos). This “ideological configuration” of pairing the purchase of imperial goods with the maintenance of the British nation “equated with the interests of the Empire and the economic expansion of Britain” (Odih 41). English consumers were convinced to buy colonial goods in order to maintain their current lifestyle and domination around the world. The use of logos to advertise colonial goods was “efficacious for the political establishment to propagate an ideology of citizenship which claimed that ‘Empire buying was a duty no citizen could afford to neglect’” (Odih 41). This advertising logos rationalized to Britons that buying British kept the country’s businesses in operation, continued the nation’s economic prosperity, and ensured British consumers received the best possible products available as a demonstration of the Empire’s wealth and profitability.

Whereas ethos attempts to appeal to consumers’ beliefs and mores, pathos focuses on audience emotions. Pathos is the “easiest of the three types of appeals to explain but the most difficult to use effectively in practice” (Tran 258). A successful marketing scheme attempts to gain an “audience's assent to the point being made by making them feel good about accepting the argument or feel bad about not accepting the argument-or both” (Tran 258). There is a fine line regarding how to adequately create pathos-driven advertising. Conjuring up the wrong emotional

reaction or overly emotional pleas can turn an audience away from a product.³ In comparison to logos and ethos, the emotional plea is arguably the least utilized or obvious appeal in both nineteenth-century print advertising and literary works. To convince Victorians that purchasing British-sourced goods supported imperial endeavors, advertisers needed to appeal to their beliefs and rationality, not their emotional tie to certain goods, which could vary for many citizens depending on their economic standing, social status, and geographic location. Pathos is often a secondary appeal coupled with ethos or logos. For example, encouraging British consumers to purchase imperial goods ensured the continuation of the Empire's endeavors abroad, an appeal to logos; failure to do so could cause British personnel to lose their livelihood without Britons' economic support, a secondary petition to pathos. If an obvious emotional appeal is used within a novel, it is typically to comfort despondent characters, who are often consoled with a cup of tea. Associating tea with sympathy and relationships links the beverage to the cultivation of friendships and the well-being of not only the individual but also the nation. As citizens came together to consume the drink, they cultivated a community on both an individual and national level through the creation of and participation in the ritual of tea drinking. In doing so, Great Britain became stronger through these domestic and national ties. Thus, novels created and filled the gap of pathos in marketing of Empire and its trade circulation within England.

As England became wealthier and the middle class expanded through the trade work available, their buying power and needs followed suit, increasing demand for colonial imports like sugar, tea, rum, and spices. The *nouveau riche* sought to show off their newly acquired

³ The Sarah McLauchlan ASPCA ad is an excellent example of an excessive emotional appeal where an adverse reaction from an audience occurs. In *The Blueprint for Strategic Advertising: How Critical Thinking Builds Successful Campaigns*, Margo Berman argues this ad “unintentionally depress[es] the audience and cause[s] them to quickly change the channel” rather than “triggering donations of sympathy [it] disturb[s] and disengage[s] the viewer” (Berman 74).

economic status through conspicuous consumption, the “selection, consumption and display of things to help show who you are or rather who you want to be in the eyes of others” (Neumann 934). For the bourgeois, this careful selection of goods aided in setting them apart from the lower class while simultaneously demonstrating their nearness and continued ascension to the upper echelon they wished to emulate. Even the purchasing of quality imported foodstuffs, such as the formerly out-of-reach sugar, tea, and spices, allowed the middle class to showcase their new wealth. The successful change in one class’s consumer behavior didn’t necessarily mean all Britons would change their buying preferences to purchase imperial goods. To counter this possibility, merchants, tradesmen, and even the government, exploited British citizens’ sense of ethnocentrism. This strategy gave the individual a “sense of identity, feelings of belongingness, and . . . an understanding of what purchase behavior is acceptable or unacceptable to the ingroup” that allows them to be included within this faction (Sharma et al. 280). Essentially, “consumer ethnocentrism” represents the “beliefs held by . . . consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign made products” (Sharma et al. 280). In the case of Victorian consumers, changing commercial practices and participation in the British national community created a nationwide food identity that allowed Britons to relate to each other through shared culinary habits. This ultimately strengthened the emotional feelings and consumer meanings associated with these goods and aided in reinforcing consumer ethnocentrism related to British purchasing habits.

Especially at the beginning of the century, the concept of “going native” reverberated as a major issue of global expansion. Contemporary texts depicted this apprehension through their critiques of nabobs and marriages between the metropolitan English and West Indians. Britons feared a reversion to a more primitive state and believed the consumption of foreign goods from

barbarous countries contributed to the “adoption of the presumably lower, dishonorable, moral and legal standards” held by their colonial subjects (Brantlinger 80). Reappropriating colonial foods through British civilizing cooking processes convinced Britons that they had removed the negative foreign influences. Arguably, while the British sought to transform these goods into “acceptable” dishes, they actually redefined what it meant to be British through the incorporation of these foods into their everyday eating practices.

Even today, tea is synonymous with Britishness even though the practice of brewing tealeaves finds its history in China, and a foreigner introduced the habit to England. Similarly, Christmas pudding, considered the most vital part of the British Christmas meal, is not possible without foreign importation of ingredients like oranges, cinnamon, and rum. The removal of colonial commodities’ characterizations as imported, foreign goods repositions them as imperial products and goods that should be celebrated as a representation of the British Empire’s strength and dominance. This understanding redefined Britons’ sense of national identity and pride as global and colonial rather than just within England. The nation’s participation in a global, colonial economy anchors England’s culinary identity and history.

This transformative process within nineteenth-century British literature and culture helped to remove the crass, foreign stereotypes that often informed consumers’ perceptions about colonial goods. Whether Anglicization involved complete alteration or only partial hybridity, the transitions of these foods from an exotic good to domestic product is important to understanding the way in which food constructs, builds, and affirms a nation’s national identity. The consumption of colonial foods not only changed the culinary composition of England but also transformed the understanding and relationships Britons had with the colonies. While the British viewed the colonies as subservient and inferior, their ingestion of foreign commodities

challenged how they related to these places. Britons believed themselves to be the masters over their territories and viewed their purchasing and eating of colonial goods as another form of dominance over their territories. While this may be true, the British colonies also had a form of power over their subjugator. Without these imperial possessions, many of the goods, traditionally accessible and affordable within England's marketplace, would become unavailable. Ultimately, the use of these goods established a reliance on these colonial territories. These dominions under the control of Great Britain needed the British Empire's assistance to remain economically secure, and England was likewise reliant on the inexpensive and wide availability of goods produced within these territories.⁴

The fictional tales woven by nineteenth century authors like Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and others were instrumental in reinforcing and growing the emergence of new "national" foods. They created an imagined community around particular foods, depicting relationships between community and the consumption of what many now consider "national foods." Tara Moore states in "National Identity and Victorian Christmas Foods" that "the idea of a '*national* foods' is a fiction, that the national diet is 'a feast of imagined commensality' between its consumers to separate their eating practices from other nations (Moore, "National Identity" 143). In creating community around particular foods, these authors contributed to the national narrative and consumer meanings surrounding these dishes and allowed Britons to imagine new kinds of consumption through the portrayal of various characters. Ultimately, nineteenth-century authors aided in growing the market for these colonial goods through their understanding of food and eating practices within the nation.

⁴ The reliance of the British Isles on the colonies for food and provisions proved to be a problem during the World Wars when the opposing side sought to weaken the nation by sinking supply convoys as they attempted to feed and stock the country.

Tara Moore also asks, “how can a particular food item, whether ‘natural’ or processed, belong to one nationality as opposed to another?” (Moore, “National Identity” 143). How nations decide on their national foods is a compelling question, especially in a world that encourages migration and travel that exposes people to different types of cultures. To delve into this matter, this dissertation uses the idea of “appropriation,” something that is “annexed or attached (to), as a possession or piece of property” for someone’s use rather than the idea of “adoption.” While adoption has similar connotations to appropriation, adoption is described as an “action or an act of taking something up or embracing it as one’s own.” Adoption’s integration typically stems from prolonged exposure, which is in contrast to appropriation, which is often the conscious and possessive assumption of an item. The adoption of food items into a non-native culture or people group is typically viewed as an *addition* to that society’s eating habits and maintains its native roots.⁵ Unlike adoption, appropriation often doesn’t celebrate a food’s origins and lacks an understanding and regard for the culture from which the good originated. In the context of the British Empire, native foodstuffs were appropriated into the Anglo culture by rebranding these dishes as something “British” through a civilizing transformation process that sought to remove any indigenous—and often negative—properties. The end result fashioned these commodities as superior to the original by removing them from their native sphere. Instead, England appropriated these foodstuffs as “British” dishes, ultimately transforming these edible goods into national foods and symbols of “Britishness.”

To create “national” foods unique and separate from those of other nations utilizing similar ingredients, “Victorian authors repeatedly use . . . foods to construct a view of the Other,” whether of their colonial subjects or European counterparts (Moore, “National Identity”

⁵ Such as the American enjoyment of tacos, which maintain their Mexican roots even though the food has become a major component of US eating habits.

144). Victorian England believed strongly in their superiority within the world and, while the British enjoyed foods also consumed by their colonial subjects, Britons refused to associate them with their colonists. The literature of the period assisted in creating these cultural meanings around which foreign foods were acceptable and how they should be eaten. The depiction of literary English characters' acceptance or rejection of certain foods influenced readers' eating habits and assisted in bolstering demand for certain goods or demonizing others. This dissertation seeks to show the impact that novels such as *A Christmas Carol* had on British consumption habits and how literary works helped establish England's unique culinary identity.

Chapter One, "Tea with Cream and Sugar: The Civilizing Ceremony of Afternoon Tea," examines how tea rose within the social, economic, and cultural realms of England to become synonymous with nineteenth-century British social life and identity. Though tea was already a popular drink amongst the upper classes in the beginning of the nineteenth century—in part thanks to Catherine of Braganza's introduction of the drink to British court in 1662—it wasn't until the British colonization of India that tea became accessible to all Britons. The British Empire's acquisition of India stemmed, in part, from English consumption habits and its distrustful trade relationship with China, who supplied Great Britain with tea. India provided the Empire with a territory that produced tea (along with a myriad of other products), omitting the necessity of trading with China. In taking tea production under the guise of British control, the British removed the commodity's non-native label as a Chinese import by framing it as an British good produced within the Empire.

However, Indian tea leaves were still imported and labeled as a "colonial" product, which to some meant it lacked the civilized qualities representative of British culture. To remove this stigma, tea was transitioned from a colonial to domestic food, changing the cultural meaning

associated with the commodity. In doing so, tea became the centerpiece of afternoon tea, a social ceremony in which families, friends, and acquaintances convened together to partake in the drink and a small spread of food. This ceremony represents an integral part of the social lives of literary characters within novels such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), and Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854). These literary depictions placed a specific positive cultural value on tea, which in turn, promoted consumerism and ensured that the Empire continued to import tea from India. The positioning of tea as a British product rather than foreign encouraged British consumers to purchase the good as a representation of British superiority, refinement, and nationhood.

Chapter Two, "Ritual Transformation: Mixing the Colonial Out of Rum Punch," examines how Great Britain altered rum through its combination with two other colonial products—citrus and sugar—to create British rum punch. The discussion of this drink provides a fascinating account of how cultural meanings transform the use of goods in society. Though the drink is comprised solely of colonial goods—sugar and rum from West India and citrus from South Africa—it is the method of its creation that founds and associates specific consumer meanings with its transformation. Though Britons identified each single good as an unrefined colonial product, the combination of these foods together transformed them from separate exotic goods to a singular British drink. When blended following British recipes, these commodities became diluted and refined, removing the impurities of colonialism and making them suitable for British consumption. The amalgamation also symbolized the mixing of people as the consumer meaning placed around rum punch was one of community and social enjoyment. Rum was seen as integral to the creation of community as well as the representation of British citizens in literary scenes in novels such as George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857) and William

Makepeace Thackeray's *The Virginians* (1859). In contrast, if the transition did not occur and the rum was ingested unadulterated, literary depictions associated vile, violent, and uncivilized characteristics with these characters. The harshness of unadulterated rum seems to pair well with the nefarious characteristics of Charles Dickens' Daniel Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) and the violent robbers from Wilkie Collins' *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* (1851). In this way, the literature of the period demonized the unadulterated colonial good as one that corrupted its drinkers, making it wholly unsuitable for civilized British consumption. These literary scenes that depict negative consequences of drinking unadulterated rum and the uncivilized nature that results from it illustrated that the only appropriate method in which to ingest rum was through the ritual civilizing of the alcohol in the creation of rum punch. The refinement of rum, citrus, and sugar into the drink also became a symbol of the British Empire's duty to civilize its colonies through the removal of their uncultured and barbarous customs by the British Empire.

The third chapter, "What's Yours is Mine: The Cultural Transformation and Rise of Anglo-Indian Food," examines the mass Anglicization of Indian food. The lengthy tenure of the British within India—first as traders and then an occupying force—had monumental effects on the eating habits of Britons. Even prior to the Empire's colonization of the country, the British East India Company had strong trade ties to India and many British personnel were often posted there and spent extended periods within the nation. When these Britons returned to England, they often brought back with them a penchant for Anglo-Indian food, a cuisine that slowly became ingrained in the nation's culinary culture. While the consumption of the cuisine initially encompassed a negative cultural meaning of "going native," by the end of the nineteenth century, it had become an acceptable dish for non-Anglo-Indians. Nineteenth-century British literature provides essential clues to understanding the creation of cultural meanings around Anglo-Indian

dishes and their transformation into acceptable foods within the nation. The change from an unfavorable facet of colonialism to a representation of Britain's "mastery (by assimilation) over the colony" demonstrates how cultural meanings transform national eating habits based on consumer ethnocentrism and habits (Chan 1). The Empire situated these foods as "improved" and "civilized," and the ingestion of specific foodstuffs by Britons transitions the cultural meanings of these foods away from being an "Indian" food to a British one.

This inclusion of Anglo-Indian food within nineteenth-century literature provides a fascinating look at one of the facets of power the Empire established over its colony through its domestication of these once indigenous dishes. Earlier novels, like William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1863), depict Anglo-Indian food as something associated with former East Indian residents and an unfortunate consequence of prolonged exposure within India. By the end of the century, Anglo-Indian food is a fundamental symbol of British hybridity, as shown in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story "Silver Blaze" (1892), in which Anglo-Indian food is a staple in the working man's diet. The transformation of the cuisine to an integral food in England is made complete in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), written at the end of the century, in which the titular character is defined by his ability to seamlessly exist in both British and Indian cultures through his food consumption, making him the physical embodiment of the long-term effects of colonialism on England.

"Cultural Fusion: Mixing Great Britain with its Colonies in Christmas Pudding," the fourth and final chapter, discusses how Christmas pudding fuses Britain with its colonies thanks to the dish's use of both domestic and colonial products. In the nineteenth century, Christmas pudding was—and still is—vital to the Victorian British holiday celebration. The dish's

popularity and success is rooted firmly in a global market economy. It cannot be made without the acquisition of foreign ingredients such as rum, citrus, and spices that provide the dish its distinctive flavor. Great Britain sourced the needed commodities for this dish within the British Empire, and the combination of imperial and domestic goods that produced a Christmas pudding also produced a cultural fusion. The dish is a poignant representation of the effects of colonialism with British consumption and consumerism habits. On the surface, this combination indicates consumer culture behavior as these goods help maintain a particular British cultural meaning around Christmas pudding as vital to the holiday celebration. However, on a deeper level the amalgamation also represents the merging of the colonial and domestic cultures within England. Nevertheless, classifying Christmas pudding as a *British* dish, not a colonial one, shows that although the recipe is heavily inundated with colonial ingredients, the national identity of the dish as British does not wane with the inclusion of foreign goods. The creation of this dish ultimately civilizes the colonial ingredients and makes Christmas pudding an acceptable, and indeed necessary, food for holiday celebrations.

The inclusion of Christmas pudding on the holiday dining table was a vital part of Briton's demonstration of citizenship and national identity in nineteenth-century literature. Many modern-day readers most commonly recollect Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and its promotion of Christmas pudding during the Cratchit dinner scene, but Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm* (1861) and Wilkie Collins' *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* (1851) also include the dish in their literary holiday feasts. These works present the pudding as a symbol of Christmas joy; the Cratchit family cheers when Mrs. Cratchit presents the dish at the conclusion of their meal in *A Christmas Carol*, and in *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box*, Mr. Colebatch is so excited by its appearance that the other diners are "thrown quite off his balance by noise and excitement" (Dickens, A

Christmas Carol 81; Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* 30). The strong relationship between happiness and cheer and Christmas pudding bears weight on readers' perception of the dish. This connection influences the nation's buying habits and the inclusion of the dish on citizens' own table. The increased consumption of this food aids in ensuring the Empire continues to import the needed ingredients to meet buyer demand for Christmas pudding.

While there is scholarship on the importance of objects as a representation of nationalism within England and the British novel, very little has been published on the inclusion of food in these texts. The scholarly attention paid to edible goods is cursory and limited to the history of the dish. This dissertation will pair a food's historical background and the significance of its literary representations together to demonstrate how a food's history and transformation can symbolize nationalism and change. Food is vital to an individual's existence on its most basic level: it is integral to sustaining life. However, a dish can also encapsulate the understanding of its culture and capture the past history of an entire nation. Authors' careful inclusion of tea, rum, Anglo-Indian food, and Christmas pudding within these works not only illustrate contemporary English life but also aid in establishing and maintaining these eating practices within the nation. Understanding the colonial goods associated within afternoon tea, rum punch, Anglo-Indian food, and Christmas pudding can challenge, strengthen, and even transform how we understand particular novels in relation to their society, history, and people. In doing so, we can further our awareness of what these texts express about the nineteenth-century British Empire. In this way, novels become key players in the marketing of British ideals, beliefs, and mores through the consumption of food and the consumer meanings created and associated with these dishes. This encouragement to purchase imperial goods solidified and appropriated these goods into British culture and both challenged and changed what it meant to be a "Briton." The cultural

transformation that occurred in nineteenth-century England can be attributed in part to the novels its inhabitants read and the impact these literary works had on how they related to themselves, their fellow citizens, and the nation.

CHAPTER ONE

Tea with Cream and Sugar: The Civilizing Ceremony of Afternoon Tea

Tea is arguably the most globally recognized food within British cuisine and is so synonymous with Great Britain that one can scarcely think of the beverage without associating it with English ideals. Hotels, teashops, and restaurants offer afternoon tea that allows patrons to enjoy this pastime. Even in the home, every “proper” British kitchen has a kettle and an assortment of teas readily available.⁶ While tea drinking has been on the decline in within the United Kingdom in recently years, the nation still consumes on average 165 million cups of the beverage daily, which comes out to a staggering 60.2 billion cups per year (UK Tea and Infusion Association). Though it seems like tea has been a part of English culture since Great Britain’s formation, the drink did not make its way into the culinary practices of its citizens until the early seventeenth century. Even then, this new and exotic drink imported from far off India was initially accessible only to the upper classes due to its expense, establishing it as a marker of high social and economic status. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, tea had travelled from the tables of the social elite to those of the middle and working classes, establishing a cultural meaning around the drink that is a major signifier of “Britishness.” One must ask, though, how did this change occur? What are the implications of tea drinking upon the nation and its people? Based on the period’s literature, how is tea depicted by these authors and why is this important? By studying the cultural meanings placed upon the beverage and the methods of tea consumption within literature, we can examine how tea transformed from a suspicious foreign Asian colonial commodity into a vital part of British culture.

⁶ I can make this statement based upon personal experience. I studied abroad and lived with a family in England where the kettle was always on. During this time, and the three visits that followed, every British home I’ve entered has not only had a kettle prominently placed in the kitchen but I’m always immediately offered a “cuppa tea” upon arrival. Even hotels and university dorms are properly equipped with an electric kettle, tea, sugar, and milk.

While scholars dispute the exact date and origin of tea's introduction into Great Britain, most attribute the beginning of the nation's love affair with the beverage to Catherine of Braganza, the wife of Charles II. The 1661 marriage between Charles and Catherine was not only economically viable but also politically important for Great Britain. Along with the taste for tea, England also acquired free trading rights within the Portuguese East Indies, Tangiers, and Bombay. These trading rights created a vital link between England and Asia that was critical to the establishment of the eventual total rule by the British within India several hundred years later (Martin 122). Though trade with India was not new for the British East India Company, these posts provided a stronger platform from which the British could conduct their trade business within the region.⁷ Doing so created a stronger connection to India that allowed the British to import more goods and drive prices down that eventually helped establish commodities like tea as essential aspects of the culinary and national landscape within England.

Establishing Cultural Meanings and Ethnocentrism

The British East India Company placed its first order for tea in 1664 and utilized its newly acquired Bombay post to establish trade relations with China, even though the Chinese did not allow the British inside the country's interior (Daly 86). The Company eventually began importing exclusively from China in 1669, effectively removing the Dutch trade in tea (Martin 141; Burnett 52). By 1700, the British East India Company was importing 90,000 pounds of tea a year into England, making the tea trade an "established fact" in Great Britain (Burnett 52). While tea was still an expensive commodity, the growing overseas trade encouraged a "convulsion of getting and spending" within Britain by its citizens (Burnett 52). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tea trade had become an active participant in the British

⁷ The British East India Company was founded in 1612, 49 years before the marriage of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza.

marketplace and the British East India Company was importing 15 million pounds of tea a year (Burnett 53).

However, the Chinese did not allow the Company inside China's interior, which created suspicion over the quality of the product Great Britain received from its Chinese suppliers. According to Judith L. Fisher in "Tea and Food Adulteration, 1834-75," as tea came to symbolize Britain's superior integrity, Chinese adulteration of the commodity "endanger[ed] an entire system of 'virtues' and behaviors that established and upheld class values and gender ideals" (Fisher 4). Chinese tea producers "habitually color[ed] their 'green' tea with Prussian blue"—a deadly dye—as well as "Indigo...Turmeric, Chinese Yellow, Red Lead, Umber, [and] Red and Yellow Ochre" to mask "Exhausted Tea Leaves...Leaves other than those of tea," and other impurities in order to make up weight and increase profits (Fisher 5; Ellis et al. 226). The contamination of imports was so rampant that the British East India Company appointed a tea inspector in 1790 to ensure that goods shipped to Great Britain from China were untainted (Burnett 60). Great Britain's sense of its national self-image of morality and superiority marked the adulteration of Chinese tea as a "foreign practice" that reflected the East Asian's merchant's inferiority. Tainted tea "betrayed the basic moral position of the British merchant" that took pride in providing his English customers with quality products that represented the nation's virtues (Fisher 4, 2). This continued adulteration of tea created a negative consumer attitude, which had the potential to harm the flourishing tea trade controlled by the British East India Company (and more loosely the British Empire) within Great Britain. British merchants and sellers located along tea's supply chain needed to maintain a positive consumer meaning associated with the commodity to keep customers buying the commodity.

In 1834, the British East India Company lost its monopoly on the Chinese tea trade and a plethora of different tea companies inundated the English marketplace with new types of tea from various global locations. Additionally, the increase in tea-dealers established an “anonymous relation between producer/import and retailer/customer” and market competition, driving the price of tea down (Fisher 4). This change from a singular importer—The British East India Company—to a myriad of new companies allowed tea to become economically accessible outside of the wealthy classes. Britons suddenly had a diverse selection of tealeaves that fit their budgets. However, the downside to the removal of the Company’s monopoly on Chinese tea meant that tea adulteration became more rampant. Even with the issues surrounding Chinese tea adulteration, the Company couldn’t cease importing tea into Great Britain without significantly angering and disrupting the established trade and consumption of the commodity with the nation. However, Great Britain lacked the “climate or soil that would allow domestic cultivation of the tea plant” that some felt would have otherwise solved the issue of tea contamination (Fisher 3). If the British could produce tea domestically, the British Empire could reestablish English ideals around the commodity, ultimately maintaining the nation’s superior virtues.

The Need for India

Rumors suggested that regions of British-controlled India had native tea plants, including one discovered in Kathmandu in 1816 (Fromer, “Deeply Indebted” 535). However, not until Lieutenant Andrew Charlton announced in 1834 the discovery of a native tea plant in Assam did evidence validate this rumor (Fisher 6). The British East India Company received suggestions as early as the 1770s to cultivate and produce tea in India, but only in the early nineteenth century did the company take the proposal seriously (Daly 89). The assurance that India possessed native tea plants combined with the substantial British colonial possessions within the nation made

India an economically appropriate and viable place for the Empire to begin its own tea production and trade.

The issues surrounding tea adulteration from third-party Chinese sellers threatened to harm the Company's image and upset strongly held English ideals. In addition to purity issues with Chinese tea, the inclusion of a middleman contributed to the commodity's expense. Even though the British East India Company had begun trading within Asia at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Company could not directly interact with China and had to conduct its trade through third parties, specifically with the Dutch or Chinese traders at their post at Bantam, Java (Ellis et al. 37). However, following the acquisition of the trading ports provided by the union of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, the British East India Company began trading directly with China in 1700, which is when history can pinpoint the first time British influence became directly located within India (Ellis et al. 38; Daly 86). Through their trading presence in India, the Company had taken control of Bengal, Madras, and Punjab by the mid- to late-eighteenth century through the formation of locally controlled regions called presidencies, effectively removing power from their original Indian sovereigns. This coup allowed the British East India Company to control its business more closely and established a stronger presence within the country. Great Britain's power in India became all-encompassing in 1857 following the Indian Rebellion, when Indian soldiers retaliated against their British superiors over the rumored use of pig and cow fat to grease gunpowder cartridges (which was an insult to both Hindu and Muslim troops) (Sturman 6). The British successfully suppressed the uprising, but the British East India Company's rule subsequently ended when the 1857 Government of India Act "terminated the Company's commercial functions while appropriating its bureaucratic and ideological apparatus to support the ongoing colonial administration of British India" (Ellis et al.

222). The act gave Great Britain total rule over India and the country ultimately became a major factor in the nineteenth-century British tea trade and vital in transitioning the commodity from a foreign import to a colonial resource.

Though Great Britain had laid out its first tea gardens in Assam in 1835, almost two decades before Britain's total control over India, the knowledge that tea could grow within the nation's boundaries was another reason it likely influenced the British Empire to colonize the nation and maintain a closed supply chain. India's capacity to produce an "abundant suppl[y] of cheap, good-quality tea" ripe for importation into England meant more income for the British Empire and less external influence within the supply chain (Burnett 61). This removal of third party merchants and the various taxes and fees with which they were associated aided in decreasing the price of tea within Great Britain. Through this process, consumers interpreted the British "cultivation of Assam tea as a divine justification of the English habit; tea was now an even more British beverage because 'the hand of Nature has planted the shrub within the bounds of the wide dominion of Great Britain'" (Fisher 6). The ability to cultivate tea within a British-controlled region allowed the British East India Company to establish a linear supply chain that ensured the purity of its product. By managing tea production within a British-controlled region, the Empire now symbolically produced the beverage within the boundaries of Great Britain, transitioning the commodity from a foreign import to a domestic good.

By differentiating itself from its competitors, the British East India Company appealed to its consumers by aligning tea more solidly with British principles. The British often viewed themselves as distinct and different from their colonies and other European nations, and their buying practices reflected these principles. Consumption habits represented Great Britain's moral character and its citizens' compliance with these habits depicted their own moral

superiority within the world. In establishing tea as a symbol of England's virtuous culture, the beverage established a cultural meaning as a "morally uplifting custom extended into the marketplace, implying that purveyors of tea had to represent themselves as 'worthy' of their product" and their patron's business (Fisher 5). The entirety of tea, from cultivation to imbibing, seemingly needed to be a representative of British mores and practices. The British East India Company capitalized on this image, marketing itself and its tea as British products that captured the cultural meanings Britons expected from their food consumption.

Due to tea's decreasing price, the middle and lower classes found themselves financially capable of purchasing the commodity, which aided their aspirations of social mobility. Additionally, the establishment of Indian tea as a British product by merchants encapsulated the cultural meanings of nationalism, superiority, and British virtues, appealing to Britons' sense of nationalism and ethnocentrism. Many English consumers chose to demonstrate their national pride through the purchasing of British commodities. This patriotism helped establish and reaffirm the cultural meaning of Indian tea as a domestic good and representation of Great Britain's superiority. The demand for the colony's tea ensured that Great Britain's presence within India was economically viable by fulfilling consumer demands for tea. The purchasing and ingesting of British-produced tea allowed many British consumers to demonstrate their Britishness, which set them apart from other nations around the world. As Markman Ellis notes in *Empire of Tea*, "tea drinking is a paradigmatic case of a cultural phenomenon in which economics and performativity are inextricably bound up with representation and self-presentation" of themselves as British citizens (Ellis et al. 141).

As tea became more accessible to the various social classes within Great Britain, the actions of the social classes slowly began to transform. The ability to purchase tea meant the

lower classes could emulate their socially elite counterparts. In *The Empire Inside: Indian Commodities in Victorian Domestic Novels*, Suzanne Daly notes that by the end of the eighteenth century, the “habit of tea drinking had trickled down from royalty and nobility to the rest of the nation” that ultimately changed “the way millions of people behaved” through the availability and enjoyment of tea within the whole of Britain (Daly 86). The cultural meanings associated with tea influenced its drinkers. The consumption of the beverage was connected with British virtues and a standard of living set apart from the rest of the world. Through its ingestion, drinkers committed themselves to upholding these ideals. In various scenes in nineteenth-century literature, tea is a civilizing social agent for the lower classes. Even the mere presence of the commodity in the home has an almost ethereal ability of creating harmony and civility within a family.

The Creation of Identity

While we can historically credit Catherine of Braganza for introducing tea to Great Britain, the construction of what is now considered by modern drinkers as “afternoon tea”—a light meal of tea, cream, sugar, finger sandwiches, and small baked goods—was created several hundred years after a Briton sipped the first cup of tea in England. One can trace the modern interpretation of afternoon tea back to one of Queen Victoria’s ladies-in-waiting, Anna Maria Stanhope, Seventh Duchess of Bedford.⁸ In a letter to her brother-in-law in 1841, the Duchess of Bedford mentions that she “often had tea around five o’clock, along with her Ladies in Waiting” (Broomfield 65). The most common explanation for the Duchess’s foundation of afternoon tea is that she would often experience “hunger pains in the late afternoon—still several hours before dinner” and in order to satiate her hunger “the Duchess [requested] tea in her boudoir”

⁸ The Duchess of Bedford was a lady-in-waiting for Queen Victoria from 1837-1841.

(Broomfield 65). In addition to taking tea with the other ladies-in-waiting, she would invite palace guests upon special invitation to join the gathering. Though the Duchess could have taken her tea alone, she explicitly extended invitations to other women, ultimately establishing afternoon tea as a female practice meant to foster relationships.

The Duchess's use of tea to spend time with Queen Victoria's other ladies-in-waiting follows a long tradition of using tea to create community. At its initial debut into the English court, Catherine of Braganza utilized tea to establish relationships by teaching her court "how to brew tea that was quite pleasurable to drink" (Moxham 18). From the beginning, literature presented tea as a social drink, as we can see in Great Britain's subsequent literary history. Andrea Broomfield mentions in *Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History* that "English gentlewomen had been drinking tea with friends and families in their home for many decades prior to the Victorian era," but despite this long history of tea drinking in England, "no ritual had been established whereby people stopped their activities...and convened for tea and cake" (Broomfield 65). Though tea had been a common social practice around English prior to the establishment of "afternoon tea," the specific meanings created around the beverage that we now associate with this particular national practice came about during the nineteenth century. Many women had served tea when friends and family would "call" in order to create a hospitable space for these gathering. Broomfield notes that in the "mid-1800s, morning calls, at homes, and afternoon tea meant virtually the same thing; but by 1882, the term afternoon tea had won out over the rest" (Broomfield 66). The fact that Britons preferred "afternoon tea" to other terms for afternoon social calls demonstrates the importance of the established cultural meaning of tea as a social beverage within the nation. The use of tea in this way changed "British sociability . . .

revolving, at certain key times of the day and for particular occasions, around the serving of tea” (Daly 86).

The ceremony constructed around the commodity created and upheld specific expectations that set afternoon tea apart from other tea drinking activities. The “small and reassuring rituals of afternoon tea...putting the milk in first, warming the teapot, taking the teapot to the kettle” are all part of this ceremony that provide comfort and normality to British tea drinkers (Ellis et al. 141). The communal serving of tea with sugar, milk, small sandwiches, and baked goods created a common understanding of what people expected to be included upon the tea table. Individuals who utilizes the term “afternoon tea” understood the importance of including all the appropriate implements and foods to ensure adherence to the status quo and the maintenance and support of conventional mores and customs.

The Tea Table

Though produced and transported by British-controlled companies, tea remained at its foundation an imported product of the colonies. Though this stigma did not hinder the continuously increasing consumption of the beverage, consumers were still wary of the adulteration that had been rampant from tea obtained through China. To differentiate themselves from foreign competitors and to ease consumer’s fears of unrefined tea, British merchants emphasized the superior quality of their tea leaves in an effort to continuously increase their profits. This method exploited their consumer’s sense of ethnocentrism and the social aspect surrounding the beverage in order to increase consumption.

Specifically, the social aspect of consuming tea played a large role in expanding the commodity’s strength within the English marketplace. Modern day observers of British life will note that there is a specific “English” method of drinking tea. When serving the beverage, the

English typically did not drink the brew unadulterated. Instead, cream and sugar traditionally accompanied the hot beverage. According to Markman Ellis, Britons began to use sugar and cream in their tea to mask the sometimes bitter and earthy taste of brewed tea that English consumers did not appreciate (Ellis et al. 31). Additionally, the use of the sweetener occurred with the Victorian obsession with sugar, which became a staple of the British tea table. The sweet commodity was readily accessible to all social factions due to the item's lowered price from the earlier acquisition of the British Empire's sugar-bearing colonies in the West Indies (Burnett 58). The inclusion of milk and sugar to make tea more palatable for British consumers seemingly "civilized" the beverage. The incorporation of sugar and milk both removed the "colonial" and "exotic" taste of unadulterated tea and also made tea more enjoyable. This "improvement" also represented the British Empire's desire to enlighten and advance their territories by bringing the refined and superior culture of Great Britain to its colonial subjects. This mixing of imperial goods—sugar and tea—with an English-sourced commodity—milk—represented the changing cultural landscape of Great Britain. The incorporation of foreign goods into their domestic practices created a hybrid culture in which the colonizer and the colonized influenced each other's culture.

Attempting to serve tea without sugar and tea thus has the potential to change the British meanings associated with the beverage. Importantly, Chinese tea drinking practices, where the British first imported tea, did not incorporate the inclusion of sugar and milk. Although literary references to the tea tray do not always specifically denote the inclusion of cream and sugar, the assumption that these goods are included along with brewed tea is one justifiably based upon historical and personal depictions of afternoon tea within Great Britain. Though not explicitly stated in Henry James' 1881 novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, the author associates tea drinking with

the inclusion of the “implements of the little feast” (James 1). The publication of *The Portrait of a Lady* in the latter part of the nineteenth-century depicts how afternoon tea had become an established fact within the nation. Its popularity within Great Britain enables James to assume his readers would understand his allusion to the “implements” included on a tea table without directly referencing these objects. Though the tea table takes various forms both within and outside the home, it always includes the same elements: tea, cream, sugar, and light refreshments of finger sandwiches and baked goods. James aptly refers to drinking tea as a “little feast,” since historically the Duchess of Bedford intended the light meal to stave off hunger between the lengthy period between lunch and dinner without ruining one’s appetite before dinner. In a way, referring to the tea table as a “little feast” describes it well: the table includes too many foods to qualify as a “snack” but not enough to make a full meal.⁹

In addition to tea, sugar, and cream, consumers needed the appropriate tools to serve the beverage. In its most basic form, the “essential implements” needed to brew tea included a “teakettle of boiling water, a teapot and the cups, a cream pitcher and sugar bowl, thin slices of lemon and small napkins.” Once the mistress of the house displayed these items to guests, she would brew the tea and would serve “small sandwiches and a cake” to her guests with a special “serving knife and small plates” (Broomfield 68). However, as tea drinking became more popular within Great Britain, the ceremony became more intricate, designating that “the material culture of tea encompassed cups, saucers, up to three different types of spoons, sugar tongs, sugar boxes and bowls, milk and hot water jugs, caddies, slop bowls, plates for any edible accompaniments and of course the teapot itself” (Gray, “Moveable Feast” 50). Almost as important as the actual tealeaves, the wares and foods that accompanied tea became vital to the

⁹ A snack is defined as a “mere bite or morsel of food.” The numerous foods on the afternoon tea table set it apart from being considered a “snack.”

cultural meaning and expectations of afternoon tea. The possession of these goods symbolized the economic wealth and adherence to British practices by Britons because it encouraged active consumption daily.

Various nineteenth century novels illustrate the importance of a properly equipped tea table. In *Hard Times* (1854), Charles Dickens indicates to his readers that regardless of social class or economic means, providing guests with good tea and other foodstuffs is vital to demonstrating suitable manners and hospitality. Stephen Blackpool, a lower-class millworker, invites Rachael and Mrs. Pegler back to his home for tea. While Rachael is a close friend of Stephen, Mrs. Pegler has only just made the acquaintance of Rachael as the older woman had “passed close to this good lass two or three times; and her face being so friendly I spoke to her, and she spoke to me,” which formed a friendship between the pair (Dickens, *Hard Times* 151). After sitting on the stoop of Bounderby’s home for the majority of the day, Mrs. Pegler complains of her “shortness of breath” and is subsequently invited by Stephen to “tak a coop o’ tea” with himself and Rachael (Dickens, *Hard Times* 153). Stephen takes incredible care to set the tea table for his guests. He “lighted a candle, set out his little tea-board, got hot water from below, and brought in small portions of tea and sugar, a loaf, and some butter from the nearest shop” (Dickens, *Hard Times* 153). Though Dickens notes that Stephen provided his guests with “small portions” of these commodities, the fact that he includes them demonstrates his desire to adhere to the material culture that is vital to a proper British tea table. While meager, these items are of good quality, as the “bread was new and crusty, the butter fresh,” which depicts Stephen’s economic ability and desire to have decent products in his home (Dickens, *Hard Times* 153). Through this display, Stephen shows his guests his appreciation for their presence and

demonstrates his ability to uphold high standards of living that symbolize his place as an English citizen.

Even though Stephen is working class and lacks substantial economic means, he still participates in the important social and cultural act of afternoon tea. Involvement in this pastime aids in the establishment of relationships. By sharing tea with Rachael and Mrs. Pegler, Stephen reaffirms and maintains his friendship with Rachael while simultaneously providing a familial experience through a shared meal to Mrs. Pegler, who cannot experience this with her own son, Bounderby, as she is not allowed to communicate with him. Though Stephen's income limits what and how much food he can purchase, which illustrates his social rank, he is still able to provide a welcoming and hospitable place for the trio to eat and converse. The foods and wares included on various Britons' tea tables were similarly markers of their economic and social status. The upper classes often included expensive Chinese dishware, silver serving utensils, and high quality food upon their tea table. The middling ranks attempted to follow the affluent class' example by displaying their newfound economic prosperity through the purchasing of imported goods such as China tea sets and high quality tea leaves that had once been available only to their wealthier counterparts. Similarly, the working class also attempted to emulate their social and economic betters. This class may have lacked economic means but its members still attempted to create a space that demonstrated their ability to purchase and serve tea to family and friends. In doing so, they could demonstrate their adherence to British social practices and their desire to join the imagined national community of Great Britain.

Elizabeth Gaskell published *Mary Barton* in 1848, at the beginning of the increase of tea consumption within Great Britain (Burnett 58). Due to the acquisition of India and the export of tea from the country in 1838, Britain had numerous vendors from whom to purchase the

commodity. Since the supply of tea leaves increased, the cost dropped as merchants priced their goods competitively to increase sales. This decrease allowed Britons from across the classes to purchase and drink the commodity. In *Mary Barton*, the Bartons and Wilsons convene in the Barton household to indulge in tea drinking and to enjoy community with each other. Mrs. Barton enters the home with “hospitable thoughts intent” on making their small home welcoming for their guests. Gaskell notes that while the Barton house is small, the gathering “room was tolerably large, and possessed many conveniences” to provide comfort to its inhabitants (Gaskell 14). Within the room, the “bright green japanned tea-tray” is on display, “propped up by a crimson tea-caddy, also of japan ware,” and the tray is “soon hoisted down” for their tea party (Gaskell 15). One can examine the Bartons’ display of their tea tray in two ways: First, they are proud of their ability to afford an imported tea tray for use within their home. Gaskell notes at the beginning of *Mary Barton* that there are “good times among the mills” and its workers paid well for their labor, illustrated through the Barton’s ability to spend their disposable income on nonessential items like the imported Japanese tea tray and caddy (Gaskell 15). They can also afford the additional expense of feeding others and so invite the Wilsons and Alice to tea (Gaskell 15). Their abundance is a direct contrast with the remainder of the novel, when the family can barely afford food and they sell their home furnishings to supplement the cut in John Barton’s wages due to the struggling mills.

Alternatively, the tea tray’s prominent display within their main room demonstrates the Barton family’s Englishness and national pride. The economic power to both purchase tea and serve it appropriately allows the Bartons to show friends and family members their adherence to British domestic virtues and ideals. The cultural meanings associated with tea drinking appeal to the Bartons’ consumer behavior. The family utilizes their extra income to purchase items for

their tea table that allows them to create community with friends. Their participation in this social custom allows them to participate in the much larger national—and even global—imagined community of tea drinkers within Great Britain. Similarly, purchasing tea shows the inclusion of global influences within the British home. The Bartons' use of two foreign commodities, the tea leaves and Japanned tea tray, reflects the inundation of global and colonial influences into the British home. By purchasing nonnative goods, the family aids in the continued importation of foreign items into the British marketplace. The Bartons' desire to participate in British social consumption ultimately encourages and supports an imperial British presence around the world. The reappropriation of tea as a British commodity and its consumption as an English pastime resituates an originally foreign good as something purely domestic. By purchasing tea and its paraphernalia, the Bartons demonstrate their adherence to British cultural norms that encapsulated England's imagined community of tea drinkers. Their support ultimately aided in the maintenance of an imperial British presence around the world and contributed to the colonization of India and the West Indies to supply desired foodstuffs within the marketplace.

The usage of the tea tray isn't the only cultural meaning the Barton household adheres to when taking tea. While the two families are having their tea late in the day rather than in the afternoon—noted by Mrs. Wilson's worry about the "lateness of the hour at which they would probably return" home after visiting with the Barton family—the tea table still reflects a traditional tea table. Mrs. Barton sets the table with "fresh eggs...[a] nice ham cut... a pennyworth of milk" and a "fresh and new...loaf of bread" (Gaskell 16). The bread, meat, eggs, and dairy provide a light meal that would satisfy any lingering hunger from the day's events. The household matriarch ensures that her guests are satisfied and have a pleasant experience during their visit, which supports the British ideal of community and hospitality.

Gaskell demonstrates the preparation by the Bartons to create a welcoming space for their friends through the atmosphere surrounding these individuals. Readers can almost hear the “merry chatter of cups and saucers” around the table as these friends enjoy community with one another (Gaskell 14). While the Bartons live comfortably, they are by no means wealthy but still aspire to create a hospitable and welcoming space for their guests. This desire allows the Bartons and Wilsons the opportunity to strengthen communal ties and maintain their friendships. The happiness and fraternity illustrate to readers how community transcends class, economic station, or geographic location and is available to everyone, aiding in the formation of an “imagined community” of citizens. In this community, the characters form a connection to their country “even [though] the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them.” Instead, these individuals believe themselves intimately connected to their fellow citizens through this established “image of their communion” (Anderson 6). The participation of the Barton and Wilson families in this tea ritual allows them to come together around a common practice, which strengthens the communal ties between the two families. Following the death of Mrs. Barton, however, the fraternal bonds between these two families lessens, isolating the Bartons, which ultimately leads to negative consequences within the family.

Later in *Mary Barton*, readers can observe the negative effects of being unable to participate in the national pastime of afternoon tea through the hardships that befall the Bartons. Since “there are not buyers enough in the market to purchase the goods already made, and consequently that there is no demand for more,” financial issues arise for the mills and their owners in Manchester and the masters are unable to pay their workers (Gaskell 24). This situation undeniably affects the Barton household, whose members suddenly find their economic surplus unavailable. To pay for food and other necessities, they begin to sell off possessions to

pay for food: “by degrees the house was stripped of its little ornaments...the smart tea-tray and tea-caddy, long and carefully kept, went for bread for [Mary’s] father” (Gaskell 111). The notation of the trade of this luxury item for goods essential for survival is poignant. “Stripping away” these decorations of refinement and beauty symbolizes the similar loss of civilization in John Barton. His base need for survival drives him throughout the remainder of the novel as his wages continue to dwindle. Finally, when the end seems bleak and no other options available for both Barton and his fellow millworkers, they believe the “the masters...should pay” for their workers’ current economic living situations. In agreeing to choose lots, each man was “sworn to act according to his drawing” and Barton pulls the “marked paper” (Gaskell 186). The millworkers’ poor wages and the atmosphere of their meeting incites Barton to take drastic measures in order to help incite the mill owners to provide better wages in order to improve their quality of living. Unfortunately, the loss of his economic stability and other creature comforts drives him to an “uncivilized” action: he murders the mill owner’s son, Harry Carson. This action is arguably a reaction to Barton’s inability to afford even the most basic necessities of bread and cheese to survive (Gaskell 115). The sale of the tea caddy, such a point of pride for the family, and its removal from the Barton’s home, demonstrates to readers how a lack of British culture can lead to negative effects. In this way, withdrawal of the tea tray and caddy from the house symbolically removes the traces of civilization from the home. The absence of civility causes John Barton to become murderous and misguided, almost “savage” without these reminders of his British identity. Through this “uncivilized” action, the novel suggests that Britons must maintain these national rituals, regardless of social, economic, or political issues, lest they forget their place as British citizens and duty to maintain civilization both within Great Britain and the world. The loss of tea and its civilizing effects within the Barton household

alludes to the potential collapse of the traditional British family as well as the possible disintegration of the larger imagined community of Britons.

Gaskell's placement of tea as a marker of nationalism within *Mary Barton* tacitly persuaded readers to purchase the commodity in order to display their place as refined English citizens. This encouragement contributed to the consumer cultural meanings established around tea drinking. These scenes of tea drinking urge readers to consume the beverage as a means to demonstrate and uphold their status as a civilized people and nation. As an English citizen herself, Gaskell understood the consumer meanings associated with tea drinking in England and utilized these cultural norms as one of the way to critique problems in Manchester due to rapid industrialization (Burnett 58). These problems symbolize the changes in personality demonstrated by Barton. Having to sell off prized possessions like the tea set and being forced to starve in order to survive, the Bartons cannot participate in this vital English pastime and essentially fall outside the nation's imagined community, costing them part of their national identity. Gaskell utilizes one of the most important symbols of English identity—tea—to illustrate to her readers the importance of ensuring that all Britons are paid a living wage. As the Bartons are unable to afford tea, it effects their connection to English society at large. The consumer meanings of community and morality that are associated with tea are removed from the Barton household because they cannot afford the commodity, which ultimately affects their relationship with British culture. Showing readers the issues associated with economic disparity and lack of cooperation between Britons through the absence of essential British commodities allows Gaskell to utilize consumer meanings to reinforce her point and potentially enact change with Great Britain.

Establishing Tea's Cultural Meaning in Great Britain

Nineteenth-century British tea distributors' desire to drive business aided in the creation of the modern interpretation of the British national identity. The origins of this attitude lie in consumer behavior and marketing utilized by both corporations and society. In *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian Britain*, Julie E. Fromer explains that nineteenth-century tea advertisements "suggest that the tea trade held a critically important position within the English national economy." These marketing materials demonstrated to English consumers the importance of their purchasing and consumption of British-sourced tea as a method to support and continue the "strength and success of the British government and its empire" (Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury*, 66). Though the ultimate purpose of British tea company's advertisements was to persuade observers to purchase their product over their competitors, these firms also attempted to appeal to consumer's closely held cultural meanings and ethnocentrism. Due to the rampant adulteration of tea by the Chinese, Britons worried about the potential dangers of consuming contaminated products. British tea companies attempted to uphold British virtues and ideals when producing their products in order to appeal to the expectation of English consumers of providing a pure and superior brand of tea. The marketing of tea then became a support for ethnocentrism by encouraging consumers to buy "local" by purchasing only British teas since the commodity captured the same virtues that Britons themselves upheld.

The drastic rise in tea drinking during the nineteenth century helped form numerous tea companies, including the still-operating Tetley (1837), Yorkshire Tea (1886), and Lipton (1890) businesses ("Historic Tea Timeline"; "Who we are"; "From the tea garden"). While Twinings was established at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it saw sizeable growth in the nineteenth century ("History of Twinings"). While these businesses managed to transition with the times, this transformation was not the case for every tea company established during this

period. However, their advertisements still remain and one seemingly popular brand was the United Kingdom Tea Company. There is nearly no significant historical information available on this company, though they seem to have published advertisements throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. The company appears to have established a marketing campaign that exemplified the ideal of Great Britain as a sovereign and superior power over its colonies within



Figure 1 – United Kingdom Tea Company, 1890

the world. An advert from 1890 depicts two British men on location in Africa. Inside a tent, the two men—one wearing a suit and fez and the other a British military uniform—relax in a tent drinking United Kingdom Tea Company brand tea, with two tea chests resting

prominently in the picture. In the corner, a half-

naked Indian stands, waiting on them, holding a tea tray with a teapot and what looks like a vessel of milk. In the background outside the tent, Indian workers are hauling tea. At the bottom of the ad, the United Kingdom Tea Company relates the conversation between the tea men:

STANLEY: “Well, Emin, old fellow, this cup of the United Kingdom Tea Company’s Delicious Tea makes us forget all our troubles.”

EMIN: “So it does, my boy.” (United Kingdom Tea Company)

This advertisement conveys two messages to consumers. First, the United Kingdom Tea Company is appealing to the cultural meaning of relaxation and community many British associated with tea. Stanley and Emin lounge in their tent away from the labor occurring outside. Drinking tea provides them with a space to become refreshed and separate themselves from their worries and concerns. This illustration seems to emphasize the “repeated rituals of home” within

the middle class. One should note that these images relate *specifically* to the middle class and above, which may be because the United Kingdom Tea Company could be too expensive for the working classes, who often purchased lower quality tea, or the company understood that the middle class's significant buying power within the country and their desire to emulate their upper-class betters through tea consumption. Either way, the images specifically appeal at least to the middle class through its depictions of the British consumer being served by servants (in these particular advertisements, colonial servants). These advertisements represent the "middle-class values, domestic ideals, and Victorian gender ideologies" that were prominent within Victorian society and "expressed in the minute details of everyday life" (Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury* 240).

Secondly, this advertisement indicates how Great Britain viewed and treated its colonies. As the Indian laborers toil outside, the British men sit inside and enjoy the benefits of their workers' labor, even though they are only the overseers of its actual cultivation and production. The scene is a small-scale representation of the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies. The tea produced in India is sold within the British marketplace, as well as other international markets, so British merchants and the Empire will acquire significant profit. This high return on investment results from the low labor costs of their colonial subjects, who were often indentured servants or worked for little income (Moxham 131). This depiction demonstrates to British consumers that they are not only sovereign over their colonies, but also that the goods they are purchasing are "British" because they are produced under the supervision of British citizens like Stanley and Emin. This advert appeals to and exploits consumer cultural meanings and ethnocentrism in order to increase consumer profit. In playing on these ideals, the United Kingdom Tea Company informs its customers that its products' consumption will take

away their troubles and allows them to support the Empire through the purchasing of British goods and services.

One nineteenth-century tea brand that is still prominently known is Lipton Tea. In 1871, Thomas Lipton began his business in Glasgow and by 1889 had imported 20,000 tea chests. In 1890, Lipton purchased 5,500 acres for tea gardens in Ceylon and began importing and selling his own tea within both the British and American markets (“3 Ways”). Lipton Tea was unique in



Figure 2 – Lipton Teas, 1894

producing its own tea rather than sourcing it from others. This closed supply chain ensured the purity of its tea, which could be a direct response to the issues often associated with the Chinese import. In Figure 2, this 1894 advertisement definitely emphasizes the importance of Lipton’s tea gardens.

The plantation is the central focus of the image with the production plant prominently featured and emblazoned with “Lipton” on the roof. At the top, the ad informs consumers that this image is “One of Lipton’s Tea Gardens,” which emphasizes to potential customers that Lipton tea is grown, produced, and shipped solely by the company. The right side text describes the tea as “Rich, Pure, Fragrant,” all descriptors vital to exemplary tea, which denotes to customers that the flavor is robust because it hasn’t been adulterated with additional substances. In the corner of the plantation, an Englishman oversees lines of colonial employees as they pick tealeaves before transporting them to the plantation’s factory. Like the United Kingdom Tea Company advert, Lipton’s advertisement demonstrates to

viewers the purity and superiority of its tea through the plantation's management by British personnel. Consumers can rest assured that Lipton's product will be of the highest quality because individuals who hold the same standards as consumers oversee its entire production.

Twining's is arguably the most famous British tea brand in the world and the one many associate with English tea drinking habits. Founded in 1706, Twining's is the oldest tea company operating in England and still maintains its original store in London on 216 Strand. The company has also been a Royal Warrant Holder since 1837. The designation grants the company the privilege of supplying goods to the royal family. Twining's has held this honor since the reign of Queen Victoria, establishing the company's title as a "British" tea brand ("History of Twining's"). When Twining's received its Royal Warrant, it would have supplied tea for a



Figure 3 – Twining's Tea Advertisement

monarch who owned at the Empire's height 10 million square miles of the earth's surface (about 1/6 of land mass around the globe) (Parsons 3). This massive territorial ownership meant that Great Britain had immense power and influence around the world, and Twining's had the ability to import their wares around the globe due to the Empire's vast market monopoly. One of their advertisements portrays the company as the global supplier of tea. In Figure 3, Twining's informs its potential customers they should "Drink Twining's" as it is "World Famous Tea" (Twining's). A deliveryman's vehicle sits atop the globe, full of

Twining's tea boxes, depicting the company's place as a lead supplier of tea around the world. The message is clear within the ad: Twining's is a global brand and the best on the market. Queen Victoria's consumption of Twining's tea makes the brand synonymous with her reign and influence. Consumers know this tea is prized over all other tea brands by the British monarch, who is the epitome of the nation's principles and mores, and by drinking of Twining's tea, they ultimately support the same ideals as Queen Victoria.

Twining's appeal to both the British love for tea and Britons' national identity encouraged consumers not only to purchase the commodity but also to do so from specifically British-owned tea companies. Buying national domestic goods indicated a Briton's desire to uphold British social principles and their support of the national economy. These advertisements' depiction of tea drinking and British mastery over its colonies appealed to consumer cultural meanings and ethnocentrism meant to drive and improve tea sales. These companies, the images seem to say, understand English practices and values because they are British-owned businesses who produce their goods specifically for English use. Ultimately, these advertisements marketed their tea to consumers in direct opposition to foreign suppliers who likely didn't hold the same standards or appreciation of a good cup of tea because they were not members of Great Britain. These ads speak to the British citizens' sense of consumer ethnocentrism and the duty of patriotism and support of the Empire. Tea drinking symbolizes community and nationalism; purchasing tea from British vendors helps to reinforce these ideals more strongly for consumers. Essentially, these established cultural meanings attributed to British "consumption patterns that draw people together and reinforce their identities" through the drinking of tea (Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury* 240). Since tea represented British values and mores, advertisements from the United Kingdom Tea Company, Lipton, and Twining's captured and capitalized on the

importance of ensuring that all aspects of tea drinking, from the leaves to the beverage's creation and finally its consumption, maintained the ideals of Great Britain. Though not explicitly noted, these advertisements appealed to the perception of foreign goods as potentially contaminated. One could argue that purchasing domestic items not only meant supporting the British Empire but also receiving goods that were appropriate to the high standards of Britons. The publications of these advertisements came later in the century after tea's importance in Great Britain was predominately established, and we can still see how the influence of how a sustained national culture of tea drinking influenced the establishment and continuation of tea plantations in India. Through the examination of nineteenth-century novels, we can observe the similarities between how promotional materials and literary illustrations of tea and its consumption created and supported the beverage's place as symbol of British national identity, which aided in the establishment of Britons understanding of their place as a superior force within the world.

The Social Community of Tea and Novels

Establishing tea as a representation of British identity, culture, and mores provided a pastime that was easily accessible and known to all Britons. This standard practice of drinking tea with sugar, milk, and a light meal became an activity with which everyone was familiar, regardless of geographic location, social status, or economic means. We can observe how tea in England became consistent with imagined community as theorized by Anderson. These communities are "distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined," which founds them as unique and separate from other groups (Anderson 6). These unique characteristics create a "deep, horizontal comradeship" amongst a nation's citizens that creates a sense of belonging to this imagined community (Anderson 7). By establishing tea, and its specific brewing methods, as something distinctly British, all Britons could identify their

place as national citizens through their adherence to this practice, which demonstrated to the English that they should be participating in regular tea drinking.¹⁰

While the portrayals of community vary across classes and locations, tea lies at the root of community, offering a place for Britons to create, maintain, and support relationships that are representative of the whole of Great Britain. Representations of the tea ceremony within nineteenth-century British literature helped support an imagined community of citizenship throughout the nation. Like the advertisements created by the period's tea companies, literary texts encouraged readers to demonstrate their Englishness and promoted membership within the imagined community of British nationalism through tea drinking. In doing so, novels ultimately supported a specific British cultural identity surrounding tea.

Tea's vital role in generating community creates connections between people by allowing them to gather around the tea table as a means of establishing relationships. This space utilizes tea to promote relationships between old friends and new acquaintances. The familiarity with the tea ceremony allows its participants to sit down at the table on equal terms that can ultimately aid in the continued establishment and promotion of community. In *The Woman in White* (1859), Wilkie Collins utilizes tea to breach the boundaries of unfamiliarity between strangers by establishing a space where individuals can interact and form relationships. When Marian Holcombe meets Walter Hartright, the new drawing teacher, she invites him to take tea with her. As she interacts with Hartright, Marian is "laughing gaily. Her light flow of talk, and her lively familiarity of manner with a total stranger, were accompanied by an unaffected naturalness and an easy inborn confidence" that allows the newly acquainted strangers to be at ease with one another. Even though Hartright has never previously conversed with Miss Halcombe, he finds it

¹⁰ Even today, not drinking tea is considered very "unBritish." A British friend of mine often receives haughty looks from other Britons for her dislike of tea, as though she is somewhat lacking as a Brit by not drinking it.

“impossible to be formal and reserved in her company” because of her welcoming nature and “bright gaiety of spirits” (Collins, *The Woman in White* 60). The tea table allows them to “[sit] down together at the breakfast-table in as cordial and customary a manner as if we had known each other for years” (Collins, *The Woman in White* 59). In constructing the scene in this manner, Collins illustrates to his readers how tea can erase the lines of unfamiliarity that exist among strangers. Due to the pair’s accustomed experience with tea drinking, they can enter into the space equally because of their familiarity with the practice of tea drinking as citizens of Great Britain. This familiarity permits them to socialize easily since they are both residents of the same community and culture. Collins illustrates the national fraternity of tea consumption through this depiction of intimacy, which allows even strangers to be familiar with one another. Though Miss Halcombe and Hartright do not know each other at the beginning of the scene, they recognize each other as citizens of the same nation and therefore members of the imagined community established through common customs like tea drinking.

A Gendered Space

However, serving tea is highly gendered. Scholars believe that the female association with tea resulted from the beverage’s introduction by Catherine of Braganza and her creation of an “elite female court culture” surrounding the beverage. This fashionable construction of drinking an “exotic and expensive luxury” only available to the wealthier classes initially provided a method for the English court to differentiate themselves from the lower social ranks and to demonstrate their affluent economic status (Ellis et al. 31). The high price of tea was due to high import taxes placed on the commodity by both Great Britain and foreign merchants. The British government itself implemented a 199 percent tax upon the good, which caused the average price of tea in 1657 to be “£6 for a pound of tea...equivalent, in purchasing power, to

more than £847 today” (Daly 89; Ellis et al. 32).¹¹ For upper class women, tea’s “consumption was conspicuously about [the] display and spectacle” of their ownership of expensive “tea and its paraphernalia” to others (Ellis et al. 31). Tealeaves were often kept in locked tea chests that were often “ornate and highly visible” within the room that illustrated the household’s ability to purchase the good. The household mistress was typically the only person in possession of the box’s key, and she would portion out the expensive commodity to ensure it wasn’t wasted (Gray, “Proud Air” 31). The female authority over the tealeaves gendered the product as a commodity overseen by females. To brew tea, the female head of household had to unlock the tea caddy, select the tea, and manage the brewing of the beverage. The expensive nature of tea meant that brewing was an important function since mispreparing the drink could be costly economically as well as socially. Because women ultimately oversaw the purchasing, brewing, and serving of tea, the tea table became a feminine space and tea brewing a female skill. The symbolization of tea as an emblem of British virtue, a woman’s ability—as well as her inability—to prepare a cup of tea properly demonstrated her propriety and moral uprightness. As tea became more accessible, women trained in the art of brewing and serving tea as a representation of their breeding and social station. These women who presided over the tea table had to “display themselves in a socially appropriate manner...[while] performing simultaneously the fact of their ‘affability’ (willingness to please) and their ‘delicacy’” (Daly 86). Situating tea as a representation of femininity strengthened the gendered nature of the commodity. British literature rarely depicted men brewing tea and, when a man does so, it usually means no woman lives in his household.¹² The predominant demonstration of tea preparation and service by women demonstrated to

¹¹ This remained until 1784, when the import tax was decreased to 12.5% (Daly 89).

¹² In *Great Expectations*, John Wemmick brews tea for Pip and the Aged because no female staff is employed.

nineteenth-century readers tea's role as a woman's job. The ability of a woman to prepare and serve tea was a symbol of her ability to establish and maintain a proper British home.

Throughout various Victorian novels, female characters are depicted serving tea appropriately, which demonstrates their place as purveyors of the household.

The previously discussed tea scene within *Hard Times* is of particular interest in relation to the gendering of the beverage. When Stephen invites Rachael and Mrs. Pegler to his home, the brewing of the beverage falls on Rachael as Stephen has been abandoned by his wife and his home lacks a female presence (Dickens, *Hard Times* 153). In tasking Rachael to perform the central role at the tea table, Dickens ensures that tea brewing remains a feminine practice. Her adherence to feminine social convention also contrasts her with Stephen's drunken wife, who has abandoned her husband and wifely duties. Rachael's ability and willingness to brew tea depicts her affability and femininity to readers, which stands in stark contrast to the brashness of Stephen's wife. This illustration essentially supports the various social and cultural ideals surrounding tea. It reminds readers of the importance of a woman's place within the home to create community and warmth through their presence and hospitality.

Dickens continues his support of gendered roles within the English home in *Great Expectations* (1861). Mrs. Joe, the physically and verbally abusive sister of Pip and wife of Joe Gargery, adheres to many expected social customs but lacks the femininity and "angel of the household" mentality often associated with women of the period. Pip describes Mrs. Joe as routinely laying a "hard and heavy hand... upon her husband as well as upon me" in her fits of anger and controls her household with an iron fist. However, even though Mrs. Joe is the unofficial head of the house, she still "applied herself to set the tea-things" for the family to enjoy their afternoon tea (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 10). Though she commands the

household through physical and verbal force, she nevertheless adheres to her domestic duties. She cooks dinner, cleans the home, and even brought Pip up “by hand” after the death of their parents (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 7). While their familial situation is less than ideal, the importance of maintaining the ritual of the tea table is still vitally imperative within the home. Mrs. Joe serves tea with bread and butter every day to satiate any hunger between lunch and dinner. However, she still lacks the needed feminine touch associated with tea brewing and her abusive and controlling nature eventually leads to a brutal beating by Orlick, whom she had incensed through her lack of feminine manners. Her unfortunate end seems to illustrate the importance of maintaining femininity within the household and the preservation of traditional gender roles. Situating the brewing and serving of the beverage as a feminine activity supports this ideal of tea as a gendered female commodity meant to be utilized by the women within the household.

Literary Tea Time

By the mid-nineteenth century, literary references to tea increased and a variety of social situations within the period’s novels include the beverage. These inclusions are not surprising since tea’s popularity increased enormously as the British East India Company’s trade monopoly on tea ended 1858, allowing new companies like Twining and Lipton to create a competitive market that drove the commodity’s price down and increased consumerism. The beverage’s consumption within these texts depicts both the increase in tea drinkers but also the transformation of buying practices amongst the classes within Great Britain. Numerous novels during the nineteenth century depict British citizens from a variety of different geographic locations, economic stations, and social classes partaking in afternoon tea. These illustrations ultimately aided in the foundation of this pastime as an English custom and helped mold the

cultural meanings surrounding tea that further promoted the demand for tea and the establishment of the beverage as a national drink. Particularly, I will closely examine representations of tea within Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1857), George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), and Dickens' *Great Expectations*. These three novels have numerous scenes of tea drinking that aid in the establishment of personal and national relationships. Characters consume the beverage in a variety of situations that illustrate the numerous places and situations that include tea drinking. We can observe the formation and support of consumer behavior through literary depictions of tea drinking with nineteenth century novels. These scenes help readers understand the importance of tea within British culture during this period and how literature assisted in garnering its place within the nation's social customs.

Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë's 1857 novel *Jane Eyre* includes numerous scenes of tea drinking between family members, friends, and social classes. The novel doesn't confine scenes of tea drinking to a particular class or location, but demonstrates the universal enjoyment of the beverage by Britons through Jane's travels around England and interactions with people across the social strata. Within these various literary depictions, Brontë promotes the consumption of tea and informs readers how they should compose themselves while enjoying this pastime. Through these literary illustrations, readers learn how to be upstanding British citizens. Tea drinking is used to portray characters positively or negatively; depictions of those who use afternoon tea to promote community are favorable, whereas illustration of those who do not adhere to established British customs are adverse. Tying the drink to British ideals of decorum ensures that the beverage remains a staple within the British household. Brontë associates and

promotes these particular customs and behaviors through the methods in which her characters ingest tea.

Jane Eyre utilizes the antagonist of Aunt Reed to promote community and respect to fellow English citizens. As an unwelcome guest within the household, Jane suffers abuse and exclusion from participation in familial activities. Brontë utilizes tea, a beverage meant to promote family connections, as a means to depict the horrible living situation that Jane bears at Gateshead Hall. When “Missis and the young ladies and Master John are going out to tea this afternoon,” they exclude Jane, further illustrating her place as an interloper within the Reed home (Brontë 47). In a way, Aunt Reed’s refusal to allow Jane to join the family for tea is on par with the physical abuse Aunt Reed and her children inflict on Jane. Her exclusion from afternoon tea, a traditional method to build community and promote relationships, enforces the family’s disdain for her, emphasizing the mental abuse Jane suffers at Reed Hall. Denying Jane access to family tea symbolically refuses her a place within the household and situates her as an outcast. Aunt Reed’s use of tea in this way supports her place as a villain within *Jane Eyre*, and the loss of her son and subsequent death later in the novel demonstrate the importance of maintaining familial ties and treating relations fairly, regardless of their social background. Their inability to create domestic harmony demonstrates to readers the importance of community for all, not only for some, in order to create harmony within Great Britain.

Even though her blood relations treat her poorly, Jane finds community with the household’s nursery maid, Bessie. Bessie attempts to reconcile Jane’s exclusion from this community activity by offering to take tea with Jane and have the “cook ... bake you a little cake” to go with their tea (Brontë 47). Even though Jane and Bessie’s tea is minimal, it still has the essential elements that accompany cake, tea, and its accompaniments. Bessie’s attempt to

make the tea table a hospitable space promotes the community Jane has lost through her exclusion from the Reed's tea. Jane meets Bessie again many years later when the former nursery maid arrives to bring Jane to Gateshead Hall, where Aunt Reed is on her deathbed. Bessie's outcome since Jane's departure from the household stands in contrast to Aunt Reed. Whereas Bessie is now married with children and leads a contented life, Aunt Reed has lost her son, fortune, and health. The different conclusions for these two women ties back to the manner in which they behaved toward Jane. Aunt Reed's refusal to treat her niece well regardless of their familial relationship results in a disparaging ending. In contrast, Bessie attempts to provide Jane with a form of community by taking tea with her in the nursery, ultimately conducting the role of family that Aunt Reed should have performed. By depicting the consequences of including or excluding Jane from the communal act of afternoon tea, *Jane Eyre* demonstrates to readers the importance of treating their family—and by extension fellow Britons—respectfully, regardless of their background.

Aunt Reed further emphasizes her lack of humanity by sending her niece to Lowood School, an institution for poor or orphaned girls. Jane finds the atmosphere of the school to be callous and uncaring of its students and their meals are the epitome of this ideal. During her first meal at the school, the pupils consume burnt porridge and meat and potato mixtures “redolent of rancid fat” (Brontë 61). The constant “exigency of hunger” represents the heartlessness of the institution that Jane experiences. While she eats a “precious morsel of brown bread” during teatime, she must share it “between two claimants.” And while she refers to the meal as “tea-time,” the students are given no actual tea. Instead, they drink coffee, and even then Jane doesn't imbibe the entire portion, as she ends up “relinquishing to a third [student] half the contents of my mug” (Brontë 71). Many of the administrators at Lowood School demonstrate their lack of

compassion by the near starvation diet to which they subject the students. These young girls eat essentially just enough to keep them alive.¹³ In contrast to their students, the teachers imbibe decent meals and tea. This refusal to provide good food to their students establishes a social hierarchy that classifies the schoolgirls as unworthy and a bane to the school. Ironically, “tea-time” does not even include tea, which seems to demonstrate that Lowood attendees aren’t good enough to receive a cup. Tea promotes community, nationhood, and well-being, but these key attributes are missing from the experiences of the Lowood students.

The inclusion of certain dishes within literature aids in our understanding of how authors utilized particular foods to construct and support ideals of consumption, but the exclusion of foods is also important. The institution purports to teach students “not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying,” as is applicable to their station as poor and orphaned children (Brontë 75). In contrast to the expanding economy of the British Empire and the ability of Britons to utilize their expendable income on non-essential goods like tea, Lowood refuses to acknowledge the transforming social and cultural paradigms within the nation by actively pushing back against consumerism and the support of cultural meanings through their consumption. In a way, informing these girls they are not good enough to consume these goods communicates to them that they cannot be part of the nation as a whole as they aren’t worthy of inclusion. Instead, it strips them of their identity as Britons and further separates them from the nation’s community.

Lowood School’s blatant refusal to provide these young girls with tea embodies their displacement within the institution. The inclusion of tea at their meal would provide them the ability to partake in community and establish friendships, ultimately strengthening their place

¹³ However, it doesn’t help ward off the “typhus fever [that] fulfilled its mission of devastation at Lowood” (Brontë 99).

within Britain's imagined national community. By removing tea from their diet, Brontë demonstrates to readers how *inhumane* it is to separate an individual, regardless of sex, economic or social status, from community. While Jane does end up creating friendships, she does so only after being invited to take tea with Miss Temple and Helen Burns when she finally has a space in which she can participate in community and affirm her identity as a Briton.

In stark contrast to Lowood School administration, Miss Temple utilizes the tea table to create community by inviting both Jane and Helen Burns for tea in her room. The trio gathers around the "little round table near the fire" and a servant brings in a tea tray containing "china cups and bright teapot" (Brontë 85). The "fragrant...steam of the beverage" and "good-sized seed-cake" provide a striking contrast to the horrible food served to the students in the Lowood dining hall (Brontë 86). Though Miss Temple cannot provide a lavish spread for her students, she does present them with some form of sustenance, which is vital to constructing a properly laid table. While the trio doesn't take tea during the traditional afternoon hours, its purpose remains the same. Providing Jane and Helen with a small meal helps stave off the consistent hunger these young girls experience. By inviting her students to take tea, she promotes the ideals of community associated with the beverage, demonstrating to readers the appropriate way in which to treat others.

Additionally, Miss Temple's choice to include a seedcake is important to the setting in which these three characters take their tea. A "Victorian teatime staple," these cakes were found on numerous tea tables throughout Great Britain (Broomfield 75-76). These cakes were "rich and heavy" and "did not easily spoil" because they were "flavored and moistened with fortified wines such as Madeira, [and] spirits such as brandy," which made them a good pantry essential (Broomfield 76). Arguably, Brontë understood the common inclusion of seed cake upon the

British tea table and knew that utilizing it was a nod to the tradition of including baked goods during this important British meal. Seed cakes' prominent and recognizable place upon the British tea table would have appealed to readers' own sense of identity with the food and allowed them to connect with the novel, its characters, and the sense of community and warmth established within the scene. Ultimately, this scene provides a stark contrast with the general deprivation of Lowood. Like Jane's tea with Bessie, the commodity brings lightness to an otherwise cheerless place. Though alienated during her time at Lowood, which Brontë depicts as gloomy and despondent, Jane manages to find community with Miss Temple and Helen. Brontë describes the trio "feast[ing] that evening as on nectar and ambrosia" and the company of each other filled with "presence and kindness" that is in such a stark contrast to Jane's previous and later experiences within Lowood (Brontë 86). This scene shows readers how tea can bring together individuals of varying backgrounds and create a familial environment through the shared enjoyment of the beverage. Though these women are not related, afternoon tea becomes a space that not only maintains a British national practice and supports the cultural meaning surrounding tea, but constructs lifelong relationships through community.¹⁴

When Jane becomes employed and arrives at Thornfield Hall, she is unfamiliar with the estate's inhabitants. However, tea allows her to acclimate to her new home and establish connections within the estate. During her time at Thornfield, Jane spends significant time with Adèle and Mrs. Fairfax. The two women and young girl initially utilize teatime to learn about each other and as they become acquainted, community is established. Jane describes their time together as a "ring of golden peace," which emphasizes the way in which tea can create harmony amongst its patrons. Jane's description of the scene is one of domestic bliss: "Mrs. Fairfax had

¹⁴ Several years after this scene, Jane is invited to Miss Temple's wedding.

taken her knitting, and I had assumed a low seat near her, and Adèle, kneeling on the carpet, had nestled close up to me, and a sense of mutual affection seemed to surround us” (Brontë 284). By gathering around tea, the two women and Adèle accept and promote community, ultimately adhering to the established cultural norm. Though not blood relations, these three have created their own domestic community that exemplifies the importance of hearth and home. In a way, they have become the ideal of the national community of British tea drinkers on a smaller scale. For Jane and Mrs. Fairfax, drinking tea is a vital aspect of their place as British citizens. Brontë characterizes Adèle’s French upbringing through her foreign, frivolous inclinations, but her participation in this English pastime aids in her indoctrination into Great Britain and demonstrates how including non-Britons within this space can assist in “refining” their unfamiliar mannerisms.

After Jane departs from Thornfield Hall and nearly faces death when she leaves her belongings in the coach, she finds a home with the Rivers siblings St. John, Diana, and Mary, who welcome her into their family. Jane has become seriously ill from her exposure to the elements and when she awakes, recovered, the family invites her to take tea. Diana prepares and provides Jane with a “little cake, baked on the top of the oven,” because her “appetite was awakened and keen” after overcoming her illness (Brontë 396). Though the Rivers know absolutely nothing about Jane, they have taken her into their home and provided her with tea and food to nourish her body. This space encourages comfort for both parties that aids in the creation of new relationships and community among these individuals.

The Rivers also utilize tea to learn about Jane and her background. Drinking tea “gave new tone to my unstrung nerves” and she is “mightily refreshed by the beverage” (Brontë 398). This scene exemplifies the idea that tea is the “cup that cheers” and revives a person’s

constitution. As noted by John Burnett in *Liquid Pleasures*, the “agreeable, warming effects” of the drink with its low dose of caffeine causes “an increase [in] mental and muscular activity and relieve[s] the effects of fatigue” (Burnett 49). Simply by consuming a cup of tea (along with a small cake), Jane is revived in spirit and health and able to share with the Rivers the “catastrophe which drove me from a house I had found a paradise” (Brontë 399). Tea’s cultural meaning of creating tranquility is an established aspect of British culture. Even now, Britons still associate tea as something that will provide repose, stress relief, or comfort for dismal situations. Brontë’s illustration of its soothing effects on Jane following her harrowing ordeal upon leaving Thornfield Hall demonstrates to readers the positive influence tea can have within the British home. Brontë’s depiction of the beverage’s calming nature on Jane would have informed readers of the benefits of tea drinking and reinforced British cultural norms to support the continued purchasing of tea. Ultimately, while Jane has travelled a significant distance from Thornfield Hall to Moor House, she is still able to find comfort in similar tea practices, which demonstrates to readers the widespread tea drinking customs within the nation. Its inclusion illustrates to readers how national consumer behaviors have become within England that have created similar buying habits within the British marketplace based around common traditions.

Additionally, the depiction of this scene of tea drinking exemplifies tea’s association with British values of refinement and comfort. Though Jane had been destitute, begging for food and shelter, her consumption of the beverage demonstrates her return to civilization and withdrawal from her status as a “vagabond.” She is able to take tea in the Rivers’ parlor, a “comfortable . . . clean and neat” room that “contained some books and an ancient set of china,” objects that depict the luxuries the middle-class Rivers enjoy. Though this home is smaller and more plainly furnished than Thornfield Hall, it still illustrates the sophistication and prosperity enjoyed by the

majority of middle-class Britons. Jane's ability to consume tea in a comfortable home amongst her fellow Britons demonstrates her return from impoverished conditions, further depicting the British ideal of community and relationship building and tea's association with comfort and security.

While Brontë supports the status quo, she also utilizes tea drinking as a means to demonstrate to readers the appropriate methods in which to act as a society. She upholds gender ideals, familial relationships, and consumerism through her various depictions of tea drinking. Though Brontë seems to support these established practices within her novels, they serve an additional purpose: moral aptitude. Characters' inability to subscribe to the established ideals surrounding tea drinking marks them as set apart from the national community, which can have negative consequences for those individuals. The Reed family's exclusion of Jane from their afternoon tea outing demonstrates their lack of humanity and sympathy toward their family member. Aunt Reed's displays her hatred toward Jane in a variety of scenes—locking her inside the Red Room, sending her to Lowood—and her allowing of John's physical abuse has dire consequences for these two characters. John eventually “ruined himself and half-ruined his family” through his lack of control and he is “supposed to have committed suicide” (Brontë 258). This subsequently causes Aunt Reed, who fawned over her son and turned a blind eye to his bad nature, to have a stroke. Both characters find death in dire circumstances. One could argue that their refusal to include Jane as part of the family led to their downfall, which Brontë poignantly demonstrates through Jane's exclusion from the family's afternoon tea.

In contrast, the Rivers siblings, St. John, Diana, and Mary, take in Jane after they discover her half-dead on their doorstep. While they are strangers to Jane, they still seek to help her recover from her ordeal and establish herself as a teacher within the town. They demonstrate

their hospitality through their inclusion of Jane during afternoon tea. They ensure she is both warmed by the tea and fed by a small cake so she may regain her strength. They are concerned for her well-being, in direct opposition to the Reeds. Though we discover later that they are, in fact, relatives of Jane, they are rewarded for the hospitality and good nature they extended to Jane before this revelation. When her late uncle wills Jane £20,000, she distributes it equally amongst her cousins, which allows Diana and Mary, who had been working as household governesses, to return home and live lives of leisure. Ultimately, their hospitality and compassion for Jane are rewarded through good health and economy. In this way, Brontë upholds the cultural meanings associated with tea through her depictions of the contrasts between the Reed and Rivers families. Whereas Jane's upbringing in the Reed household was abusive and solitary, the Rivers actively include her—a near stranger—as a member of their family by inviting Jane to take tea with them. The importance of maintaining communal and family ties is essential to the continued success of Great Britain, for its strength relies on its citizens. By creating a national community, bonds (imaginable ones) produce a nation as a strong and powerful force within the world. In *Jane Eyre*, tea drinking reflects this need for community and unity. Those who refuse to succumb to this ideal—the Reeds and Lowood School—face negative consequences while those who uphold the cultural meanings of tea—Miss Temple, Thornfield Hall, and the Rivers—receive rewards. Brontë seems to understand that community is vital to the success of the nation and through her descriptions of tea practices, she informs her readers of the importance of maintaining close relationships facilitated through tea. Through these literary depictions, the author supports the consumption of tea as a method of supporting personal ties, which creates community and a strong sense of British nationalism.

The Mill on the Floss

In *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), George Eliot utilizes tea in two ways: first as a means to demonstrate and support appropriate British behavior through the serving and taking of tea and, second, to illustrate British superiority over other cultures. In doing so, Eliot informs her readers how the beverage can represent British ideals and mores that allow the nation to set itself apart from other nations, including the Empire's colonial holdings and European neighbors. In situating tea in this manner, Eliot, like the other novelists in this chapter, subscribes to the cultural meanings that many Britons associated with the commodity.

Due to its cultural association with British mores and virtues, Eliot uses tea as a means to mediate good behavior within the *Mill on the Floss*. After a scuffle, Maggie and Lucy return to the Tulliver house covered in mud. Mrs. Tulliver refuses to allow them to take tea in the parlor and informs the two young girls that they must "have theirs in an ignominious manner in the kitchen" (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 97). Though Mrs. Tulliver still allows Maggie and Lucy to have tea, she does not permit them join in for afternoon tea in the formal parlor. Ultimately, Mrs. Tulliver prohibits the girls from engaging in an essential aspect of the tea table: community. This duality is interesting. Firstly, though Maggie and Lucy have been disobedient, they are still entitled to a cup of tea, which demonstrates how vital the beverage was to everyday life and symbolizes the expectation that every Briton would receive a cup.

Secondly, their removal from the tea table illustrates Maggie's departure from civilized British ideas. While playing outside with Tom and Lucy, Maggie becomes upset when she feels left out. In retribution, Maggie, with a "fierce thrust of her small brown arm...push[ed] poor little pink-and-white Lucy into the cow-trodden mud" (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 95). This action deviates from the expected ideals for young English women during this period. Maggie is described as "half wild" and "like a gypsy" who refuses to accept British social expectations for

women (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 99). Maggie is notable for having a “brown arm,” an indication that she spends too much time outside (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 95). Her darker coloring and headstrong nature demonstrate Maggie’s deviation from the norm. Throughout the novel, she consistently pushes against the boundaries placed upon her, which often gets her in trouble. Maggie’s consequence for pushing Lucy into the mud and straying from the norms of female behavior is banishment from afternoon tea in the parlor, which excludes her from participating in community. She must maintain and support the required social expectations if she desires to be a part of the British social system.

Maggie’s relegation to the kitchen for tea is a common form of discipline for her disobedience throughout *The Mill on the Floss*. Maggie receives constant scolding for her unladylike behavior that is not representative of a virtuous English girl. To escape the social expectations of home, she runs away to live with the gypsies since it is the “only way of escaping [the] opprobrium” (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 99). However, while Maggie believes she wants to escape British life, she cannot leave behind the customs she has gleaned from it. Though she is under the impression that gypsies live a less constricted life, when she discovers they do not have the essential commodity of tea in their possession, she finds she cannot exist within gypsy culture. After running away to live with the gypsies “in a little brown tent on the commons,” Maggie becomes hungry, requesting “I want my tea so” from her newfound gypsy acquaintances (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 99). Rather than receiving a warm cup of the drink, an older gypsy woman hands her a “lump of dry bread, which she had taken from a bag of scraps, and a piece of cold bacon” (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 104). This food is a far cry from the nicely set tea table of the Tulliver home with its fresh baked goods and steaming tea. When Maggie asks for “some bread-and-butter and tea instead,” an older gypsy woman tells her “We've got no tea nor butter”

(Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 104). While Maggie has attempted to escape the confines of British society, she finds that tea is such a “visible and remarked upon sign of [her]— and [her] nation’s superiority” that she cannot remain living with gypsies (Zlotnik 75). Eliot depicts Maggie’s experience in the gypsy camp in strong contrast to the Tulliver home. Maggie notes the gypsies have a crude manner of speaking, eat with antiquated “brown dish with an iron spoon,” and have a dirty appearance that is directly in contrast with her idealized version of British superiority (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 105). This “uncivilized” manner of living causes her to regard the gypsies as inferior to her because their practices are different from those Maggie associates with conventional and acceptable British society. The gypsies’ disregard for what Maggie considers a vital British custom creates strife between herself and these nomadic people. In constructing the gypsies as uncivilized through their lack of involvement in tea drinking, Eliot illustrates to readers the importance of upholding British customs. In this way, Maggie’s agitation that the gypsies don’t have tea demonstrates her acceptance of British cultural meanings and her desire to maintain them, regardless of where she goes. By showing this strong need to maintain Maggie’s Englishness, Eliot illustrates to readers the importance of upholding British virtues and ideals in order to set themselves apart from those who are less refined or marginal to national identity, like the gypsies.

Tea is also a vehicle for Mrs. Tulliver and her three sisters, Mrs. Deane, Pullet, and Glegg, to converse, argue, and gossip regarding matters of their immediate and extended families. During an afternoon tea at the Tulliver home, Mrs. Tulliver serves her guests tea on “a small tray, on which she had placed her silver teapot, a specimen teacup and saucer, the castors, and sugar-tongs” (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 198). Having a tea service within the home demonstrates the expendable capital that the Tullivers possess as part of their socioeconomic

class. Their choice to spend their money on a tea service shows their desire to uphold British values as well as their subscription to the cultural meaning of tea as a commodity purchased and used within their household. Though the teapot is silver—rather than made of china, a more expensive imported good—the Tullivers demonstrate their expendable income through the purchase of additional tea implements—the sugar tongs and castors—socially differentiating the family from less wealthy Britons who did not have the economic ability to include otherwise unnecessary tools. This tea service allows Mrs. Tulliver to serve tea to both her immediate family—Mr. Tulliver, Tom, and Maggie—but also to guests, including her sisters and other visitors. She can proudly display the prosperity of the family mill through the use of a beautiful tea service. It also allows her to maintain a sense of propriety amongst her wealthier sisters, especially once the family begins to have money issues later in the novel.

When Mr. Tulliver loses his mill, he cannot support the family financially. Like the Bartons, the Tullivers must sell off their possessions in order to pay bills and creditors. One of the items Eliot notes as being sold is Mrs. Tulliver tea service. For Mrs. Tulliver “loath[es]” the idea of someone outside the family—“travellers and folks”—buying it from the Golden Lion and knowing that she will never be able to purchase it back. The tea set is incredibly personal to her as it was “brought when I was married . . . [and has] my letters on it,-see here, E. D.” (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 198). The teapot is central to familial and community life within the Tulliver household. Selling off this symbol of Englishness means that the Tullivers no longer have the ability to serve tea and establish community with others. Without the tea set, the family’s identity as British citizens and their class status is lost.

Additionally, the family’s financial situation means they have “renounced [certain items] in favor of a more elastic commodity.” Mr. Deane, Mrs. Tulliver’s brother-in-law, commits to

“buy Mrs. Tulliver a pound of tea now and then” to supplement their meager pantry so they can continue to imbibe the beverage (Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* 227). Though not a life sustaining food since it lacks vital nutrients, tea represents England, its people, and economic prosperity. The Tullivers’ inability to afford the commodity demonstrates the turmoil that family is embroiled in. The absence of tea symbolizes the lack of community that befalls the family once the mill is lost and Mr. Tulliver declares bankruptcy. For the family, the lack of tea denotes their economic dearth but also represents that slow downfall of the family since they no longer can participate in English culture.

As in Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*, tea drinking in *The Mill on the Floss* symbolizes British home life and culture. To be included at the tea table, individuals must uphold English social mores and ideals. Maggie’s relegation to the kitchen after she returns home covered in mud is because she hasn’t represented herself appropriately as a woman and English citizen. Similarly, we can observe the Tulliver family’s hardships through the selling of their household tea service and the struggle to purchase tea for family consumption. Their inability to participate in this vital British practice reflects negatively on the family, their home life, and their connection with society. Once the Tullivers fall on hard times and lose the tea set, their participation in familial and social community suffers. Maggie finds herself exiled from the town and embroiled in scandal after spending an unchaperoned night with Stephen Guest. Tom distances himself from his family following their financial ruin and attempts to better his life at the expense of sacrificing family relationships. At the conclusion of the novel, both characters drown as they attempt to find dry land during a flood. While Tom’s actions are less socially harmful than Maggie’s, he failed to aid his family in their time of need and shirked his duty to them. In doing so, he removes himself from the community of his family through isolation. It seems that the

choices these two characters have made prevent them from rejoining English society because they have not upheld the cultural ideals expected of them.

Great Expectations

Known for his social critique of nineteenth-century England, Charles Dickens offers in *Great Expectations* (1861) an excellent example of the social and cultural revolution occurring within Great Britain during the period. The increase in economic capital provided individuals with the ability to ascend the social hierarchy and improve their living circumstances more easily than previous generations. In *Great Expectations*, the main protagonist, Philip “Pip” Pirrip, rises above his working class origins into the middle class through the anonymous monetary donations of a benefactor who seeks to turn Pip into a “gentleman.” We can observe the transformations in Pip’s environment, economic, and social status through the various scenes of tea drinking within the novel. Though these scenes demonstrate the importance of maintaining British ideals of community and relationship building, they also signify the varying ways in which the different classes took tea. Due to the characters’ different economic means, the beverage’s consumption also becomes a signifier of status and place within the social strata.

Even though the Gargery household is working class and their disposable income is sparse, they’re still able to afford the “necessary luxury” of tea. While their tea table is set simply and the atmosphere casual, they are nonetheless enjoying a vitally important aspect of their identity as British citizens. The importance of this ceremony is illustrated through the ritualized process of “set[ting] the tea-thing” by Mrs. Joe as she prepares to serve tea to the family (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 10). Even though the family can partake of this particular national pastime, their social and economic status is depicted within the scene. Pip notes that Mrs. Joe has a “trenchant way of cutting our bread and butter for us, that never varied”: she cuts a “very thick

round” off a bread loaf, equally portioning it for Pip and Joe, along with “some butter (but not too much)” (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 14). Mrs. Joe practices household economy through her meticulous method of serving tea, which demonstrates the family’s limited income. While their afternoon tea lacks a lavish spread, its inclusion still demonstrates the importance of the practice within their daily diet. It is still a small meal between lunch and dinner as everyone is provided bread, butter, and tea. Though basic, Dickens was committed to depicting a varying strata of British society and this scene illustrates the family’s desire to partake in the pastime, which demonstrates their place within the nation as its citizens.

At the beginning of *Great Expectations*, Pip encounters Magwitch, an escaped convict who is starving, shackled, and on the run after escaping a prison ship. He demands Pip bring him “wittles” (e.g., food) to eat and that if Pip fails to do so, his liver will “be tore out, roasted, and ate” (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 6). Terrified of the convict, Pip attempts to acquiesce to Magwitch’s request. Unfortunately, Mrs. Joe closely monitors the family’s food budget due to their economic status, which forces Pip to sacrifice his afternoon tea bread portion. Considering that the afternoon tea’s initial purpose was to avoid mid-afternoon hunger, Pip’s decision to give up his bread is a sacrifice as it means he will remain hungry until dinner is served in the evening. However, Pip believes it is a “resolution necessary to the achievement of this purpose I found to be quite awful” and consequently places his “bread and butter down my leg” (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 10). The relinquishing of his afternoon meal severely impacts Pip’s mood. Described as depressed and unsociable, Pip finds he cannot enjoy his afternoon tea or the companionship of Joe. This “quite awful” decision also depicts how Pip has lost his capacity to enjoy tea and “enter upon our usual friendly competition” with Joe. Whereas Joe is eating his bread and butter with gusto, Pip keeps his “yellow mug of tea on one knee, and untouched bread

and butter on the other” (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 11). Since the establishment of the tea table is vital for community building, Pip’s inability to engage with Joe coincides with Pip’s misery over the situation in which he has found himself with Magwitch. Afternoon tea serves not as a place for Pip to relax and converse with Joe, but as an accomplice to his ill deeds.

Additionally, Pip will also steal from the household to procure food, which threatens to break the bonds of familial community should he be caught by Joe or his sister. This internal conflict within Pip is outwardly portrayed as Joe attempts to liven his younger companion’s spirits but cannot do so. The utilization of tea aids in amplifying Pip’s agony, and many readers would have connected with this scene through their own experiences in tea drinking.

Later in *Great Expectations*, Pip relocates to London in order to begin his studies and become a “gentleman.” His ascension up the social ladder transforms the methods and environment in which he takes tea. When he becomes a club member of The Finches of the Grove, Pip describes it as a place with “gratifying social ends . . . so invariably accomplished” that represent his newly arisen place within the middle class. Membership in The Finches of the Grove supplies Pip with a place to meet other men in similar social and economic situations as himself (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 273). Pip has ascended to an economical level where he has more expendable capital, which essentially changes how he consumes food. He notes that club “members should dine expensively once a fortnight” (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 273). Pip’s economic abundance is in stark contrast to the Gargery household with Mrs. Joe’s economical method of measuring and serving tea. Pip is no longer relegated to only eating at home but has the choice to eat out if he chooses. This expendable income gives Pip the ability to “take care that [Estella has] some tea” on their journey to Richmond. Previously he would have been unable to purchase afternoon tea for himself and Estella since afternoon tea is expensive on

the road and is an activity typically reserved for the more higher classes. However, Pip's ascension into the middle class affords him this luxury and demonstrates his newly acquired economic status. The socio-economic class to which Pip has ascended gives him the opportunity to stop at the Inn Yard in Surrey Richmond upon a return trip to London for rest and food. The experience of being served by a waiter was an activity only the upper classes could afford. When Pip and Estella stop during their journey to dine at a restaurant, it depicts their separation them from the lower classes. Though the pair are dining out, many "towns, stations and on public transport [which] mimicked the safe environment of the home" that ultimately extended "domesticity into public spaces and alleviat[ed] worries over travel and the dangers it could represent" (Gray, "Moveable Feast" 54). Providing tea within these places also demonstrates the importance of the beverage to the English consumer. Its popularity founded the demand for afternoon tea served within public spaces for individuals unable to drink the beverage at home. The need to still have the option to indulge in afternoon tea demonstrates its importance within English society. For Pip and Estella, the Inn Yard is a convenient and comfortable place to satiate their hunger with an experience similar to what Pip and Estella would have expected within a domestic space. A waiter provides "a teaboard, cups and saucers, plates, knives and forks...[and] spoons" along with a "meek little muffin...a soft bit of butter in a quantity of parsley, a pale loaf with a powdered head" and large tea urn (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 205). Though the spread is basic, it still illustrates the expectations that Pip and Estrella would have expected from afternoon tea. They eat a light meal with their tea, which helps satisfy their hunger during their journey. Even though they aren't within a domestic setting, the pair can converse and spend time together. While their relationship doesn't progress in the manner in which Pip

would prefer, it does provide a space in which he and Estella can discuss her plans in London and for the future.

Dickens is a master at utilizing food to demonstrate the social, cultural, and moral environment and personalities of his characters. Within *Great Expectations*, readers observe another level of understanding into the lives of the characters through their consumption of tea. Even though he obviously differentiates between characters through the methods by which they drink the beverage, he also demonstrates that every Briton, regardless of social and economic standing, has the opportunity and ability to consume this beverage and to be a part of the nation's community. This important and all-encompassing opportunity to drink tea ultimately establishes a consumer meaning surrounding tea that encourages its consumption and leads to increased purchasing by Britons, which helps to continually support the commodity as essential to British culinary and social life. Even though Dickens demonstrates tea's vital role within all of English culture, his depictions of specific procedures of consumption separates these social spheres by associating particular class meanings around tea drinking. Illustrating these differences and their origin in the national pastime of tea drinking encourages its nationwide consumption while still portraying how the different factions within England associate with tea.

Conclusion

The establishment of tea as a symbol vital to England and the British Empire's national and culinary identity was not by chance. A strong promotion by nineteenth-century tea growers and sellers increased consumerism—as seen within the period's print advertisements—that aided in the establishment of tea as a common item within the British home. The expansion of the market for tea helped institute the beverage as a symbol of the country's national identity and cultural superiority. These specific cultural meanings helped construct a distinct understanding of

what it meant to be “British” and this ideal is exemplified within the period’s advertising and marketing. These marketing campaigns relied heavily on British ideas of national identity and dominance to appeal to their consumer’s specific ethnocentrism of superiority and nationalism, as noted in Twinings, United Kingdom Tea Company, and Lipton’s print advertisements.

Drinkers consumed these British-produced teas to demonstrate their support of England and the Empire through their adherence to British practices. By purchasing tea, consumers supported both their beliefs and nation, allowing them to be active participants within the British Empire.

While marketing and advertising aided in convincing consumers to purchase certain goods, other propaganda forms were not as pronounced in their intentions. Literature is a form of marketing often overlooked, even though it is an extremely effective and powerful tool. While the primary inclusion of tea within these novels was not to increase tea sales or support the presence of the Empire within tea-producing colonies, these texts still played a monumental role in establishing the beverage as a vital part within the British social and cultural landscape. Important literary figures such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Charlotte Bronte utilized established cultural meaning of tea to connect with readers through a shared common experience. These inclusions essentially supported and maintained these ideals. By portraying tea within these novels, the authors adhered to established consumer meanings while also positioning tea as a symbol of community. Their novels aided in the formation of tea as an instigator of both local and national relationships and demonstrated to readers how the beverage’s consumption allowed readers to connect with their fellow Britons regardless of their social, economic, or geographical status.

Ultimately, both direct advertising by tea companies and indirect marketing by novels helped establish consumer meanings and ethnocentrism tied to the commodity and instituted the

beverage as a central symbol and embodiment of Britishness within Great Britain. Even today, over a century removed from the nineteenth-century, tea is still a vital part of British social life. This cultural appreciation for tea is a result of the works of nineteenth century authors who represented the beverage's importance within both England and the Empire as a method to connect people to form stronger bonds personally and nationally.

CHAPTER TWO

Ritual Transformation: Mixing the Colonial Out of Rum Punch

Introduction

Arguably, no other British good epitomizes the effects of colonialism better than rum. A true commodity of colonial experimentation, the alcohol was transformed from an unrefined byproduct of sugar production to a major element within British cooking and baking. In modern British culinary recipes, rum is a critical culinary component found in various punches, confectionary glazes, and, most importantly, Christmas pudding. However, without the colonial acquisition of Caribbean territories by the British Empire in the seventeenth century, it's unclear whether this vital alcoholic product would have such a prominent place within the British kitchen. Rum's history of transformation and its use as a symbol of British propriety during the nineteenth century can be observed within the period's literature. Characters' various methods of consumption relate profoundly to their moral and social portrayal and role within these novels. Throughout the period, from rum's original distillation on a humid plantation in the West Indies to its establishment as a respectable beverage for middle-class gatherings, rum punch encapsulates how colonialism, the economy, and nationalism promote and institute methods of ingestion that depicts characters' morality (or lack thereof) through their depiction in literature.

The Victorian English are considered "the first people to be so closely identified with their belongings" that the items used by these individuals have come to define their people, culture, and history (Plotz 2). As the British Empire expanded and the English immigrated to the imperial colonies for a new—and sometimes better—life, the British brought items to their new homes representative of their life in England. In doing so, Britons realized these "precious relics overseas [to] connect family [and] England" and establish a "direct conduit back to a place

nostalgically construed as an alma mater” and (Plotz xv, 18). The English utilized objects and practices to exemplify and maintain their Englishness. As John Plotz states in *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move*, the participation of “afternoon tea on a foreign verandah came to stand in for England—although the tea might be Indian, and the cups Chinese willow-ware” (Plotz 18). For the English, it was the practice of these British customs that set them apart from a colony’s native inhabitants and built a link back to England to ensure the English remained English. Edible commodities can be situated in this same way. As the English moved around the world as travelers, employees, and immigrants, they brought with them food customs to reproduce in their new home. By the middle of the nineteenth century, “recreating home had become a nearly sacred injunction for English” as they navigated the new marketplace to find similar foods to reproduce away from Great Britain (Plotz 18). While recipes for food dishes aren’t tangible like physical objects they are important to understanding community building outside of Great Britain within the British colonies. The transport of rum and its various incarnation both into England and abroad situates the beverage as a portable commodity. Acknowledging the alcohol’s travels is essential to understanding its use as a signifier of Englishness in all its forms.

Rum’s inhabitation within nineteenth-century British literature establishes the alcohol as a portable commodity both in a colonial and British standpoint. The alcohol was first imported into England from the British West Indies by British sailors who obtained a fondness for it during their service. Later on, the middle class “improved” grog through the creation of rum punch and the concoction became a staple in middle class social functions. Rum punch’s increasing popularity in England established it as a symbol of national identity and encouraged emigrants to other parts of the British Empire to take the recipe of rum punch with them to be recreated in the

colonies. Transporting this “portable commodity” abroad as a representation of Englishness aided in instituting and upholding England’s culture and ideals, which helped set the English apart from the native colonists.

The pervasive references to rum punch in nineteenth-century British literature are key to understanding the transformation of rum from a sailor’s liquor to its status as a representation of British community and superiority. The removal of rum’s colonial roots through its adulteration with sugar, citrus, and water made the liquor palatable to Britons. Refining the otherwise intense alcoholic taste of rum by masking it with the strong flavor of citrus and the sweetness of sugar removed its colonial origins. This change also represents how the British Empire established mastery and possession over its colonies through the reappropriation of rum, a product that represented colonialism and the savagery these territories possessed to the British. This conversion, in a way, symbolizes the British Empire’s desire to “civilize” and “refine” its colonies by bringing its knowledge and culture to these acquired locations, which can only be done through the shrinking of colonial influences and the acceptance of British practices. The consumption of rum punch by British subjects then indicates Britons’ support of the Empire’s presence within the West Indies and the continued subjugation of this colony. In choosing to mix and drink rum punch, the British demonstrate in their novels their endorsement of colonialism and accepted cultural mores and practices.

However, while the blending of rum with other ingredients to dilute it is illustrated as a respectable and refined beverage for British society, nineteenth-century novels also depict the downside to rum consumption. The misuse of the beverage, whether it’s the inability to mix rum appropriately or the overconsumption of rum punch, can have negative effects on the consumer. Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, and George Eliot utilize their

novels to demonstrate the ill effects of the overdrinking of rum. For these authors, too much rum punch can lead to drunkenness, which can cause embarrassment or lead a character to act out in violence. The drinking of pure rum without any additives is similarly depicted especially negatively within the period's literature. Its ingestion is often associated with evil and a moral removal from society. These negative associations indicate to readers the importance of diluting ("Englishing") rum to preserve social conventions and the morality of the nation.

Literary scenes of rum consumption helped shape suitable social expectations for the consumption of the drink. Showing it as an important part of English social life depicted to readers how rum facilitated and established relationships. This promotion of localized gatherings through village dances and balls enticed readers to emulate these scenes of gaiety and community. Rum punch became a central beverage for these gatherings and aided in the foundation of the cultural meanings of community and relationship building around rum. The increased demand for rum ensured the continued presence of the British Empire within their West Indian colonies in order to meet the needs of English customers. We can observe these finely tuned associations of good and evil that embody rum and the particular methods authors used to show the suitable and improper ways in which to consume the alcohol. These social constructions, which still hold true within modern-day English society, depict a culture obsessed with maintaining their aura of superiority and power through a finely designed public image made possible through its literature.

History of Rum

Distilled from molasses, rum boasts the achievement of being the first colonial-produced liquor within the New World. Even though the beverage is closely tied to the European need for sugar, historians note that information regarding the drink's history and background is slight.

Considering that within the “history of sugar, [there are] overflowing archives [that] provide enough information to lead to mental obesity,” yet for “rum, it’s a starvation diet” (Curtis 15). Even though rum history is lacking, we cannot discuss the importance of this beverage within nineteenth-century England and the British Empire without first talking about the importance of sugar in relation to rum. The taste for sugar that permeated Great Britain led to the colonization of its West Indian territories, which is an important factor in the creation of rum and its subsequent place within the British marketplace and home. Sugar’s vital role within England’s culinary history aided in fixing rum as a key beverage within the nation.

Like most of Great Britain’s imperial expansion, economic growth and the demand for particular commodities played a large role in the Empire’s colonization of their West Indian territories. The British Empire acquired Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands in the seventeenth century; Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago in the eighteenth; and added St. Lucia, Trinidad, and British Guiana in the early nineteenth. The British were also “present in the Bahamas, in parts of the Virgin Islands, and in British Honduras.” To satisfy the “growing demand in Europe for the sweetener,” the Empire designated part of its Caribbean holdings to supply the overseas market for sugar (Hall 69). Barbados and Jamaica were specifically “devoted to sugar”; Jamaica in particular was “organised for sugar production; that was its purpose and place in the British Empire” (Porter 470, Hall 72). The increasing affordability of the sweetener led to its status as a staple within the British home, due almost entirely to slave labor. Sidney W. Mintz explains in *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, that to guarantee these plantations could produce enough available sugar for England, the Empire “import[ed] vast numbers of people in chains from elsewhere to work them” to “produce things of which they were not the principal consumers”. As the sweetener became more widely

available and affordable, Britons became “consume[rs of] things they had not produced,” which ensured the West Indies’ colonization and the continued growth and manufacture of sugar for British culinary enjoyment. These plantations were successful “as far as the [British] were concerned” as this cycle of cheap labor and increased consumerism ultimately “earn[ed] profit for [the British]” within their overseas holdings (Mintz xxiv). The success of these West Indian plantations ensured that, by 1800, the sweetener became an integral aspect of the British diet and, by the end of the nineteenth century, made up one-fifth of the caloric intake of the British (Hall 69-70). The high production of sugar to satisfy British consumers’ appetite for the good played a vital role in the origination and manufacturing of rum during the nineteenth century. Both of these commodities held significant roles within the British culinary repertoire and within the period’s literature.

Even though rum established itself as an important food commodity within England, its journey embodies the transformation of cultural meanings through appropriation. Initially, the perception of the Empire’s West Indian colonies was negative. These territories were “depicted as a place of drunkenness, prostitution, and crime,” ruled by pirates and other dregs of society. Rum was a high-consumption drink for early settlers because of its inexpensive availability, and the alcohol came to represent this disorderly and immoral island. However, as the British obtained more control and rule over the islands, the “buccaneers had been displaced by planters” who instilled order through their relationships with the British government (Hall 70). As the British West Indies lost its wild and uncivilized designation, rum slowly transformed into an acceptable beverage for civilized peoples. Part of this change can be attributed to the importance of sugar within the British diet. The presence of the British within the West Indies transformed the lawlessness and disorder through the formation of government and stability, ultimately

altering the cultural meanings associated with the West Indies from negative to positive. This evolution is similarly representative of the transformation of rum. Initially positioned as the drink of the colonial and lower classes, the alcohol transitioned to become a staple within the British diet and the nation.

In order to understand rum's production, we must be familiar with the process of sugar manufacturing. To obtain white, granulated sugar, sugarcane must first go through a refining process. Originally, early sugar manufacturers produced sugar by crushing the cane, boiling the resulting juice, and leaving the boiled syrup to cool and cure in clay pots. During the curing process, the "waste matter bound up between the sugar crystals [would] ooze out" of the holes in the pots, leaving the sugar behind. This viscous liquid that "resisted crystallization or further refining" is what modern consumers know as molasses (Curtis 24). Fermented molasses is what transforms into rum.

However, early Caribbean sugar producers lacked a use for molasses, viewing it as a "waste product," and often discarded it. The amount of molasses produced in comparison to the amount of sugar is substantial, though: for every two pounds of sugar, a pound of molasses is produced (Curtis 24). Since manufacturers lacked market demand for the sticky, thick liquid, which was also considered "too bulky to ship economically," molasses was habitually dumped into the ocean or given as food to plantation slaves. Some West Indians attempted to repurpose it by using molasses as mortar, a cure for syphilis, and as feed for cows (Curtis 25). These residents certainly didn't lack imagination when it came to utilizing molasses, so it is no wonder that someone eventually tried their hand at distilling it, ultimately producing one of the most recognizable and heavily consumed alcohols in the world.

Since substantial information on the early history of rum is lacking, there isn't a clear explanation regarding who originally produced rum, the exact location of its initial distillation, or the reasoning behind its creation. What can be agreed on is that sometime during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "extensive sugar cultivation and the knowledge of distillation made their way through the New World tropics." This information encouraged distillers to experiment with sugar's "waste" product (Curtis 25-26). While no one knows exactly where the "first dram of New World rum dripped out of a still," British-owned Barbados claims the "cultural paternity" of the brew (Curtis 26). Barbados does lack documentation to prove they produced the first bottle of rum, but they can claim the first documented appearance of the alcohol. In a 1652 observance by a visitor to Barbados, he wrote, "the chief fuddling they make in the island is Rumbullion, alias Kill-Divil, and this is made of sugar canes" (Curtis 26). Though brief, the description assigns the cultural meaning of rum as a foreign commodity, associating it specifically as a well-known product ("chief fuddling") of Barbados ("the island") that is produced from sugarcanes, the island's most prevalent crop. The remark depicts to its (likely European) reader its predominance on the island and its fixture as a Barbadian commodity. Additionally, the island claims to house the oldest continuously operating rum distillery, Mount Gay, with records suggesting that the distillery has been producing rum since as early as 1663 (Curtis 26). Even though British Barbados lacks the irrefutable proof of their claim as the original producers of the sugar-based alcohol, the nation has certainly been a key participant in the production and consumption of the beverage for centuries.

Rum's quick popularity within the West Indies is the same reason it took some time for the liquor to become popular within Great Britain. The brew was heralded as an inexpensive substitute to costly imported European wines and spirits with the Caribbean. As it was produced

locally, the taxes often placed on imported alcohol did not apply. Similarly, without a significant market for rum within Europe, the high expense of shipping the commodity across the Atlantic wasn't a feasible business venture. Instead, rum remained primarily a West Indian drink, and its cultural meaning became fixed as a colonial item. However, rum's increasing popularity within the Caribbean and the consistent transportation of British officials, military personnel, and colonists between the West Indies and England played an important role in the alcohol's transition from a colonial beverage to an imperial and national beverage.

The British Royal Navy is seen as one of the most significant factors in increasing the demand for rum within England. Due to the long voyages at sea and the lack of substantial refrigeration, preserving food and drinks aboard naval vessels was a difficult task. Many beverages, including beer and water, would become rancid during these journeys: the taste of beer tended to go off and become malodorous while water would become algae ridden and musty in casks (Curtis 54). In contrast, rum remained fresh during long voyages and did not cause negative health effects, allowing it to become an optimal choice for sailor's liquid rations. Rum ultimately became a crucial commodity during naval expeditions. However, providing these men with large quantities of a highly potent alcohol did have some disastrous consequences for the efficiency of the navy. Rum produced "many fatal effects [upon] their morals as well as their health" and made naval personnel "slaves to every passion" that caused them to abandon their posts (Curtis 57). Admiral Edward Vernon, an eighteenth century British naval officer, saw firsthand the effects rum had upon sailors.¹⁵ Incensed by these issues and believing that the Royal Navy would be unable to perform its duty if called to it, he subsequently proposed a solution to the problem. He knew that eliminating rum from sailors' allowances could potentially

¹⁵ Admiral Vernon served in the West Indies between 1698 and 1712.

“give rise to mutinies or, at the least, a sullen crankiness amongst seamen,” so he advised the dilution of the spirit: for each part of rum, four parts of water were added to counteract rum’s potency. His recipe was successful and by 1756, the drink recipe became codified within the British Navy’s naval code as part of a sailor’s required food ration (Curtis 58). Vernon’s creation and contribution of the recipe even gave birth to the concoction’s name of “grog.” Naval lore states that the admiral had a penchant for wearing a coat made from “grogam,” a “woven fabric stiffened and waterproofed with gum,” which earned him the name “Old Grogam” and subsequently led to rum-and-water becoming known as “grog” in recognition of his involvement (Curtis 58).

Though Vernon’s original recipe of grog was simple, just the mixture of rum and water, it set the foundations for the nineteenth-century version of rum punch. Sailors who found grog undrinkable were allowed to “exchange their salt and bread allotment for ‘sugar and limes to make [grog] more palatable to them’” (Curtis 59). The Navy also discovered that this daily provision of rum aided in combatting scurvy, a common health problem amongst sailors. Though the idea that citrus fruits helped prevent the malady had been acknowledged since the late sixteenth century, it wasn’t until nearly two centuries later in 1795 that the Royal Navy instituted regulations to provide each sailor with a “half-ounce of lemon or lime juice per day ‘to be mixed with grog or wine’” (Curtis 59). The inclusion of citrus improved grog, and through this addition we can begin to observe the creation of rum punch. The British Navy’s inclusion of a regular grog allowance to their sailors is without a doubt a major contributor to rum punch’s eventual popularity within England. The success of the navy abroad contributed to England’s positive association with the military faction. As naval personnel returned to England, they brought with them a preference for grog, which was then introduced to family, friends, and acquaintances. The

Navy's popularity aided in a positive association with the drink and as both military and civilian began to consume grog more frequently, the beverage became ingrained within the British drinking culture and was established as a national drink.

British sailors were given a consistent ration of grog while out at sea. A "daily dose of lemon juice after six weeks at sea" was required through the consumption of "1 gill of rum to 3 of lemon juice and water," with the alcohol "acting as a preservative as well as encouraging takeup" (Burnett 96). This regular ingestion of grog by sailors provided them with an appreciation for the drink, which may have contributed to its initial introduction into England. In 1801, the adult male population of England and Wales was barely more than 2 million, but during the Napoleonic wars, "120,000 served in the Navy," which is about 6% of the population (Burnett 96). This sizeable percentage of the male participation in the Navy meant numerous British families knew a man within its service. The beverage's strong presence within the Royal Navy made it a common aspect of naval life. As men transitioned back into civilian society, they brought with them a preference for the beverage that slowly integrated into their own families and eventually into British society. Their desire to maintain consumption of grog within their civilian diet likely aided in the "disseminated knowledge and appreciation" of the drink within England (Burnett 96). While grog was originally associated with the lower and military classes, its shift into a middle class rum punch provides an excellent demonstration of the power of food.¹⁶ The beverage can be considered a symbol of the transformation of England during the nineteenth-century as its influence became increasingly more global and foreign commodities were introduced into the nation. The acceptance of rum, a good that initially was associated with

¹⁶ This shift from lower to middle class could be attributed to naval officers socializing with the middle class and gentry, like the myriad of officers in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* or "making their fortune" during the Napoleonic war, such as Captain Wentworth in Austen's *Persuasion*, which allowed naval personnel to ascend the social hierarchy.

colonialism and the colonies' lack of civilization, made the alcohol acceptable for the British to ingest. This transformation of its cultural meanings illustrates how the inclusion of the colonies within the British Empire became an integral factor to British life, including its culinary preferences.

Rum Punch

The consistent rationing of grog to sailors transformed the drink to a “more fixed and ceremonial” aspect of everyday life aboard Royal Navy ships. Wayne Curtis notes in *And a Bottle of Rum* that the “time around noon was ‘the pleasantest...of the day,’ since that’s when the ‘piper is called to play *Nancy Dawson* or some other lively tune, a well-known signal that the grog is ready to be served out” (Curtis 59). Sailors would be called up on deck and the purser would “haul to the open deck a premeasured portion” of rum mixed with water and lime to provide “each of the crew [their] allotted one-half cup of rum” that would be drunk before the sailors went back to their duties (Curtis 59). This same ritual would then be repeated in the late afternoon, establishing grog drinking as a regular practice onboard naval ships. The grouping of the entire crew on deck to dispense this beverage demonstrates the early association with the gathering of a community around the punch bowl. Having the sailors come together to receive their portion encouraged socialization and promoted shipboard community.

However, even though the Royal Navy provided its sailors with regular allotments of rum, the alcohol was not popular within England. In 1698, Barbados officially exported 207 gallons of rum to England, whereas Barbadians “drank something on the order of 10 gallons per person per year” in comparison (Curtis 29).¹⁷ During the first half of the eighteenth century, the British-held Barbados and Antigua exported ninety percent of its rum to North America as “no

¹⁷ Curtis notes 207 gallons is likely low since rum smuggling and unrecorded sales to crews of visiting ships were common practices (Curtis 29).

market had yet emerged in England or Europe” for the Caribbean liquor. Instead, gin “accounted for 80 percent of local drinking,” and rum’s share was a mere three percent (Curtis 44, Williams 256). The beverage’s association with the colonies and naval personnel meant it had yet to transform these cultural meanings to become acceptable for British ingestion. Instead, Britons chose to purchase *domestic* spirits, predominately gin and scotch whisky (which accounted for five percent of the nation’s alcohol consumption), illustrating a desire by the English to support their local economy rather than a foreign colonial one (Williams 256). However, as more Britons returned to England as previous residents of the West Indies, as former naval personnel, and as the Empire expanded and introduced more imperial goods into the British marketplace, rum became more popular and aided in the transition of rum as a colonial or naval commodity to one acceptable for English consumption. Part of rum’s popularity in Great Britain can be attributed to the British Parliament’s introduction of high duties on alcohol from foreign countries. These taxes were originally instituted to promote gin purchases by Britons, but the “consequent demand for grain for food, and the dire effects of cheap gin led to the increasing popularity of rum...[especially] in the form of punch” (Williams 256). This influence by the British government on rum purchase, a local (though imported) commodity, aided in establishing its popularity within England. By the latter half of the nineteenth century “2.25 million gallons of rum were [officially] imported into England annually” (Williams 257).¹⁸ As more and more Britons obtained the taste for rum, the market for the liquor within England grew. This increased enjoyment of the commodity encouraged the English to incorporate it into their drinking and eating practices, which likely played a large role in the inclusion of grog, and eventually rum punch, into the nation’s culinary repertoire.

¹⁸ Again, this figure may be higher as undocumented sales from smuggling were widespread.

As rum became available in the English marketplace and the population of returning naval sailors who had consumed grog increased, we can observe its growing use and popularity in British culinary practices. *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, one of the most popular guides to Victorian domesticity for the rising middle class, informs readers that rum is essential to a "good sauce for various boiled puddings" when mixed with butter and sugar (Beeton 141). *Mrs Beeton's* also includes it as a vital ingredient in dishes such as Christmas pudding, mincemeat, and rum sauce. However, the ingestion of rum within punch is a fascinating culinary commodity to examine within the confines of the period's literature. Literary writings provide specific guidelines for its creation and consumption that aided in establishing acceptable drinking practices for Britons. In exchanging "grog" for the more refined "rum punch," the upper classes reclassified the beverage as more acceptable and cultured for their social division.

Even then, rum punch wasn't exactly British in its entirety. While grog may find its roots in the British Caribbean, some historians argue that the English recipe for punch was discovered in another of the Empire's colonies: India. In *Cocktails: A Global History*, Joseph Carlin explains that the word "punch" is derived from the Hindustani word "panch," meaning "five," which refers to the five ingredients originally used in the drink: arrack (a spirit distilled from coconut palm sugar with a taste similar to rum), sugar, lemons, water or tea, and spices (Carlin 26-27). British consumers substituted rum for arrack in rum punch within England because rum was the inexpensive choice, which is likely due to the high taxation instituted by British Parliament on non-imperial and domestic goods. In "Ritual Encounters: Punch Parties and Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century," Karen Harvey notes this was a successful ploy as "arrack made into punch would cost 6s., and a quart of...rum made into punch would cost 4s,"

(Harvey 178). This appeal to the Victorian sense of economy solidified rum as the preferred alcohol within punch's recipe in England.

As rum punch increased in popularity within England, it became a central figure within nineteenth-century social culture. Harvey notes that “punch parties — with the bowls at its centre...underlines how [rum punch's] association was an idea forged out of culture as well as social practice” (Harvey 172). Rum punch ultimately epitomized the influence of the British Empire within the British way of life. The introduction of various commodities from imperial territories and the promotion of these goods by the government through specific taxation influenced Britons' spending habits. This method of creating demand for specific items expanded the consumption of these goods, which increased their presence within the British home. Their popularity and the desire by Britons to maintain appropriate social practices ultimately aided in establishing rum punch—and by association rum—as a vital item to a successful social gathering. Additionally, purchasing the liquor demonstrated a consumer's support of the British Empire and desire to buy imperial goods.

This change from naval spirit to domestic English product provides a fascinating look at how cultural meanings can transform how commodities are utilized in society through buyer habits. Though rum punch is comprised mainly of nonnative ingredients—rum, sugar, spices, and citrus—the method of its creation at the hand of a Briton aids in its alteration and the establishment of the consumer meanings connected with it. Though each separate good has associations as an unrefined colonial import, their combination essentially transforms them from multiple foreign items to a singular British drink. By blending these goods together, the “unBritish” attributes are refined, transforming them into a beverage suitable for British consumption. Similarly, the mixing of colonial goods to be drunk by British citizens represents

the blending of these multiple cultures. Ingesting rum punch symbolizes both the colonizer appropriating the goods of its colonized but also the merging of two cultures through the blending of culinary goods

Also important to note is that even though the creation of rum punch removed foreign stigmas, the methods of producing rum punch were still utilized to separate social classes within England. Whereas rum punch has associations of bourgeois mores and principles, grog was still a beverage that symbolized the working classes. Rum punch's incorporation of sugar to the rum and water mixture of grog elevated the drink from a coarse sailor's beverage to one appropriate for the refined palettes of the middle class. Designating grog and rum punch in these ways helped solidify the social hierarchy within England. Appropriating these specific rum drinks for the classes symbolizes the intricate social system within the nation. While the reappropriation of rum into another food separates it from its colonial origins, we can still observe how the terms "grog" and "rum punch" are utilized within nineteenth-century texts to uphold a strict class structure. Though these two recipes are similar, the exclusion of certain ingredients and objects in regards to punch consumption establishes the beverage as a middle-class food. Harvey comments in *Ritual Encounters* that:

Not all drinks were the same, either as substance or commodity, and drinks were characterized through a process combining chemical, material, economic, social and cultural factors. The combination of alcohol, sugar, fruit and spice made punch energizing, enlivening and palatable. The evidence for [rum] consumption suggests that it occupied a broad middling position in the market of alcoholic drinks, distinguished not only from the cheaper drinks and their typical sites of consumption but also from the more expensive wines and their clear association

with gentility, though overlapping to some extent with both. In contrast to some other alcoholic drinks, the cost, spaces and objects tie punch not to the labouring or elite propertied classes, but rather to a more indistinct middling group. Yet dominating what we can term the culture of punch was the notion that this was a drink of which all might partake. (Harvey 180)

Though rum punch was seemingly depicted as a beverage that all British citizens could and did imbibe, the beverage was predominantly consumed by the middle class. Since they were able to purchase the expensive and imported ingredients to produce the drink, consumption of punch set the middle class apart from the working class. The lower echelons typically lacked both the financial ability to purchase quality ingredients and the housewares in which to serve it (such as the punchbowl). However, they still possessed the economic means to purchase the ingredients for grog (rum and sugar) and thus the precursor to rum punch became associated with the lower classes.

Similarly, while the middle classes were unable to afford the more expensive wines and spirits purchased by the wealthy ranks, they demonstrated their economic prosperity through their purchasing power, which displayed their economic and social standing. While the middle class lacked the economic means to emulate the purchasing choices of the upper classes, they did possess the monetary ability to obtain quality commodities. These consumption practices distinguished them from the working class and their capability to mix rum punch (rather than grog) symbolized their bourgeois prosperity and set them apart from the lower classes and improved their social capital. These differences in buying habits and practices indicate how food can be utilized to uphold particular social groups through the creation of class specific foods.

However, even though these two classes had differing rum drinking practices, their inclusion of rum within grog and rum punch and the importance of these drinks in their social and cultural practices aided in the establishment of an imagined community that crossed class boundaries. Even though these individuals were separated by class and economic boundaries, they could still demonstrate their support of Great Britain and their place as British citizens through the purchase and consumption of rum, ultimately supporting the cultural meaning of rum as an integral aspect and demonstration of British life. While the recipes for the two beverages varies slightly, the similarities between grog and rum punch—rum diluted by water and other ingredients—assisted in uniting the nation’s citizens.

We can observe literary support for these class ideals within the period’s texts. In *The Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857), George Eliot depicts servants drinking grog in their quarters, while the middle classes imbibe rum punch during their community assemblies. Though the recipes are nearly identical—grog lacks spices and tends to be sweeter—their respective names hold connotations of different class practices and types of social gatherings. Even though grog and rum punch are utilized as class signifiers, they both essentially promote the importance of socialization and community building amongst each class (though it is telling that there isn’t any mixing of classes when these drinks are consumed). Establishing these cultural meanings for grog and rum punch aids in creating a sense of nationhood amongst all citizens by fixing these beverages as symbols and central figures of social functions. This meaning influences readers’ understanding of their place as citizens within Great Britain: in imbibing the beverage, they demonstrate their citizenship and camaraderie with other Britons.

While the consumption of grog and rum punch is typically characterized in a positive way to promote community—as well as the sale of rum to support the British Empire’s presence

in the West Indies—authors also depict the *negative* effects the alcohol could have on a person both inwardly and outwardly to their audiences. If a character consumes the beverage unadulterated before the connotations of colonialism and foreignness have been removed, adverse consequences typically befall the individual. Numerous literary depictions are adverse: characters described as vile, violent, and uncivilized are typified as evil and morally corrupt. The harshness of undiluted rum seems to pair well with one of Charles Dickens’ best-known villains, Daniel Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), as well as the robbers from Wilkie Collins’ *Mr. Wray’s Cash-Box* (1851). By constructing these characters and their drinking habits in this way, the literature of the period demonizes the unadulterated colonial commodity as being unsuitable for sophisticated British consumption. These descriptions illustrate to readers that the only appropriate method in which to ingest rum is through the ritual refining of the liquor in the creation of rum punch. Establishing something left out shows the importance of civilizing both its colonies and the goods received from them, specifically through the culinary symbolization of the refinement of rum, citrus, and sugar into punch within these literary works.

Rum in Literature

Examining fictional representations of culinary practices and their impact on consumer habits offers another method in which to examine the importance of food within a particular society. Acknowledging the literary influences that persuade individuals to purchase specific items also aids in understanding the cultural meanings that were constructed around certain foodstuffs. The influx of foreign goods into nineteenth-century England had an immense impact on how Britons ate, which influenced their own grasp of their place both as domestic English subjects and global citizens of the British Empire. Unlike the negative character and moral portrayals in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Mr. Wray’s Cash-Box*, we can observe positive

representations in novels such as *The Scenes of Clerical Life* and *David Copperfield* through characters' drinking of rum punch. Through these positive or negative models, readers can understand and replicate the proper methods for rum ingestion that aided in establishing rum punch as a symbol of "Britishness" and its superiority.

The mixing of rum with other ingredients is a vital practice for differentiating morality and immorality as well as an individual's adherence to a society's established social standards in literature. Socially acceptable practices of rum drinking are depicted through the consumption of punch during communal gatherings where amiable and genteel participants are shown creating and upholding familial and fraternal relationships. Ingesting rum either unadulterated or in isolation is shown as inappropriate and immoral. The characters of Quilp as well as Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes (*Mr. Wray's Cash-Box*) illustrate how rum should be consumed socially and in moderation; failure to do so can have dire consequences. Through these scenes, Britons are shown that becoming disassociated from established cultural, moral, and social norms or surrounding themselves with people who don't adhere to British practices can only cause harm. Instead, Britons should combine rum with water, sugar, citrus, and spices to transform rum into a domestic product appropriate for English consumption. We can observe how nineteenth century literary representations established the need to remove foreign influences in rum. Various characters illustrate to readers the importance of transforming the colonial influence of rum through its transformation into a British beverage, which symbolized the civilizing power of the British Empire throughout the world.

The Old Curiosity Shop

The juxtaposition that epitomizes the different methods of rum consumption is especially notable in Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841). The novel includes numerous

illustrations of characters ingesting rum both in its unadulterated state and as a punch. These scenes aid in the creation of cultural meanings and establish socially appropriate methods and situations for rum drinking. Specifically, however, *The Old Curiosity Shop* stands as a warning to readers of the negative effects the liquor can potentially produce. As one of Dickens' most notably evil characters, Quilp is utilized to alert readers to the harmful effects of imbibing unadulterated rum. Quilp, described as sly, cunning, and grotesque, epitomizes wickedness and corruption throughout the novel, which is continuously supported by his alcohol consumption (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 29). As a whole, rum is not characterized as an evil beverage, but it serves as a representation of a character's moral aptitude. Unlike temperance literature, which demonizes alcohol regardless of the situation, Dickens utilizes the different methods of rum drinking within *The Old Curiosity Shop* to depict to his readers the socially appropriate methods of consumption. Dickens contrasts Quilp with other characters' fondness for rum punch and their acquiescence to established cultural traditions. In doing so, Dickens aids in the creation of cultural meanings around rum's use within the English home and the appropriate methods of consumption, which feeds directly into consumer habits and their support of the British economy.

For many literary scholars, Quilp's evil and immorality are epitomized by his manner, physical appearance, and actions, but it can be argued that his eating habits are an extension of this idea.¹⁹ The foods Quilp eats and the way in which he does so support his characterization as an antagonist. Specifically, Quilp's wickedness is solidified through his consumption of pure, unadulterated rum. He habitually swallows the alcohol in its raw form and, in doing so,

¹⁹ See Stanley F. Wainapel's "Dickens and Disability" (1996), Hamilton B. Gibson's "Loneliness in Literature" (2000), and Matthew Beaumont's "The Mystery of Master Humphrey: Dickens, Nightwalking and *The Old Curiosity Shop*" (2014).

symbolically immerses himself within an uncivilized foreign culture. Since the liquor hasn't been refined to mask its colonial properties, Quilp's imbibing of raw rum supports his disregard of British ideals and established norms of transforming the alcohol into punch to differentiate the spirit from its negative colonial origins. Not only does he drink the unadulterated spirit, but the methods in which he ingests it are of particular interest. Quilp is described as a messy and disgusting consumer:

He ate hard eggs, shell and all, devoured gigantic prawns with the heads and tails on, chewed tobacco and water-cresses at the same time and with extraordinary greediness, drank boiling tea without winking, bit his fork and spoon till they bent again, and in short performed so many horrifying and uncommon acts that the women were nearly frightened out of their wits, and began to doubt if he were really a human creature.

(Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 47)

Quilp's lack of decorum is so uncommonly grotesque for his dining companions, Mrs. Quilp and Mrs. Jiniwin, that they have difficulties finding his humanity because he cannot civilly consume his food. Ingesting his food in such an uncouth manor ultimately separates Quilp from his tablemates and, by proxy, other Britons. His actions betray his dissent from contemporary cultural norms and his refusal to emulate and uphold social manners demonstrates his removal from society. Similarly, Quilp's consumption of unadulterated rum *and* the method in which he drinks it sets him apart from other characters in the novel and further supports his antagonistic representation.

Quilp's particular manner of rum drinking "dehumanizes, even demonizes" him and ultimately supports his removal from proper English society. He swallows his rum "fiery and 'raw,' rather than transforming it through the civilizing ceremony of preparing punch" (Cozzi

136). In producing his rum punch, Quilp forgets to “add the water” and when the “saucepan of rum he had been heating is burning hot,” he “raised the hot saucepan to his lips, and deliberately drank off all the spirit it contained” (Cozzi 136, Dickens 465). Not only does Quilp drink the alcohol completely unadulterated, he also consumes it straight from the pan (rather than using a cup) and swallows it scorching hot, which would be painful for most people. His abnormal ingestion sets him apart from the established process of enjoying rum, which also represents his hardened nature that is unaffected by the civilizing effects of rum punch. His cruel and violent behaviors and gruesome death illustrate to Britons the harmful social and physical effects that can occur when they do not perform the ritual transformation that accompanies the creation of rum punch and other practices of civilized Englishness. His actions support his characterization as a villain and someone outside the bounds of English culture. This withdrawal aids in supporting the idea that abnormal culinary practices epitomize an individual’s removal from society and lack of refinement. Though rum has been appropriated as an imperial commodity through the British Empire’s presence within the West Indies, it remains a *colonial* item. The mere possession of the liquor isn’t substantial enough to remove its uncivilized characteristics. Instead, the ritual transformation of creating rum punch and the stirring out of its unwanted properties ensures purchasers do not obtain the undesirable qualities that are prominently evident in Quilp.

This delight in swallowing raw rum is something Quilp also attempts to encourage among his acquaintances. While this could be depicted as a method to establish community and a way in which to connect with others, Quilp’s venture to produce a shared activity is unsuccessful. Brass, Miss Brass, Mrs. Quilp, and Mrs. Jiniwin fail to consume the unadulterated liquid and are shown preferring rum punch. Their inability to share Quilp’s preference for

drinking the raw alcohol demonstrates both Quilp's further removal from English society and the observation that he has no real relationships. As he is unable to form connections with these people, Quilp cannot establish community and be an active participant in English culture. His removal from society, characterized by his antagonistic personality and drinking habits, makes it impossible for him to do so.

The melding of sugar, rum, citrus, and water from four separate ingredients into one drink illustrates the unity established through a shared national identity. At social functions, rum punch is the centerpiece for social gatherings as attendees mingle and imbibe the beverage together. Though these people come from varying backgrounds, they are still unified as citizens of Great Britain who seek to uphold the standards and expectations of English society. Working together, similar to the melding of the ingredients within rum punch, a superior nation is created. The compilation of Quilp's villainy and rejection of English cultural and social customs demonstrate to readers the particular character traits that should be avoided. His unfavorable reception by other characters and demise depict to readers how separation from the nation's moral, social, and cultural expectations can have a negative impact on an individual. Quilp's isolation from community and refusing to be an active participant in English culture in *The Old Curiosity Shop* illustrates to readers that only negative consequences can arise from living an immoral and cruel existence outside of the ideal English society.

Throughout *The Old Curiosity Shop*, rum symbolizes the tenuous relationship between the effects of colonialism and its effects on established English customs and mores in Great Britain. The relationship between Nell and Quilp is of particular note. One could interpret their interrelation as the two different aspects of English society: Nell, a representation of pre-imperial England, one relatively untouched by colonialism, and Quilp, the infringing darkness of

colonialism and foreign influences threatening to destroy England. Quilp's wicked nature is most obviously contrasted with Little Nell, who is consistently kind and caring to everyone and whose existence Quilp wants to ruin with his inhumanity. Within the novel, Nell is never observed to consume rum and lives in an antiquated curiosity shop surrounded by relics of the past. After the shop is confiscated by Quilp, the remainder of her existence is plagued by the deteriorating health of her grandfather and her eventual death. While Nell is never caught by Quilp after her initial flight from him at the beginning of the novel, she is constantly on the run from him and Quilp's persistent pursuit of her eventually leads to her demise. *The Old Curiosity Shop* could be an argument for the importance of ensuring that the colonial influences, which provide economic and political force to Great Britain, could destroy society if not watched and monitored closely for problems that could potentially cause upset or unrest. If the Empire is unable to halt negative influences into the nation, then the English could surrender to the effects of harmful colonial traits, much as Quilp's evilness and barbarity aid in Nell's eventual death and the loss of her goodness and morality within the novel.

In contrast to Quilp, his lawyer, Mr. Brass, cannot swallow the scalding hot alcoholic drink when it is offered to him. Instead Brass mixes rum with sugar, citrus, and water. Though morally corrupt, Brass's method of consumption manages to separate him from both Quilp and the protagonists of the novel. Whereas Quilp swallows rum in its pure form and Nell doesn't consume it at all, Brass's morality is defined by his specific ingestion of the beverage. He prefers to enjoy rum with "hot water, fragrant lemons, white lump sugar, and all things fitting; from which choice materials . . . [he] had compounded a mighty glass of punch reeking hot" that provides him with a "comfortable joy" (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 370). Dickens characterizes Brass' consumption as a positive experience that provides relaxation and delight.

Structuring the scene in this way provides readers with a contrast between Quilp and Brass, which aids in constructing particular cultural meanings through distinct social practices. Unlike Quilp, whose fondness of rum is accompanied by cruelty toward his wife, Brass' experience drinking the punch is characterized as "bland" and "sentimental" (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 370). Admittedly, Brass is by no means a protagonist within *The Old Curiosity Shop*, but while he is associated with Quilp, Brass's participation in the creation and ingesting of rum punch provides him with some semblance of humanity. This is not to say, however, that Brass doesn't receive punishment at the conclusion of the novel. For his crimes, he is summoned by London's Grand Jury "to a trial before twelve other wags for perjury and fraud, who in their turn found him guilty with a most facetious joy" (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 549). While Quilp performs heinous and brutal crimes throughout the novel and receives a punishment fitting to the brutality he exhibits towards others, Brass' wrongdoings are non-violent (even though he attempts to frame Kit for murder) and he subsequently receives a fair trial. Though convicted, Brass is sent to "reside in a spacious mansion where several other gentlemen were lodged and boarded at the public charge, who went clad in a sober uniform of grey turned up with yellow, had their hair cut extremely short, and chiefly lived on gruel and light soup" and wore "upon one ankle an amulet or charm of iron" (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 549). Though Brass' cheating nature doesn't result in death, he does lose his freedom but is still punished in a more humane way than Quilp's grisly demise in the marshes. Brass' acquiescence to consuming rum in punch form cogently demonstrates his Englishness and allows him to continue living within proper British society, at least in some capacity. In adhering to this custom, Brass remains a part of English culture, rather than an outsider. Even though he has committed crimes, he isn't

isolated from society completely. Instead, he is temporarily removed to pay and learn from his crimes in order to become a respectable member of English society through time served.

Additionally, Brass is noted to use a “case-bottle of rum—his own case-bottle, and his own particular Jamaica—convenient to his hand” in the production of rum punch (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 370). Dickens’ reference to the geographic location from which the rum originates is of particular importance. A British colony wasn’t the only nation producing the alcohol within the West Indies and the specific inclusion of “Jamaican rum” by Dickens within *The Old Curiosity Shop* encouraged readers to purchase British-produced rum. Brass, Dick Swiveller, and Quilp make a specific choice to consume the Jamaican spirit. This depiction of English characters ingesting items sourced from the Empire encouraged ethnocentrism through the promotion of the colonial byproduct (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 27, 370, 374). Rum from Barbados and Martinique (owned by Spain and France, respectively) would likely have been found in the English marketplace. When purchasing the liquor, Britons would have to make a conscious choice to buy Jamaican rum over its competitors. Dick, Brass, and Quilp’s choice to purchase the British-sourced liquor illustrates how the increased supply of rum to England reduced its cost, making it affordable to the lower classes and essentially transforming it into another cheap alcoholic beverage available in the English marketplace. While these characters consume rum because of its inexpensive price, it also depicts the success of the British Empire’s undermining of other alcohol and the establishment of demand to support the British presence in the West Indies. The purchase of rum also encouraged British ethnocentrism through buying and consuming this “domestic” spirit, albeit one produced in an imperial colony. Purchasing rum from another country would be considered an impudent decision, especially if the commodity was utilized within punch. Due to the beverage’s signification as a symbol of British national

identity and unity, mixing in a foreign-produced rum would have figuratively tainted it. Specifically naming Jamaica as the origin of Brass, Quilp, and Dick's alcohol, Dickens encouraged and maintained the sense of ethnocentrism for his readers when purchasing goods within the English marketplace. A reasonable assumption can also be made that since Jamaican rum was purchased the other ingredients needed to make the punch—sugar and citrus—would have also been acquired from British producers. Dickens' choice to reference only Jamaican rum as the specific drink of his characters ultimately encourages readers to “buy British” through capitalizing on readers' sense of national identity. The small faction of characters within *The Old Curiosity Shop* represents England on a smaller scale and their choice to exclusively enjoy Jamaican rum indicates to readers what their fellow citizens are buying and ultimately encourages them to make similar choices.

Dickens also demonstrates how rum can promote fraternity amongst Britons through the gathering between Brass, Mrs. Jiniwin, Mrs. Quilp, and a “couple of waterside men,” which supports the social ideal that rum punch is an initiator of social situations. The party enjoys “bland and comfortable joy” together as they socialize and consume their beverages (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 370). Though this gathering is not as lively and festive as other scenes centered around rum punch, Dickens still illustrates to his readers the positive atmosphere the drink can create. This group takes pleasure in each other's company through their shared fondness of the beverage. Furthermore, the absence of Quilp from this gathering supports the character's absence from English society. Because he continually breaks from social norms and practices, he is not included and instead “plant[s] himself behind the door of communication” so the group cannot see him (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 370). This exclusion from the social gathering among Brass, Mrs. Jiniwin, and Mrs. Quilp, with whom Quilp is intimately acquainted,

exemplifies his removal from the British community. His preference to consume unadulterated rum disallows the formation of a place for him within the party and only allows his participation as an outsider.

While the inclusion of rum within *The Old Curiosity Shop* is exclusively centered on the novel's antagonists, their drinking methods are important to the establishment of community through its appropriate consumption. Though the novel's drinking situations don't encapsulate the festive gatherings seen in other novels, including *David Copperfield* or *The Virginians*, Dickens still provides a stark contrast between these two characters. Quilp's complete dissent from English society eventually leads to his gruesome death at the conclusion of the novel. While Brass certainly isn't innocent of the crimes he has committed, his decision to uphold certain English traditions and values allows him to live (albeit in jail). Through these two depictions, Dickens conveys to his audience how a civilized existence is the best path for English citizens. A complete or partial denial of British ideals and conventions can only lead to negative consequences for the individual. Instead, readers should strive to live a wholesome existence through the support and upholding of Great Britain through its customs and traditions, including the drinking of rum punch with friends and family.

Mr. Wray's Cash-box

Within Wilkie Collins' first and only Christmas story, *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box, or, The Mask and the Mystery* (1852), he utilizes rum to illustrate the moral aptitude of his characters. The short story follows Mr. Wray, a teacher who "gives lessons in elocution, delivery, and reading aloud" and prizes the mask of Shakespeare's visage that was produced from a mold "taken from his own face, after death," which he carries around in a locked cashbox to prevent it from being stolen (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 10). His obsessive protection of the mask

causes two local criminals to assume the cashbox contains actual money and they devise a plan to break into Mr. Wray's home (which he shares with his daughter) and steal it. However, during the break in, a scuffle ensues between Mr. Grimes and Mr. Wray and the "mask of Shakespeare flew several feet away, through the open lid [of the cashbox], before it fell, shattered into fragments on the floor" (Collins). The destruction of the mask renders the already beaten Mr. Wray into a catatonic state and he is only brought out of it after his granddaughter, Annie, and employee, Martin Blunt, recast the mask and inform him that the robbery was all a dream.

Unlike *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Collins does not depict the correct and incorrect methods of the beverage's consumption. Instead, he utilizes the environment and reasons behind drinking rum to demonstrate socially acceptable methods for ingesting the alcohol. In this way, Collins conveys to readers the importance of the social atmosphere that accompanies the liquor. As outward appearance represented an individual's moral and cultural aptitude, the environment in which persons surrounded themselves was equally important. This ideology is depicted through the social atmosphere and conversation of two antagonist characters, Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes, and the negative effects of rum on them. Ultimately, the characterization and consequences for these individuals illustrate how their removal from respectable society and their consumption of unadulterated rum encourage them to commit robbery.

Collins is careful to choose "grog" as the preferred beverage of Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes as they plan their robbery in The Jolly Ploughboys pub. The pair imbibe this beverage with "two lumps o' sugar" in a dark corner of the establishment (Collins 80). The author's choice to have the characters drink grog, rather than punch, ensures that the positive connotations of rum punch aren't sullied and also situates the pair as members of the lower class. Showing Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes as two immoral individuals who frequent public houses and

consume grog depicts to readers that this particular rum concoction isn't suitable for Britons who desire to maintain the moral and cultural aspects of English society. Additionally, Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes's preference for grog also indicates a class divide. While grog sometimes lacked sugar and was simply a mixture of rum, citrus, and water, these two beverages are essentially the same brew. However, the designation that Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes are drinking "grog" rather than rum punch brings forward an interesting point about class and morality in comparison to the other characters within the story, including Mr. Wray; his daughter, Annie; and Martin Blunt. While a poor actor and instructor, Mr. Wray holds himself in high esteem as he teaches "elocution, delivery, and reading aloud" and consistently namedrops the "late celebrated John Kemble, Esquire" to demonstrate his place as an acquaintance of the social elite (Collins 7, 14). Though neither Mr. Wray, Annie, or Martin consume any form of rum punch within the text, the use of "grog" in association with the socially and morally lower Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes is an important designation of their place within the social hierarchy of the novel.

Grog's utilization as a distinguisher of morality aids in the placement of rum punch as a signifier of Britain's imagined community surrounding national cuisine and the importance of fraternity within the country. Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes ingest rum in a pub, which sets them outside the home and in a secluded place. While the pub is a public gathering space, it is an environment more commonly visited by men and would not be a place for respectable women, who more commonly attend community dances and parties. Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes are removed from that space, and in a way, have detached themselves from society and the morality that encapsulates the domestic home. In doing so, they succumb to the negative effects of not adhering to British practices and mores, choosing instead to follow their baser need by stealing from Mr. Wray.

Additionally, Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes consume grog rather than rum punch. Punch is typically served within a domestic establishment as a means to promote community. Situating these men within an isolated environment creates and supports social and class distinctions between the consumption of grog and rum punch. The secretive nature of their conversation and the fact that they're devising their plan within a public house not only depicts to readers their place as antagonists but also situates secretive and private meetings revolving around grog as the wrong method for enjoying rum. This link between grog and wickedness depicted in *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* could stem from the erstwhile association of the drink with mutiny that sometimes occurred aboard British naval ships. There was a fine balance over how much rum to give sailors as "a lot could . . . [provoke] rebellion" (Curtis 125). Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes' rum consumption aids in setting adverse and harmful actions into motion, much like intoxicated naval mutineers seeking to overthrow a ships' command.

While Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes technically adulterate the rum, they ultimately do not adhere to the appropriate cultural meanings instituted around the consumption of the alcohol. By disregarding the socially acceptable methods of rum drinking, they participate in illegal actions, which separates them from respectable society. In this way, their association with rum is very similar to how Dickens utilizes the spirit to differentiate between levels of morality in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Chummy Dick and Mr. Grimes' crimes aren't as severe as Quilp's violent and destructive tendencies, but they are similar to that of Mr. Brass. Establishing these cultural meanings illustrates to readers the importance of the adulteration of rum and its enjoyment within a social community. The burglars' shattering of Mr. Wray's Shakespeare mask also symbolizes their uncivilized and unscrupulous nature. Shakespeare is a significant literary figure within English culture and the pair's disrespect for Shakespeare and his significance to

England's national identity further demonstrates their removal apart from English society. Supporting these social practices within *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* signifies to readers the importance of their national imagined community and their participation within it. The lack of engagement, which the story seems to expound, leads to immorality and lawlessness as individuals ultimately lose their sense of Britishness and the morality and civilization that are associated with being a member.

Scenes of Clerical Life

While Eliot is not as obvious on the perils of rum drinking as Dickens or Collins, she utilizes her serialized text *The Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857-1858) to demonstrate both the negative and positive effects the beverage can impart. The specific methods in which these characters consume their beverage is particular and represents their place within the British social culture. Eliot utilizes her text to reinforce the established cultural meanings around rum through her descriptions, which indicated to nineteenth-century readers how they should compose themselves when enjoying the alcoholic beverage. In doing so, she aided in the creation and support of British cultural meanings. Through her favorable depictions of rum's consumption, Eliot encouraged her readers to purchase and ingest the beverage, but only if done in the appropriate manner through its adulteration (including solely with water) and in moderation.

Eliot poignantly utilizes rum to create distinctions between the upper and lower classes. The methods with which these two spheres utilize the alcohol are demonstrative of the differences in social, economic, and cultural standing. In "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story," Eliot provides two distinct rum recipes: rum-and-water and rum punch. Rum-and-water, reminiscent of its naval origins, is drunk by the lower classes for both refreshment and restoration. When

Caterina Sarti, the ward of the wealthy Cheveral family, arrives at the home of Daniel and Dorcas and promptly faints due to an oncoming sickness, Dorcas “got [Caterina] to drink a spoonful o’ rum-an’-water” to help revive her. The household specifically “keeps [rum] for sickness” even though it is “some capital rum [but] Dorkis won’t let nobody drink it” (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 179).

However, while the household doesn’t keep rum to use for pleasure, when Mr. Gilfil, the town’s upper-class curate, visits Dorcas to inquire about the health of Caterina he is offered a glass. In an attempt to be hospitable, Dorcas asks if Mr. Gilfil would like “some tea, or be-like you’d tek a glass o’ rum-an’-water,” as these are the only refreshments she is able to provide. Embarrassed, she acknowledges that these foods aren’t ones “as you’re used t’ eat and drink; but such as I hev, sir, I shall be proud to give you” (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 182). Both tea and rum have associations with domestic and national community.²⁰ Dorcas’ desire to provide Mr. Gilfil with a beverage after she invites him into her home demonstrates her desire to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for the curate. The reason Dorcas likely saves the rum for medicinal and special occasions is its cost. As they’ve purchased “capital rum,” it was likely an expensive purchase for the household, which is why Dorcas has chosen to only utilize it for notable circumstances. While Dorcas and Daniel don’t regularly imbibe the alcohol, Dorcas acknowledges that rum is a beverage that ascends the boundaries of social divisions. Through offering the alcohol to Mr. Gilfil, she attempts to indulge the tastes of his particular class by presenting her most expensive beverage as a means to bridge this gap. In doing so, she aims to temporarily close the social space between herself and Mr. Gilfil through a drink that is

²⁰ For more information on the social and communal implications of tea, please see Chapter 1.

consumed across the nation and class structure. This moment allows *The Scenes of Clerical Life* to depict to readers how, regardless of social boundaries, rum is a beverage all can enjoy.

Similarly, rum is the central reason Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Sharp come together to trade town gossip while “taking a comfortable glass of grog together in the housekeeper’s room” (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 110). Eliot’s decision to have these working class women consume grog, rather than rum punch, aids in the foundation of the beverage as an indicator of their social standing, which upholds instituted culinary class indicators between these two recipes. Rum punch’s ascension into the middle class is therefore reserved for those particular individuals, so Eliot reinforces grog’s place as a lower class beverage by having Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Sharp imbibe grog rather than rum punch. However, even with the differences in name, both grog and rum punch are ultimately utilized to create community and relationships.

Eliot continues to demonstrate differences in class methods of drinking rum through *The Scenes of Clerical Life*. In particular, the servants of the wealthy, aristocratic Cheverels take grog together as Mrs. Sharp, Lady Cheverel’s lady’s maid, provided a tale to the “upper servants that evening . . . [that] detailed Caterina’s history, interspersed with copious comments” to the rapt attention of the other servants (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 110). While the conversation encourages gossip, the story establishes relationship building and informs the servants of events within their community. Ultimately, they are kept apprised of the goings-on within the manor that could potentially affect their positions. Consuming grog also allows these individuals a time to relax after a day’s work and form relationships with the other servants, promoting community amongst Cheverel Manor.

Even Mr. Bates, a local bachelor not employed by Cheverel Manor, joins the group where he enjoys the same “feast of gossip and the flow of grog” from Mrs. Sharp. Mr. Bates is

noted to “habitually [be] a guest” at the manor as he prefers the “social pleasures there...to a bachelor's chair in his charming thatched cottage on a little island, where every sound is remote, but the cawing of rooks and the screaming of wild geese, poetic sounds, doubtless, but, humanly speaking, not convivial” (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 111). Eliot portrays her characters as social creatures who prefer to engage in fraternity with friends, family, and acquaintances. In doing so, she not only encourages communal relations within localized communities, but offers a holistic representation of England. *Scenes of Clerical Life* demonstrate the importance of community and the delight of socialization. As a solitary bachelor, Mr. Bates lacks a family with which to converse and interact, so he takes the time to leave his home to engage with the Manor’s servants as a way to relieve potential loneliness.

These positive representations of rum drinking indicate to readers how it can be utilized to promote community and relationships within their homes, towns, and nation. Nancy Henry notes in *George Eliot and the British Empire* that the author’s references to “the empire . . . and sense of English identity . . . preserved a distinctive Englishness and provided a touchstone of national identity” for readers to emulate (Henry 6). This idea that rum could establish community and promote a strengthened country encouraged Britons to purchase and consume colonial commodities. Eliot’s inclusion of rum punch depicted the “state of transformation under the pressures of colonial dispersion and cosmopolitanism at home” and shows how the beverage brings people together and creates fellowship (Henry 6). The drink’s consumption ensures that the British Empire continues to generate and export the product to buyers. Without the inclusion of rum from the West Indies, purchasers would be unable to make rum punch, so their social ingestion assures the economic incentive for Great Britain to maintain a presence in the Caribbean. The production of a social construct around the drinking of rum allows the alcohol to

become an essential aspect of social life within England, guaranteeing that the entire process of sugar production could be utilized for economic means.

However, Eliot also depicts the negative side to rum consumption. In “Janet’s Repentance,” the overconsumption of punch leads to horrifying consequences. Mr. Dempster, a lawyer within the town of Milby, is portrayed adversely through his overindulgence of the liquor, which has harmful consequences for both himself and those around them. Eliot notes that Dempster is a violent drunk. While attending a party, guests worry that his abusive nature may intrude on the gathering as he “had done as much justice to [drinking] the punch as any of the party” (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 230). Boots, familiar with Dempster’s “social demeanour” when imbibing copious amounts of the mixed beverage, elects to escort Dempster “safely to his door” in order to remove his unwanted presence from the festivities (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 229). The partygoers are correct in removing Dempster; as Boots follows him home, the drunken man “soon became aware of him, stopped short, and, turning slowly round upon him,” exclaims:

You twopenny scoundrel! What do you mean by dogging a professional man's footsteps in this way? I'll break every bone in your skin if you attempt to track me, like a beastly cur sniffing at one's pocket. Do you think a gentleman will make his way home any the better for having the scent of your blacking-bottle thrust up his nostrils? (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 230)

While Dempster is considered part of the respectable middle-class and thinks of himself as a “gentleman,” the “lawyer's ‘rum talk,’” caused by overconsumption, belies his violent nature and removes the propriety he otherwise obtains from his status as a gentleman (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 230). In overdrinking, Dempster must be physically removed from the party

because he is unable to uphold the required decorum expected within Milby. However, unlike temperance literature, Eliot contrasts Dempster's drinking habits with those of the other townspeople. Dempster's drunkenness is depicted as a representation of his brutality and cruel nature whereas the other partygoers' moderate consumption is shown as acceptable. Eliot doesn't demonize rum itself but rather an individual's consumption practices. As the town is a representation of the nation on a smaller scale, the exclusion of Dempster from a village function represents his ejection from English society. His inability to uphold established practices and mores results in his dismissal from the party and temporarily removes his membership within the community.

Dempster's violence is not only verbally abusive but also physical. Upon arriving home, he calls for Janet, his wife. Determining that she kept him waiting too long to open the door, he informs her, "I'll beat you into your senses," before his "heavy arm is lifted to strike her" and a "blow falls —another—and another" onto her (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 231-232). Like Quilp, Dempster is demonized through aggressive conduct, cruelty, and brutality and his negative behavior eventually results in death. After being thrown from a carriage, he dies from wounds sustained from the accident, which illustrates to readers that rum's overconsumption can only have negative consequences; in Dempster's case his eventual death. Quilp's death, noted earlier, is equally terrible. As he flees from the authorities, he trips into "cold, dark water" that "bore him down . . . driving him under" the current that eventually "carried away a corpse" (Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 512). Even though Quilp dies in part because of his decision to consume unadulterated rum, the pair both overindulge in the liquor. Dempster's overindulgence of rum punch ultimately transforms him into an equally cruel individual. His actions not only

physically harm his wife but also drive her into her own alcoholism as a method of coping with her barbarous marriage.

Unlike Dempster's obvious drunkenness, Janet is never depicted as intoxicated. Instead, her drinking is observed through the gossip shared between the women of Milby. They comment how Janet's "headaches always were bad, and . . . they make one quite delirious sometimes" and "Mrs. Dempster was often 'so strange'" in her countenance (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 279). Though her consumption of alcohol causes her to act strangely and alienates her from the other women in Milby, Janet is regarded with pity for her marital situation rather than demonized. The townswomen are aware of the "dreadful stories about the way Dempster used his wife," which is "enough to make [Janet] drink something to blunt her feelings" (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 279, 222). Whereas Dempster drinks for recreation and the activity is presented as a character flaw that further emphasizes his cruel and abusive nature, Janet's drinking is looked on with sympathy and as an escape from the brutality of her marriage. While her drinking also isolates her from Milby society, there is a level of understanding expressed rather than judgement because it is ultimately a byproduct of her "home-misery" over which she has no control (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 242). However, Dempster's death allows Janet to escape from her unhappy marriage and recover from her alcoholism. This recuperation is symbolically celebrated through her smashing of Dempster's liquor bottle, rather than consuming it herself (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 334). Her recovery is further aided by a religious conversion as well as her friendship with Reverend Tryan and his congregation:

The goodwill of her neighbours, the helpful sympathy of the friends who shared her religious feelings, the occupations suggested to her by Mr. Tryan, concurred, with her strong spontaneous impulses towards works of love and mercy, to fill up

her days with quiet social intercourse and charitable exertion. Besides, her constitution, naturally healthy and strong, was every week tending, with the gathering force of habit, to recover its equipoise, and set her free from those physical solicitations which the smallest habitual vice always leaves behind it.

The prisoner feels where the iron has galled him, long after his fetters have been loosed. (Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* 339)

Janet is able to overcome her alcoholism by seeking help from a community of people, rather than attempting to handle it by herself. This provides her with the support needed to move on from her marriage and stop drinking. Her return to sobriety allows her to regain a place within both Milby society and the nation.

Throughout *Scenes of Clerical Life*, Eliot essentially supports the consumption of rum, but only within the parameters of appropriate social practices. Rum is especially designated as an important part in creating community within the town. It is the focal point of socialization and readers can observe how rum establishes relationships between individuals and can even aid in bridging class boundaries (even if just temporarily). However, Eliot also utilizes her scenes of rum drinking to support social ideals and practices. Overconsumption is depicted extremely negatively with violence and harmful consequences for those who consume too much, which illustrates to readers the importance of maintaining their faculties when ingesting the beverage. Eliot aids in supporting and forming cultural meanings around rum through positive depictions of community. These scenes ultimately encourage readers' enjoyment of the beverage through the institution of cultural meanings related to rum punch and its formation of fraternity and happiness amongst Britons.

David Copperfield

In Charles Dickens' 1850 novel *David Copperfield*, Wilkens Micawber's delight in creating and ingesting rum punch is a constant part of the character's community building throughout the story. Micawber takes pride in mixing his rum punch and regularly consumes it. He takes such pleasure in its concoction that he refuses to make it in a bad mood as the process requires a clear mind in order to appropriately create the drink to ensure it is made according to British standards. Additionally, whenever Micawber mixes the beverage ingredients together, it is followed by some sort of social engagement. This constant correlation establishes a strong cultural meaning between the drinking of the beverage and fraternity, ultimately promoting the consumption of the beverage. Even when Micawber leaves England for the colonies, his deep affection for rum punch helps institute British ideals within his imperial home. Micawber's transportation of this recipe across the world and into a British colony is what James Belich refers to in *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* as "reproductive colonization," which "implies a continuing connection between source and settler societies, oldlands and new" through the sharing of traditions, practices, and culture (Belich 178). The creation and consumption of punch within his colonial home is a vital part of Micawber's identity as a person and Englishman and the assurance of his ability to imbibe in it is essential to the creation and continuation of a British home outside of England.

Micawber's affection for rum punch causes David Copperfield to note, he "never saw a man so thoroughly enjoy himself" in making the beverage (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 419). The character immerses himself "amid the fragrance of lemon-peel and sugar, the odour of burning rum, and the steam of boiling water" with "his face shining at us out of a thin cloud of these delicate fumes, as he stirred, and mixed, and tasted, and looked as if he were making, instead of punch, a fortune for his family down to the latest posterity" (Dickens, *David*

Copperfield 419). Dickens' depiction of Micawber's almost ethereal experience mixing punch establishes a positive cultural meaning around the drink. Dickens' utilization of olfactory descriptions allows readers to enter the scene and to become an observer alongside David as he watches Micawber ritually go through the process and essentially become a part of the community in which David and Micawber are members. The structure of the scene in this way ultimately reinforces the idea that rum punch is to be shared with others. Readers are enticed by the "fragrance of lemon-peel and sugar" and the image of "the steam of boiling water" that David experiences as he watches Micawber prepare the beverage. The culinary delight Micawber has for the punch and his desire to share it with David—and Dickens's vicariously with readers—aids in forming rum punch as a central aspect of creating community and relationships.

When David and Traddles are invited to partake in the punch mixed by Micawber, the latter uses his time with David and Traddles to reminisce over the "days when my friend Copperfield and myself were younger, and fought our ways in the world side by side" (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 424). The trio's drinking of punch creates a space in which Micawber and Copperfield can reconnect over shared past experiences that ultimately strengthen their relationship. Punch then becomes a tool for establishing and reaffirming friendships and community, and its enjoyment provides a sense of unity amongst these men. While the tea table was typically designated as a feminine space, the consuming of rum punch forms a place for men to participate in relationship building and the strengthening of friendships. The tea table often constructed connections between women through the communal participation of ingesting tea and *David Copperfield* promotes rum drinking as a similar experience for men. As the trio imbibe their beverage, Copperfield notes that as Micawber "took a pull at his punch . . . we all did," emphasizing a sense of fraternal connection amongst these men (Dickens, *David*

Copperfield 425). The enjoyment of punch between Copperfield and Micawber allows the pair to rekindle the relationship they had when Copperfield was younger. Ultimately, punch becomes a catalyst for a renewed friendship among the group. Constructing the consumption of punch in this way demonstrates to readers how the beverage can have positive effects on creating community amongst Britons. Though Copperfield and Micawber have lost touch, they rebuild their friendship over a shared cup of punch. This reestablishment seems to symbolize the shared fondness of rum punch amongst English citizens and the experience that accompanies it. At social gatherings, Britons find commonality around rum punch, which symbolizes the national community formed through the shared libation. Promoting this perception encourages the consumption of the beverage as a means to show solidarity and nationhood.

For Micawber, there is a science to producing punch: mix it too little and the flavors won't meld together and remove the taste of the individual ingredients, but over blend it and the taste will be ruined. As Micawber explains to David, the drink, "like time and tide, waits for no man," and the mixer must be aware of the "present moment [that] high flavour" emerges lest the libation be spoiled (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 52). Micawber's obsession in ensuring his punch is mixed properly can be observed as a metaphor for the removal of the ingredients' colonial attributes by the masking of their original tastes through the creation of punch. All the components for the drink are sourced from abroad, and even though they are grown within territories of the British Empire and transported within the imperial supply chain, these goods still contain consumer meanings of foreignness. Micawber's need to mix rum punch exactly right demonstrates his determination to transform these ingredients from colonial byproducts to an English beverage. The creation of this specific drink demonstrates the British ability to refine rum into an acceptable punch for civilized tastes, much like the imperial endeavor to enlighten

and improve the world. This particular transition illustrates the shift of cultural meanings associated with these items. Before being purchased by a Briton from the English marketplace, rum, sugar, and citrus are foreign ingredients acknowledged as being colonial. However, once they become the possessions of an Englishperson and are mixed appropriately into rum punch, they are transformed from three imported commodities into a single domestic English beverage. Micawber's careful preparation of the drink indicates the importance of guaranteeing they mix the punch correctly themselves to attain its specific "high flavour" so that it is consumable for their palettes. Creating these positive literary experiences around the production and enjoyment of the beverage shows readers how to appropriately ingest these colonial products. Their consumption of rum essentially supports the Empire economically as well as upholding the English way of life through their demand for the alcohol.

Similarly, Micawber's choice to create and drink rum punch ties well into his decision later in the novel to immigrate to Australia. The beverage's symbolization of British colonization, immigration, and mastery over its territories is apt for an individual who chooses to help colonize one of the British Empire's territories. The mixing of rum, sugar, and citrus to produce the punch and its consequential consumption depicts Micawber's own mastery of these colonial goods as well as his support of the British Empire's colonial endeavors. His choice to purchase these imperial goods ensures that the economic prosperity of the Empire continues. Similarly, the Micawbers' emigration to Australia aids in the transformation of the nation from an uncivilized territory to a British colony. The presence of the Micawbers within Australia, as well as other British emigrants, changes the social and racial diversity of the country. The influx of white English emigrants who believe their purpose is to civilize the native population and transform the territory into a representation of Great Britain assists the Empire's desire to instill

mastery over its colonies. The sustained presence of the English within Australia assures the continued sourcing and production of these needed commodities that contribute to the continued ingestion of colonial-sourced British dishes.

As the Micawbers prepare to emigrate to “the Bush” (i.e., Australia), Micawber ensures that Traddles “order[s] the ingredients necessary to the composition of a moderate portion of that Beverage which is peculiarly associated, in our minds, with the Roast Beef of Old England. I allude to—in short, Punch” (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 810). Micawber places such high importance on ordering these ingredients that he charges a man, Traddles, to complete the task. It seems that Micawber is unable to allow the “indulgence of Miss Trotwood and Miss Wickfield” to complete this errand, inferring they’re unable to properly buy the needed ingredients due to their gender (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 810). While this comment is wholly misogynistic, it does demonstrate the value Micawber places on the ability to create rum punch in his new home.²¹ This high importance to produce and drink rum punch inspires him to transfer the purchasing of foodstuffs to a man, which is traditionally a woman’s task, in order to guarantee the ingredients arrive safely in Australia.

To continue his preparation for his new life in the Bush, Micawber even tweaks his technique for mixing rum punch:

Mr. Micawber immediately descended to the bar, where he appeared to be quite at home; and in due time returned with a steaming jug. I could not but observe that he had been peeling the lemons with his own clasp-knife, which, as became the knife of a practical

²¹ This is not to say that Micawber’s choice to have a man purchase the ingredients signifies rum punch as inappropriate for genteel middle-class women. During this period, a woman’s realm was in the home and it could be argued that Miss Trotwood and Miss Wickfield would be unfamiliar with shipping items abroad. Instead, Traddles is entrusted with purchasing the items as the Micawbers prepare to emigrate since he would have been more knowledgeable (allegedly) in international shipping procedures.

settler, was about a foot long; and which he wiped, not wholly without ostentation, on the sleeve of his coat. (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 810)

Micawber adapts his methods of rum punch production to coincide with the family's transition to the life of colonists. He embraces his upcoming transformation into a settler by using his clasp-knife to peel lemons and wiping the sullied implement on the sleeve of his coat, rather than a towel as he might have done in England. Once he is done, he serves the punch in "villainous little tin pots" rather than the "wine-glasses" lining a shelf in the room. Micawber attempts to give his family a more authentic experience as a way in which to prepare them for the loss of "luxuries of the old country" (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 810). Even with this alteration of scenery, the family still benefit from the social community of consuming rum punch together in their new home. David notes, he "never saw [Micawber] enjoy anything so much as drinking out of his own particular pint pot" during the gathering. Though the family is still at home in England, Micawber's desire to ensure that rum punch and his particular method of creating the libation can be performed abroad demonstrates that the customs, experiences, and ideals of the nation—like rum punch—can be still appreciated, regardless of location. By ingesting the punch (a symbol of their Englishness) from tin pots (a representation of their emigration) the family embraces the differences that will accompany their move. Just because the vessel has changed, the connotations associated with the beverage have not. The "Anglo Settler Revolution" that the Micawber family is undertaking "was not only a massive expansion but also a process of reintegration" (Belich 179-180). For English citizens who relocated to the colonies there was some fear of "going native," so transferring British traditions to the colonies ensured that colonists maintained their Britishness. In turn, English colonists could also emulate Anglo ideals to the native population that ensured the "reproduction of one's own people through far-

settlement” (Belich 177-178). Micawber’s desire to guarantee that he can produce the drink in his new colonial home indicates his desire to transform the social arena of Australia to emulate England. He ultimately promotes the imperial mandate to civilize the colony through the establishment of specific English practices and customs.

Micawber’s appreciation for punch and his strong desire to ensure his continued ability to create and consume it after his emigration to Australia position him as the model English rum punch drinker. He utilizes the beverage as a means to promote community, Englishness, and imperialism, the main characteristics for the production and consumption of rum punch. The use of the drink as a catalyst for social engagement is a major aspect of Micawber’s ingestion. He consistently enjoys it with family and friends to reminisce over shared experiences as well as to form new ones. His desire to maintain these relationships exemplifies the communal purpose of rum. By including these scenes, Dickens illustrates to his readers how the alcohol favorably impacts English society. Punch becomes a central object to promote the institution and preservation of relationships amongst Britons and to build a connection back to England. Creating these positive communal ties centered around the libation forms a harmonious community and aids in supporting and maintaining British ideals amongst English within imperial colonies. The encouragement of rum consumption and positive connotations of fellowship ultimately generate and support a national community at large, which can be observed through the Micawbers’ emigration to Australia. Micawber’s understanding of the proper mixing of rum punch to confirm its correct taste depict his desire to appropriately participate in English ideals and practices abroad. Obtaining the right ingredients is so vital, in fact, that Micawber requires a man to source and ship the goods, even though this is traditionally a woman’s job. Micawber’s high value placed upon rum punch displays his Englishness and provides readers

with an understanding of its important place within the English national culinary identity.

Dickens seems to claim that drinking rum punch exhibits consumers' place as citizens within the national community of the British Empire as well as their support of its values and practices.

The Virginians

Like Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Virginians: A Tale of the Last Century* (1859) utilizes rum and the varying methods in which it is consumed to represent a character's social and cultural status. The novel follows twin brothers, George and Harry Warrington, who are American by birth but English by ancestry. Their mother, Mrs. Esmond, is the daughter of Lord Castlewood, an English aristocrat, who migrated to colonial America with her husband and is the mistress of a plantation, also called Castlewood. Though George and Harry have been raised and educated in America, their mother sends them to England to meet their English relatives and learn about their heritage, which she finds to be more cultured and sophisticated than America. Throughout the novel George and Harry attempt to reconcile their identities as both Americans and Britons, which is further demonstrated by the scenes of rum drinking. The alcohol is depicted as a British commodity and only drunk while the Warrington twins are within England. Constructing the ingestion of the beverage in this way establishes divisions and differences between cultures, classes, and geographic location.

During Harry's visit in England, he finds himself embroiled in social scandal when he is unable to pay his gambling debts and is imprisoned. Upon discovering Harry's plight, George pays off his brother's debts and Harry is released from prison. To prevent any further social scandal, George also purchases a commission for Harry in the British Royal Navy where Harry almost immediately finds himself shipped out. While at sea, Harry is introduced to a different form of rum drinking. Whereas he had consumed punch while visiting his aristocratic relatives in

England, Harry is only provided “plain sailor’s rum” as part of his daily ration (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 141). Thackeray’s specific description as the provision of a sailor disassociates the alcohol from the otherwise more refined “rum punch” and establishes class distinctions between the navy and higher ranking classes. Though military officers were often from the upper classes since it was “considered [a] most fitting” occupation by the landed gentry and middle-class for their sons, it does remove the men from England and the refined society associated with rum punch (Thompson 132). This removal is supported when Harry notes that “My gentlemen's stomachs are dainty” through their inability to imbibe the spirit comfortably (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 141). Noting that rum is barely palatable further reinforces its less refined nature. Additionally, specifically noting that these sailors are “gentlemen” separates them from the other lower-class crewmembers (such as the cook or purser). Since food is often used as a signifier of class, the incapacity by these gentlemen to consume “sailor’s rum” differentiates them from other naval personnel of lower social rank. In a way, it seems to designate that middle-class individuals have a more refined palette, one created for pleasing and appetizing foods, including rum punch. Even though these men are all onboard in service to the British Empire, there are still class distinctions, which are signified by the variances in eating habits observed by Harry. As an American colonist, he is an outsider amongst his British naval companions but Harry drinks his rum “very contentedly: being determined to put a good face on everything before our fine English macaronis, and show that a Virginia gentleman is as good as the best of 'em” (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 141). Harry desires to prove himself as equal a sailor as his British compatriots by showing his ability to drink the rum without problem, which aids in establishing his place within the crew.

Whether the rum Harry consumes is mixed with lime or sugar (or both) remains unclear, but it seems to lack a certain smoothness that is often accompanied by rum punch. Rum's unpleasant reaction for the gentlemen aboard the ship illustrates to readers the importance of mixing the alcohol with other ingredients, such as sugar and citrus, to make the spirit drinkable. An attempt to consume rum unadulterated can have ill effects upon the English body. By transforming the raw commodity into an acceptable appetizing libation, it becomes ingestible for "dainty" English stomachs. The stigma of naval influence associated with rum is also removed through the transition from naval grog to the English rum punch. This difference is important: Unlike the middle and upper classes, the British Royal Navy was oftentimes comprised of men from lower social backgrounds seeking to improve their status in society. While the Navy was viewed positively by the English, naval personnel were charged with protecting the British Empire and maintaining imperial global interests. This connected the Navy with lower social status as a class of people who dealt directly with the unrefined aspects of imperialism. Similarly, the Navy's placement in the British West Indies associated its personnel with the colonization of the Caribbean and its uncivilized indigenous people. Their penchant for grog, which was oftentimes unpalatable for the upper classes further emphasized the Navy's coarseness. The transformation that occurs when unadulterated rum is mixed with sugar, citrus, and water tempers these associations, much like the superior influence of Great Britain within the West Indies.

This depiction of rum as having negative effects on the refined stomachs of the gentlemen sailors is similarly bolstered by the placement of rum punch within the novel. References to punch's consumption are paired with social functions as a method for "making merry with your friends, and drinking your punch" (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 287). In fact,

when George goes to study law in England, he indulges in “much more leisure, much more pleasure, much more punch, much more frequenting of coffee-houses and holiday-making . . . for amusement” with his fellow students. He is able to bond with these other men, even though “he had himself a name, and a very ancient one” that socially set him apart (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 125-126). Punch allows George to socialize on more even ground and to create relationships with his new friends. Although George outranks his classmates, the beverage is one enjoyed by all men through their shared membership as citizens of England. Additionally, even though George was born in America, punch forms a way for him to participate and understand his English heritage and to ingrain himself within the culture. George and Harry’s drinking preferences within *The Virginians* aid in structuring the beverage’s representation of Englishness. Harry’s preference for sailor’s rum sets him apart from the upper class British society from which he is descended. At the conclusion of the novel, Harry chooses to remain in America rather than returning to England and marrying Hetty, an Englishwoman. In contrast, George’s preference for rum punch supports his choice to remain in England indefinitely and to embrace his Englishness. The brothers’ differing preferences for rum aids in establishing the beverage’s cultural meaning as a symbol of compliance with British practices and mores.

These associations of punch as an English pastime and its strong ties to the nation’s culture are further supported during Harry’s recounting of a battle scene in a letter to George:

The French horse and foot pursued us down to the sea, and were mingled among us, cutting our men down, and bayoneting them on the ground. Poor Armytage was shot in advance of me, and fell; and I took him up and staggered through the surf to a boat. It was lucky that the sailors in our boat weren't afraid; for the shots were whistling about their ears, breaking the blades of their oars, and riddling their flag with shot; but the

officer in command was as cool as if he had been drinking a bowl of punch at
Portsmouth. (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 147)

The bafflement Harry expresses after observing the officer's calm demeanor in the face of a violent and bloody combat causes him to reflect on how his behavior is more apt for the ballroom rather than the battlefield. The military's removal from England's peaceful and civilized society to the field of battle makes the officer's relaxed manner out of place. Harry's specific observation that the officer looks as though he is "drinking a bowl of punch at Portsmouth" depicts the consumption of the beverage as something fit for the sophisticated boundaries of England and not the bloody and violent fields of battle. This is made particularly interesting since rum punch's predecessor, grog, is associated with the naval community. This seems to establish a distinction between rum punch and grog that situates the beverages as dissimilar from one another even though the only difference is the inclusion of sugar in rum punch. Harry's observation specifically epitomizes the more genteel (i.e. sweeter) rum punch as a representation of the peaceful and civil culture of England that the warfare his naval participation is attempting to bestow through the British Empire's engagement in foreign wars lacks. This differentiation between the two beverages illustrate to readers how the drink is an important symbol of Great Britain's culture and superiority within the world. Though the British Royal Navy's tasks were to patrol and defend its territories in battle, the consumption of rum punch ideologically separates the crew—and by extension the English—from the violence and barbarity found within the rest of the world.

Though rum punch is representative of England's propriety and civilized society, Thackeray does provide a warning about its overconsumption within *The Virginians*. Upon her return to Castlewood from the Countess's drum, Lady Maria is informed that her maid, Betty, is

“not in a fit state to come before my lady” as the servant had drunk too much punch that evening. Betty’s “partiality for rum-punch” had caused her to begin “a-junketing and merry-making with Mr. Warrington's black gentleman, with my Lord Bamborough's valet, and several more ladies and gentlemen of that station” because the “liquor...had proved too much for Mrs. Betty” to remain sober (Thackeray, *The Virginians* 299). In comparison to the unpleasant experience of drinking rum by the gentlemen sailors on Harry’s ship, the punch in this scene is so palatable that Betty consumes such an amount it renders her unable to perform her duties for Lady Maria. Additionally, Betty’s inappropriate behavior during her drunkenness causes embarrassment both to her and her employer. Rather than maintain a demure and ladylike attitude, Betty becomes excited and foolish through her animated dancing. Though the consequences of Betty’s overconsumption are less violent than that of Dempster in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, the maid’s inebriation still causes harm. The portrayal of Betty in *The Virginian’s* depicts to readers that both men *and* women can succumb to inebriation if too much rum punch is consumed. Thackeray reminds his audience to imbibe carefully so they do not cause embarrassment to themselves and others.

While rum is certainly not stigmatized within this scene—or within *The Virginians* as a whole—Thackeray does note to his readers that lacking self-restraint can lead to humiliating experiences. The maintenance of one’s composure through the moderate enjoyment of rum punch ensures that individuals don’t incur shame upon their persons or those of others. The text depicts to readers the importance of appropriate outward action within society. The inability to uphold these standards through self-restraint has the ability to bring embarrassment. Readers are shown that while rum punch is an acceptable beverage for social gatherings, overconsumption can hinder partygoers’ merrymaking and the establishment of fraternity. *The Virginians*

encourages drinkers to be mindful of their actions and to maintain composure as a means to indicate acquiesce to accepted social conventions.

Conclusion

The nineteenth-century British novel utilized rum to form a specific social and moralistic attitude within the nation's culture. While the alcohol was used to create community and promote relationships amongst Britons, its specific employment within rum punch demonstrated to readers how their consumption habits dictated their actions and social perception. *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* show readers how unadulterated rum can lead to immoral and illegal activities; in contrast, the drinking of rum punch in *David Copperfield* and *Scenes of Clerical Life* show fraternity amongst Britons when rum is utilized properly within punch, bolstering an imagined community of nationhood and support of the Empire through the libation's ingestion.

The creation of rum punch from three colonial goods—rum, sugar, and citrus—into a “British” beverage depicted the Empire's mastery over and ability to civilize its colonies. England's capability to take foreign, raw commodities and produce a refined drink suitable for the nation's sophisticated society transformed Britons into rum consumers. While nineteenth-century novels certainly promote the purchasing of rum and its consumption, the texts are specific in how it was to be enjoyed. These novels illustrate to readers how the ingestion of undiluted rum could harm both the nation and its people and that the only respectable and accepted method in which to imbibe it was through rum punch. This construction of culinary habits aided in the establishment of the beverage as a symbol of Great Britain and a representation of the nation's refined and moral society.

By generating these specific consumer meanings around rum, Britons were encouraged to make certain purchasing decisions within the English marketplace. Unadulterated rum's association with drunkenness and immorality compelled buyers to also procure sugar and citrus fruits in order to dilute the alcohol's potency. Encouraging these buying habits guaranteed that the British Empire remained within the colonies to produce these commodities. This promotion of rum punch as an important figure within England's social scene ultimately ensured its place as a representation of the English way of life. Assigning these consumer meanings of fraternity fashioned it as a "British" beverage and as a symbol of the Empire's superiority and mastery within the world.

Rum, once a symbol of unrefined Caribbean island life and the representation of the uncivilized nature of the Empire's colonies, established its place within the English culinary repertoire through its transformation into rum punch. The "helping hand" of Great Britain through its reappropriation of the colonial goods is a poignant representation of how British imperialism challenged and transformed foreign goods as appropriate items for English consumption. Observing rum's initial use as a substitution to costly imported European alcohol to its ascension as a vital staple within middle-class communal gatherings shows the power foodstuffs have within society. Unadulterated rum signified the low aspects of colonialism and, in masking its taste through dilution, was made more palatable—and civilized. We can compare the Empire's attempt to refine its colonies through the concealment and removal of indigenous and brutish colonial characteristics by way of masking of rum's foreignness through this drink. In taking ownership of rum and transforming it into an acceptable British concoction, the Empire demonstrated its dominance and mastery over its principalities. The construction of positive cultural meanings around punch within nineteenth century texts encouraged consumerism and

aided in rum's formation as a representation of Englishness. In creating this connotation, Britons connected through a shared pastime and established relationships both in their physical community as well as within the English imagined community.

As a whole, nineteenth-century novels provide specific illustrations of how Great Britain was meant to represent itself both nationally and globally. The inclusion of colonial goods, like rum, promoted and encouraged certain buying and consumption habits that supported distinct practices. These practices ultimately represented and urged a particular way of life within England. In doing so, rum punch became a symbol of the nation and its people, culture, and ideals. The mixing of punch with rum, sugar, and citrus illustrates the influence the British Empire had within its colonies and the permanent transformation that occurs through that fusion. However, this amalgamation of British and colonial influences is only acceptable when the byproduct is "British" and a proper representation of the nation's ideals and practices. The removal of foreign stigmas by changing its original form ensures the creation of a national drink that is allowable for the refined and civilized tastes of the English. This reappropriation transforms rum into an ingredient representative of England and its ingestion a symbol of the nation's local and national community.

CHAPTER THREE

What's Yours Is Mine: The Cultural Transformation and Rise of Anglo-Indian Food

Introduction

Indian cuisine is an integral part of current British culinary identity, and many people believe that it is a representation of British food just like tea, fish and chips, and Christmas pudding. In fact, during a speech in 2001, former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook named curry a “national dish” of Great Britain, even though the fare is synonymous with and has origins in India. Despite this claim, the nationalization of curry by the British, along with other Anglo-Indian foods such as kedgeree and mulligatawny soup, stresses Britain’s former dominance over and “connections to the Empire,” which were established during the nation’s extensive colonization efforts during the nineteenth century (Bullock 439). The change of Anglo-Indian dishes from an unfavorable facet of colonialism to an epitome of Britain’s “mastery (by assimilation) over the colony” demonstrates how cultural implications altered consumer ethnocentrism and habits (Chan 1). British literature during the nineteenth century provides essential clues in understanding how cultural meanings around Anglo-Indian dishes were created and transformed. These cultural assimilations allowed these foods to permeate the British national culinary landscape, ultimately leading to the British Foreign Secretary’s statement that resoundingly classified the cuisine as something inherently British.

It should come as no surprise that India had such an effect on British culture and society. Great Britain’s increasingly powerful presence within the nation spanned over three hundred years, first with the establishment of trade relations through the British East India Company and eventually the British Empire’s total control over the nation until its decolonization in 1947. These strong ties made this eventual hybridity of these two civilizations inevitable, and the

results of this merger are noticeable within the British way of life practiced by colonizer and colonized alike. The influence of India upon British life is shown in nineteenth-century fashion, home décor, and food that had an immutable effect on the tastes, opinions, and identity of Great Britain. The enjoyment of Anglo-Indian commodities was initially considered “going native,” a negative effect brought on by extended stays in India. However, the eventual acceptance of the colony’s goods as a normal aspect within British culture over the course of the century confirms how colonization could also be a positive influence upon British life. The indoctrination of Anglicized Indian foods into the British culinary repertoire demonstrates Great Britain’s capacity to reappropriate foreign goods as British products as a hegemonic response to the inevitable influence of colonialism on the nation. The examination of Anglo-Indian foodstuffs within nineteenth-century literature details this evolution. British people on the mainland initially met Indian cuisine with suspicion, but by the end of the nineteenth century, Indian cooking became an acceptable dish for Anglo-Indians and Britons, regardless of their contact with the colony.

This transition can be examined through the literature of the period, which provides a fascinating account of the challenges, changes, and eventual acceptance of the dishes within England. This transformation can be observed through the works of authors like Sir Walter Scott, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, chronicling the relationship Britons had with Anglo-Indian food as well as aid in shaping how the English related to the fare. While earlier nineteenth-century novels such as *Saint Ronan’s Well*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Aurora Floyd*, view the hybrid dishes with suspicion and fear, by the end of the century “Silver Blaze” and *Kim* depict Anglo-Indian cooking’s integration into British society positively. Analysis of these fictional works provides an understanding of how this originally foreign cuisine was able to

become an integral part of British life and a representation of its comprehension and relation to their place within the world.

Establishing Cultural Meanings and Ethnocentrism

The British East India Company received its charter in 1600 and began funding voyages to the South East Asian Spice Islands in 1601. Journeys to these islands continued until 1613 when the Company decided to shift its “geographical focus” to the western ports of the Mughal Empire, effectively setting up a permanent residence in the Mughal port of Surat (Pettigrew 27). To support and maintain Great Britain’s commercial ties to India and to ensure the efficient and quality production of goods. Hundreds of thousands of Britons travelled, lived, and emigrated to India during the tenures of the British East India Company and British Empire. This British presence in India and the immersion that occurred among soldiers, merchants, and Company employees from their extended stay within the nation affected many facets of white Britons’ lives, including the culinary sphere. Examining the colonial hybridity that occurred through the food these British citizens consumed provides another avenue in analyzing the effects that colonization had on nineteenth-century British culture. The integration of Indian cooking ingredients into the British diet represents the strong ties between these two civilizations and the effects these links had upon both ways of life through the creation of the Anglo-Indian cuisine.

As England began exploring the globe, new cooking styles and ingredients were a result of their travels, and the inclusion of these new culinary techniques and foods changed British culinary methods. Previously, traditional British cooking remained as it had for centuries. Britons primarily “lived on the land and off the land” through the “forced variety of season[al]” foods. Imported commodities were expensive and often reserved for the wealthier classes who could afford them. Instead, most consumed available produce and native livestock through the

creation of region-specific dishes, such as Devonshire cream, Lancashire potatoes, and Scottish oatmeal (Hartley iv). This dependency cultivated regional cuisine as these individuals' "idea of good food was ingrained by their environment" and accessible edible commodities (Hartley 19). Local ingredients played a large role in the types of foodstuffs Britons ate and their understanding of themselves in relation to their community. However, the impressive trade routes and foreign partnerships of the British East India Company expanded the types of products available to British consumers. These new items transformed how England ate and their increased choices affected the entire nation's eating habits. The inexpensive availability of new fruits and vegetables like mangos and taro as well as exotic spices like cardamom and turmeric aided not only in the alterations of conventional British fare but also introduced entirely new culinary methods to England, changing what Britons considered "English food." The incorporation of these new, exotic foods into the British culinary repertoire exhibits the transformation of Great Britain from occupier, an aloof and remote nation in charge of a distant colony, to an Empire influenced and transformed by its colonies.

Nineteenth-century literature provides a fascinating look into the reshaping of the English culinary scene as well as perceptions of foreign and domestic dishes on the British dining table. Literary representations of these foods aided in normalizing the establishment of these foodstuffs within the nation's cookery repertoire. Through the examination of the differing scenes within these texts that revolve around Anglo-Indian cuisine, we can observe the various stages of suspicion and acceptance the nation underwent as the cuisine slowly seeped into the foundations of British life. Early novels depict this foreign cooking with disapproval and skepticism, and characters seem alarmed by the abnormal habits Anglo-Indians exemplify and the implications these transformations potentially have on England's way of life. However, as the presence of the

British continued and strengthened in India, the perceptions of Anglo-Indians altered. As more Britons travelled to and returned from India, the availability of cardamom, chilies, and coriander became standard in the market place and British citizens increasingly began to sample East Asian cuisine. These literary depictions aided in reshaping consumer meanings regarding Anglo-Indian cuisine and encouraged readers to try these foreign and unconventional dishes. In doing so, the nation's understanding of England's food and its identification with the British Empire was ultimately transformed as Anglo-Indian foodstuffs became an integral aspect of the British culinary tradition.

The British in India

As the British East India Company expanded its presence and power within India, the number of Britons who travelled, lived, and worked within the nation increased. Relocation by British citizens to India was often temporary—though lengthy and sometimes even ending in death—and these short-term moves are vital to understanding the Anglo-Indian hybridity these stays produced. While abroad, the British routinely acquired an appreciation for Indian cuisine. Many of the foods Britons were accustomed to purchasing in English markets were not always available in India and these scarcities caused the British to adjust their eating habits to include unfamiliar ingredients. In certain circumstances, local spices, vegetables, and fruits were used to fill in the “gaps” where unavailable commodities would have otherwise resided. Popular Anglo-Indian recipes, like mulligatawny soup and kedgerree, got their beginning as these “stand in” dishes: the former was a popular substitute for soup and the latter found its way onto the breakfast table for its similarity to porridge. Indian cooks employed by British families also utilized their knowledge of Anglo-Saxon recipes and their familiarity with Indian ingredients and recipes to create hybrid dishes suitable for British tastes.

For Britons abroad, it was important to “consider English culture first and foremost in its imperial aspect’ . . . [in order] to preserve the illusion that life in India is best understood as a (painful but necessary) continuation of Englishness abroad” (Plotz 46). To maintain their “Englishness,” Britons reappropriated parts of Indian culture to substitute for breaches in their established cultural practices. In doing so, the English dining table transformed from a domestic to international one that came to represent Great Britain’s imperial efforts abroad. However, it still exemplified British ideals and customs, namely through its ownership of Indian foods as “British.” Even though Indian servants utilized Indian ingredients within these dishes, their reformulations to meet English taste buds removed their Indian connotations and reshaped them as Anglo-Indian recipes. But by ingesting these foreign, native foods, Britons (perhaps unintentionally) embodied the “cosmopolitan characteristic of openness to other cultures and display[ed] a kind of worldly cross-cultural competence” that would come to define the cross-cultural identities of Anglo-Indians (Germann Molz 84). Though the English attempted to reappropriate Indian foods by repurposing and renaming them into curry, kedgerree, and mulligatawny, they still “physically ingest[ed] Otherness” and ultimately transformed British eating practices abroad (Germann Molz 91). This food transformation was meant to establish dominance and power over Britain’s colonies and its subjects, but this change to English cultural norms initially made these Anglo-Indians outsiders themselves as they integrated Indian spices, vegetables, and fruits into their diet. Britons abroad attempted to maintain British culinary traditions but to do so had to make substitutions for ingredients unavailable in India. Even though certain foods were altered, the English continued to practice British eating rituals as a method to maintain Englishness abroad and to not succumb to native customs. However, the inclusion of foreign foods into traditionally English dishes did create culinary hybridity and

ultimately transformed the way Britons ate. The English viewed the indoctrination of Indian foods into British culinary habits as a form of mastery over and civilization of their colony, and while many may have assumed the transformation was one-sided, the changing eating habits show how India irreversibly changed England and its culinary identity.

The English validated their British domesticity in India by “naturalizing the products of foreign lands” (Leong-Salobir 44). The inclusion of new and exotic ingredients like chilies and aromatic spices within more traditional British recipes allowed Britons to both understand their new home and to take ownership of Indian cooking to which they had access. As they did so, a type of culinary hybridity emerged as “both British and local dishes appeared on the dining table” in British-occupied India (Leong-Salobir 43-44). This “colonial need to replicate the Western meal” that included specific courses like soup and a meat dish in India created the Anglo-Indian cuisine, which was influenced by the presence of these two cultures within one space. However, the selected foodstuffs that have become synonymous with Anglo-Indian cuisine are not random, but selected through the “culinary and domestic management” of the British to ensure the maintenance of the Empire’s ideals through the incorporation of Indian gastronomic techniques (Leong-Salobir 43).

The creation of the Anglo-Indian cuisine was as much an Indian byproduct as it was English. To satisfy their employers’ cravings for conventional English fare, Indian cooks became “adept at producing British favourites, although with an Indian twist” (Monroe 56). As certain ingredients were not available in India to recreate standard British recipes within the colony, cooks utilized more native spices. For instance, Shepherd's pie, a classic British recipe, was “served with the added benefits of cumin, sesame seeds and ginger” as Indian employees attempted to achieve a “close approximation of the dish found on many a farmhouse kitchen in

the [English] Shires” (Monroe 56). These alterations to “classic” British fare not only allowed the English to consume the comfort foods of home, but it also caused their taste preferences to change, which aided in the creation of Anglo-Indian dishes.

Additionally, cooks adjusted more traditional Indian recipes to accommodate their British employers’ particular Western taste buds, which tended not to be used to the amount of spices often found in Indian fare. Cooks “gradually altered and simplified their recipes” to make them acceptable for the Anglo dining table, and in some cases, changing them so much that these dishes no longer resembled their originating recipe in “substance as well as name” (Collingham 116). Modern day Anglo-Indian “quoremas” or “kormas” derive from Lucknavi quaramas, a rich Hindustani curry. This recipe, if “made according to the original recipe . . . is quite unsuited to European taste” due to its heat and spiciness and would have never been eaten by the British had it not been for these adaptations by Indian cooks (Collingham 116). The intersection of India and England within this culinary sphere transformed Indian recipes, which ultimately changed the landscape of both these nations’ cuisines through the modification and fusion of the two cooking methods. These alterations to both British and Indian dishes encouraged a “cultural appropriation and interchange” of Indian “cuisines and dining habits” by British consumers (Leong-Salobir 43). By integrating both Indian ingredients and revised Indian recipes into their culinary repertoire, English citizens transitioned into “Anglo-Indians,” and nineteenth-century literature demonstrates this group’s influence within British society.

The relationship between England and India and the future of British culture and society “became an abiding preoccupation” in nineteenth-century British literature (Bolton 550). Initially, many Britons did not find the Anglo-Indian hybridity a positive trait to emerge from Great Britain’s occupation of India and novels became concerned about the changes that

disrupted the established British way of life (Bolton 551). In novels published in the beginning of the century, authors express fear that the British living abroad in India could end up “going native” and losing their sense of “Britishness,” which would have a negative effect on British mores and customs. The British viewed this type of individual, a “nabob,” or former employee of the East Indian Company, with suspicion. These particular individuals were criticized for their unethical means of devising their wealth and the influences living in India had upon their way of life. They were often “condemned for their bad taste in gaudy clothes, art collections, country houses, displays of wealth, and Indian wives and mistresses” by the British and were seen to have “degenerated under India’s influence” by their British counterparts (Codell 223). In addition to clothes and residential aesthetics, food was another outward expression of an appreciation for—or in some ways a corruption by—India. Returning British citizens included Anglicized Indian dishes upon their dining table, a seeming “ingestion of India,” which further heightened the skepticism and suspicion expressed by Britons.

Numerous Anglo-Indians brought back a taste for the food and recipes they had enjoyed while abroad, which made the transition back into British life easier. Many had “difficulty in adjusting to life of their native land” after extended stays within the nation because “[e]xotic, exasperating India . . . had seeped into their bones, [and had] become [their] home away from home” (Banerji 79). The relocation to and consumption of these foodstuffs in England allowed Anglo-Indians to reminisce about their time abroad and “capture the ‘nostalgia for the glow of the empire’” they had encountered in India as well as “share vicariously in the experience of travel” with families and friends, which aided in warding off a longing for a life left behind (Leong-Salobir 46). In eating curry or mulligatawny soup, these former Indian residents were able to temporarily transport themselves back to their time abroad through the sensory memory

brought on by the food's flavors and texture. It is this form of inclusion onto the British dining table and the sharing of meals that "helped incorporate Indian food into the national diet and India into the British Empire" (Leong-Salobir 48). As Britons became more exposed to Indian influences, it slowly seeped from the dining rooms of Anglo-Indians and into those of the rest of the nation.

Curry

Curry is arguably the most well-known Anglo-Indian food: references to it permeate nineteenth-century literature more so than kedgeriee and mulligatawny soup. The information on its history since the British first encountered India is both fascinating and transformative. In "The Anglo Indian Table," Chitrita Banerji states that curry is "one of the greatest ironies of India's food story . . . whose blanket application is so much at odds with the actual authenticity, regionalism, and idiosyncrasy of India's cuisines" (Banerji 79). Whereas most of the Anglo world (the Americas included) view curry as a general term for both vegetarian and meat recipes covered in a fragrant sauce with culinary ties to India, Indians refer to their various dishes by specific names, including "rogan josh, dopiaza, or quarama. But the British lumped all these together under the head of curry" (Collingham 115). Rather than attempt to understand the different types of foodstuffs and foods served upon the British table in India, the English, likely in the name of redundancy and a lack of care for the country they inhabited, chose to refer to these particular Indian dishes as "curry." "Curry" isn't even an Indian term, but another British reappropriation. The designation derives from "kari," a word within the Indian dialect Tamil that describes the "spices for seasoning as well as dishes of sautéed vegetables or meat" (Collingham 115). The word was further transformed into "'caree' and eventually into the word curry, which the British then used as a generic term for any spicy recipe with a thick sauce or gravy in every

part of India” that was “distinct from the roasts, chops, stews, and puddings cooked in the Western way” (Collingham 115, Banerji 80).

Indian cooks aided the reshaping of traditional Indian dishes into “curry,” because they sought to satisfy the particular tastes of their British employers. In *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*, Lizzie Collingham notes how the Anglicized version of curry “greatly reduced the amount of ghee and yoghurt, as well as the aromatic spices such as the cloves and cardamom” from British curry recipes as their flavor would have been shocking for unacquainted English palate (Leong-Salobir 54; Collingham 116). Instead, the British ate the “distinct colonial invention” of a “more generic curry sauce by adding coriander, ginger, and peppercorns, which were basic ingredients in a British curry” rather than the multitude of components found in Indian cooking (Collingham 116). By simplifying these recipes, the colonizers reduced centuries’ worth of unique dishes and cooking into the homogenous category of “curry,” and eliminated the distinctive names used for them. This move not only allowed the English to make the fare more acceptable for British consumption but also asserted power over their subjects by taking ownership of these foods.

As the British became more entrenched in India politically and economically, they continued to make and consume curry, and a basic recipe emerged that allowed many to make the dish at home. The spice mixture is a “most heterogeneous compound of ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, coriander, Cayenne pepper, onions, garlic, and turmeric” (Collingham 116). The simplified spice, then, contrasts with the spices used by Indian cooks who “grind and mix fresh spices in appropriate proportions for each individual dish” and “find the idea of using a generic 'curry powder' to cook meat, fish or other food items preposterous” because each recipe is meant to “have its own distinct masala [spice mix]” (Leong-Salobir 42).

The creation of British curry powder ultimately produced a “‘fabricated’ entity” of pseudo-Indian food as a result of “colonial commerce” to make the production of “curry” within the British home more accessible. The reappropriation of another nation’s foodstuffs “impos[ed] a term that signified a particular type of dish onto a specific mixture of spices, that then became a fixed and familiar product” of India’s colonization by the Empire (Zlotnik 86). The simplification of these recipes from “endless variations in flavor . . . achieved by adding spices to the food in different combination and at different stages in the cooking process” to a “spoonful of curry powder” demonstrates the lack of appreciation for the complex and unique culinary processes of India by the British (Collingham 116). In creating curry powder, the British transitioned the cooking of curry from the hands of Indian servants to the kitchens of the English.

As the influence of the British Empire increased within India, curry became increasingly popular within England. As the nineteenth century wore on, the references to curry grew and the dish’s characterization transformed from one of skepticism to acceptance as the nation acquired a taste for the fare.

Mulligatawny Soup

In Sir Walter Scott’s novel, *Saint Ronan’s Well*, the stereotyped Anglo-Indian character, Peregrine Touchwood, provides specific and detailed instructions to his landlady regarding how to correctly create mulligatawny soup. While Touchwood refers to this dish as “Indian,” mulligatawny soup cannot be considered part of the nation’s traditional Indian fare, though this Anglo-Indian food does find its origins in India’s culinary history. A reshaping of the Tamil recipe “milagu tanni,” or “pepper water,” the resulting mulligatawny “according to Salman Rushdie, ‘tries to taste Indian, but ends up being ultra-parochially British, only with too much pepper’” (M. Roy 73). The dish is another testament to Great Britain’s presence within India, a

representation of its mastery over the colony through its transformation of a long-established recipe into one more suited for English preferences and refinement.

The reason for reappropriating the soup from the Tamil recipe “milagu tanni” comes from the “colonial need to replicate the Western meal that consisted of separate courses” as there was no Indian equivalent that could serve as a soup course (Banerji 80).²² Britons modified Indian pepper water by “add[ing] other condiments, with chicken, mutton, &c, thickened the liquid with flour and butter and by degrees succeeded in concocting a soupe grasse of a decidedly acceptable kind” (M. Roy 67). The British not only utilized the Indian recipe to create the Anglo-Indian dish but also the “corruption of the Tamil [word] milagu-tannir” into “mulligatawny” (Banerji 80). By changing both the ingredients and the name of milagu tanni, the British removed it from the Indian culinary sphere, detaching its “exotic” properties to make it acceptable on the table of the English consumer.

By the mid-nineteenth century, “mulligatawny had already entered the cookery lexicon” through its inclusion in several cookbooks, such as Eliza Acton’s *Modern Cookery in All Its Branches* which included three recipes for the food. One of the recipes explicitly notes that cooks should exercise moderation when using onions and garlic, as “it is only in coarse cookery that their flavour is allowed ever strongly to prevail” (Acton 38). Acton seems to declare that overly spiced dishes, like those within traditional Indian cooking, are only utilized to mask substandard cooking techniques or ingredients that are otherwise unacceptable for British palettes. As a culinary authority, she informs her readers of what foods are appropriate for ingestion and reinforces the ideology that India, and the products that originate from it, are unsuitable for British consumption. This positioning of Indian food as inferior to British cooking further

²² This idea could also lead to a discussion of eating practices in India beyond use of ingredients and recipes by the British in India

establishes England as idealistically more advanced and cultured than its colony. In challenging the conventional Indian recipe to allow for it to be acceptable for the British palette, Acton aids in “point[ing] the way to the domestication of exotic and foreign menu items” within the British household (M. Roy 69). The reappropriation of these foods to make them suitable within Britons’ eating practices further depicts their dominance over the colony. While milagu tanni remained steadfastly tied to India and not unacceptable for British consumption, mulligatawny found its place on the Anglo table as a glowing representation of the British Empire’s strength abroad through its transformation from a native to domestic recipe.

Kedgeriee²³

Though a prominent dish in nineteenth-century cooking, kedgeriee is arguably the least researched of the major Anglo-Indian recipes even though the legume and rice dish is considered a breakfast staple. W. Somerset Maugham, an early twentieth-century playwright, stated, “to eat well in England, you should have a breakfast three times a day and with kedgeriee in it” (Leong-Salobir 18).²⁴ However, even though there isn’t an abundance of scholarly research on the fare, kedgeriee is still vital to the evolution and foundation of Anglo-Indian food and its effect on the British consumer during the nineteenth century. Its consumption both in India and England as a breakfast staple marks a strong relationship between the two nations through the utilization of the original recipe to create the Anglo-Indian adaptation of porridge and its transportation back to England to become a major morning dish for nineteenth-century Britons.

²³ It is also sometimes spelled “kidgeriee” and “kedgaree”

²⁴ Even my 2000 Oxford World’s Classics edition of *Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management* does not have a recipe for kedgeriee, though mulligatawny and curry are both included. (funnily enough, however, the official *Downton Abbey* cookbook includes a recipe, noting it as a favorite of the British Raj, further demonstrating the popularity of the dish as a symbol of Anglo-Indian “Britishness”).

Kedgerie can trace its origins to the vegetarian Indian recipe khichari, a “simple rice and lentil dish”; its consumption dates back to the fourteenth century (Collingham 119; Leong Salobir 18). The foodstuff became a breakfast within Anglo-Indian homes, and people usually paired it with fish, another breakfast favorite. The inclusion of fish within this traditionally vegetarian recipe was a practical response to economy within British households. During the hotter periods in India, “fish caught early in the morning would be much deteriorated before the dinner hour” and would subsequently be incorporated into kedgerie so it would not go to waste (Collingham 119). In addition to fish, “hard-boiled eggs and fried onions, and eventually all three (fish, eggs, and onions) came to be seen as essential to a good kedgerie” by British consumers (Collingham 119). The inclusion of fish, eggs, and onions essentially “elevated” the dish from its native recipe, creating a hearty breakfast entrée that was essential to the morning meal in British India, and eventually, England.

Though kedgerie is still well-liked and eaten in twenty-first century England, with popular British chefs such as Delia Smith and Jamie Oliver providing modern interpretations of the recipe, references to the food within nineteenth-century literature are few and far between. Though there are multiple spelling variations of “kedgerie” (including kidgerie, kitcherie, kitchari, and kitchiri), a search of the period’s literary works only uncovered a reference to the dish within William Makepeace Thackeray’s *The Tremendous Adventures Of Major Gahagan* (1855). However, even this mention is fleeting, merely referencing the prisoner’s desire “to pull their nails out by the root, to boil them in kedgerie pots,” which isn’t even an actual reference to the eating of the fare (Thackeray, *Major Gahagan* 17). Other major authors of the period, including Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Brontë sisters, don’t reference kedgerie. Despite the fact that this dish was commonly eaten by Britons and

people expected British cooks to prepare the meal, kedgerree's exclusion within popular novels is significant, especially since curry and mulligatawny can be found regularly.²⁵

The exclusion of references to kedgerree does not extend to popular nineteenth-century cookbooks, however. The periodical *Punch*, *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery*, Mrs. J. Bartley's *Indian Cookery for Young Housekeepers*, and Carrie Cutcrewe's *The Mem Sahibs' Book of Cookery*, all have references to kedgerree as a British food and its consumption around the English table.²⁶ While these aren't literary novels, the significant inclusion of kedgerree recipes within these texts detail the dish's importance within the Anglo-Indian and English household. These recipes' widespread availability within British cookbooks and periodicals also indicated its popularity with English consumers within the nation, effectively supporting kedgerree as a required breakfast dish on the table. In "Printed Cookbooks: Food History, Book History, and Literature," Henry Nortaker argues cookbooks are "important sources to document aspects of current mentalities, moral attitudes, ideology, national identity, and gender roles . . . of the early nineteenth century" (Nortaker 132). Cookery books and periodicals were excellent resources for many middle-class women on how to run an efficient household and scholars have begun to "investigate the special role that food plays in constructing both the cultures in which we live and our place in them" (Nortaker 133). Cookbooks were "how-to" manuals for many nineteenth-century women and these texts provided standard, conventional methods of house management in England. The recipes included in these manuals would have been regarded as traditional foods served within the country and vital to providing an

²⁵ The lack of references in nineteenth-century remains unclear, though it is commonly included within popular recipe books of this time period. This is a potential avenue of research as to why British novelists (intentionally or unintentionally) chose not include it as often as other Anglo-Indian foods.

²⁶ The Asiatic Society was founded in 1784 to enhance and further the cause of "Oriental" research within India. The journal details these findings.

“English” meal to family and guests. These mainstream cookbooks’ incorporation of cooking instructions for kedgerree, mulligatawny soup, and curry situates these texts as an important part of the literary history of Anglo-Indian foods because “cuisine cannot exist without food; nor can it survive without words” (Nortaker 133). These recipes’ inclusion ultimately allowed eaters to demonstrate their participation within the English national identity and their support of the British Empire and its power within and occupation of India through their cooking and consumption of these foods. Cookery books ultimately became supplemental to fiction novels. Fictional stories often only included references to dishes, lacking directions on how to produce them, while cookbooks not only supplied these needed instructions but further corroborated the validity of Anglo-Indian foods within England’s culinary identity and their place on the nation’s dining table.

Anglo-Indian Food and Literature

References to Anglo-Indian dishes within nineteenth-century British literature provide a fascinating look at one of the lesser analyzed facets of power the British Empire established over colonial India and the colony’s shaping of English daily life. This transition from the suspicion of Anglo-Indian food to its acceptance within the British home can be captured almost linearly within the progression of the period’s fiction. Sir Walter Scott’s *Saint Ronan’s Well* (1823) casts both a wary eye on the nabobs returning from the East and the Indian influences coming back with them. However, as the century progressed and British power in India changed and progressed, Anglo-Indian fare is cautiously accepted within English households. William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Aurora Floyd* (1863) depict Anglo-Indian cuisine as a harmless quirk associated with former East Indian residents. But by the end of the century these dishes were positioned as a product of hybridity, as shown in Sir

Arthur Conan Doyle's short story "Silver Blaze" (1892), in which Anglicized curry is a staple in the working man's diet. Furthermore, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), a book in which the lead character is defined by his ability to exist within both British and Indian societies, illuminated by his food consumption, demonstrates Britain's appropriation of the nation into the Empire. Literary representations, both positive and negative, are significant in making sense of the importance of how these portrayals aided in the construction and transformation of consumer meanings around Anglo-Indian recipes like curry, mulligatawny soup, and kedgeree. These depictions deepen understanding of how the influences of the British in India challenged how the English related to their colony through their enjoyment and ingestion of these dishes.

Saint Ronan's Well

Sir Walter Scott's 1823 novel *Saint Ronan's Well* provides one of the earliest literary references to Anglo-Indian food consumption within British literature. When the novel was published, the British Empire had acquired numerous former Indian provinces through military battles or political annexes between 1757 and 1803 (T. Roy 2). The growing territorial possessions of the Empire meant more and more Britons travelled to and stayed in India. This growing number contributed to the inclusion of Anglo-Indians characters and dishes within domestically set British novels. Scott's characterization of Peregrine Touchwood, an Anglo-Indian who returns to Saint Ronan's, is peculiar and nosy and his predilection for Anglo-Indian food sets him apart from the "traditional" British community and from the other villagers. This representation of otherness and separation portrays him as out-of-place in England due to his Anglo-Indian tendencies. Readers are ultimately informed that Britons who exemplify these types of eccentricities are divergent from English society and should be dealt with warily.

When Touchwood arrives in Saint Ronan's and takes up lodgings with Dame Dods, he immediately provides his new landlady with a "valuable receipt for concocting curry-powder" in order to instruct her in the "mysteries of curry and mulligatawny" so she can create the dish successfully for him during his stay (Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well* 308). Touchwood deems himself an authority on Anglo-Indian cuisine, stating, "how the devil should any one know how to mix spices so well as he who has been where they grow?" (Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well* 269). This specification seems to inform readers that only Anglo-Indians know how to make curry properly, creating a distinction between British and Indian culture and effectively constructing a separate way of life in which non-Anglo Indians are excluded. The establishment of these divisions further amplifies the differences between the two civilizations. Since Dame Dods hasn't travelled to India and "seen the sun ripening nutmegs and cloves," Touchwood assumes (and likely rightly so) that she is unable to cook Anglo-Indian food correctly (Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well* 269). While Dame Dods does cook these dishes for Touchwood, he is the only individual who ingests them, which again reinforces the separation between Anglo-Indians and Britons and a disassociation between England and its colony. This separation creates a foreign stigma around Anglo-Indians, symbolizing the effects of colonialism on Great Britain. These negative connotations both represent and reinforce an ideology of caution regarding the return of these individuals from East India. By creating this division, early nineteenth-century Britons remained skeptical about colonial India.

In addition to his "strange" eating habits, Scott also describes Touchwood's physical appearance, which further sets him apart from his fellow villagers. Considering the negative perception of Anglo-Indians during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Scott utilizes the character's external attributes to juxtapose him to other residents of Saint

Ronan's. In fact, Julie Codell states in "Vulgar India from Nabobs to Nationalism: Imperial Reversals and the Mediation of Art," that Anglo-Indians were often "condemned for their bad taste in gaudy clothes"; and other Britons believed that they "degenerated under India's influence" (Codell 223). Upon first meeting the character, Dame Duds notes that Touchwood's "complexion was burnt to a brick-colour by the vicissitudes of climate, to which it had been subjected" and dressed in a "blue coat and buff waistcoat, half boots remarkably well blacked, and a silk handkerchief tied with military precision. The only antiquated part of his dress was a cocked hat of equilateral dimensions, in the button-hole of which he wore a very small cockade" (Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well* 137). Touchwood's complexion is darker and he wears outdated clothing, which marks him immediately as an outsider in Saint Ronan's. Scott's special attention to the color of Touchwood's skin is particularly significant; his darker complexion makes him more physically similar to native Indians and ultimately signifies the inward influence of India upon his person through the darkening of his complexion. It is almost as if Touchwood's appreciation for Anglo-Indian commodities has, in some way, transformed him so fully that his bodily appearance has been transfigured into another person (e.g., a native Indian).²⁷ Scott's description suggests that their environment makes Anglo-Indians not completely Indian and not completely British. *Saint Ronan's* detailed illustration of Touchwood serves to demonstrate to readers how prolonged visits to India can negatively affect an individual by replacing aspects of Britishness with the influences of India. This hybridity created trepidation amongst Britons who worried how the British Empire's presence within the colonies could affect life within England.

Scott's literary descriptions of Touchwood informed and influenced readers to conclude that Anglo-Indians aren't entirely English any longer because they dress and eat outside the

²⁷ An early version of "you are what you eat."

standard practices of English culture. The inclusion of this form of prejudice within *Saint Ronan's Well* assists in establishing a veil of caution and skepticism around Anglo-Indians that ultimately influenced how the English reacted and related to returning colonial Britons. Similarly, this suspicion toward Anglo-Indians also cast a wary view upon the foods these individuals brought as though these dishes and their consumption somehow embodied the deviation from English mores and practices.

Vanity Fair

By mid-century, the division that separated Anglo-Indians from their English counterparts began to slowly weaken. As more people travelled to India as soldiers, businessmen, and missionaries, Britain's familiarity with the country expanded. Those unable to experience India firsthand often learned about the colony through returning Anglo-Indians from abroad who brought back tales of their experiences to share with family and friends. This form of introducing Indian byproducts aided in transforming the negative connotations associated with the colony's goods. The trust between Anglo-Indians and their family and friends acted as a type of vetting process that removed the foreign stigma and otherness that created division between Anglo-Indians and the English. This change facilitated through familial involvement can be observed within contemporary literature. Within these novels, those who had never traveled to India and former East Indian employees participate together in the consumption of Anglo-Indian food.

William Makepeace Thackeray's most best-known work, *Vanity Fair* (1847), likely reflects the author's experience of living in India. Though educated and almost entirely raised in England, Thackeray was an Anglo-Indian by birth. He was born in Calcutta, where his father, Richard, worked as a secretary to the Board of Revenue within the British East India Company

(Brantlinger 74; Codell 227). By the time Thackeray was six, his father died and his mother sent him to be educated in England. He “never returned to the scenes of his earliest childhood,” but his writings are “deeply influenced by India” and his experiences there (Brantlinger 74). While many of his novels include some reference to India, it is “always mere background . . . not the center of attention” for the story (Brantlinger 75). Still, the nation’s inclusion and how it is represented aids in constructing readers’ particular understandings of the colony, those that live in and return from it, and England’s relationships with them.

Particularly, Thackeray aids in transitioning Anglo-Indian fare from an unfortunate side effect of a lengthy post in India and prolonged absence from England into a way for families to share the experiences of India with family members who had been abroad. In *Vanity Fair* (1847), Thackeray utilizes Anglo-Indian food as a vehicle for the Sedley family to celebrate Jos’s return from an extended stay in India. The family’s shared consumption aids in removing the foreign stigma surrounding Anglo-Indian cooking, effectively shortening the culture gap between Anglo-Indians and Britons. This scene and others like it helped begin the process of establishing East Asian dishes like curry as an acceptable part of the British diet.

Thackeray’s Jos Sedley, a British East India Company tax collector, returns to England a wealthy man through his employment as a tax “collector of Boggley Wollah, an honourable and lucrative post, as everybody knows” (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 23). Thackeray constructs Jos’s employment with the British East India Company as a respectable job, which assists in restructuring Britons’ cultural meaning regarding India. Jos’s existence as British personnel in India is presented as positive; his time in the remote village of Boggley Wollah allows him to establish an English presence within the country. Thackeray’s favorable perception of the British East India Company’s presence in India assists in establishing a positive impression of the

Empire's existence in India, which constructs a foundation for the continuing improvement of the perceptions of returning Anglo-Indians.

When Jos returns to England from India, he requests that curry be served for dinner, which allows him the opportunity to share his Indian experiences with his family. Jos is excited to introduce them to his colonial experiences and they are likewise willing to indulge him in this request. Eager to please, Mrs. Sedley "prepared a fine curry for her son, just as he liked it" and Jos is described with "his face quite red with the delightful exercise of gobbling" (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 29). While the inclusion of curry on the Sedley table is "acceptable," Thackeray still portrays Jos in an undesirable light. The Anglo-Indian's vulgar method of consumption is a consequence of prolonged exposure to India and situates him as removed from polite English society. Though the other members around the table sample the curry, they still maintain expected English dining decorum. However, it is Jos' act of sharing these foreign foods with his family that is important. He may have strayed from propriety, but the participation of his family in this experience is an important method for "naturalis[ing] the products of foreign lands" within this otherwise British household (Zlotnick 84). By having his mother create Anglo-Indian curry for him, her "home cooking, with all its emotional and symbolic resonances," is encapsulated in the otherwise foreign dish (Zlotnick 83). This combination affords Jos the familial customs associated with his home in England as well as the comforts of India he has come to enjoy. The inclusion of curry on the Sedley dining table in England makes it accessible not only to Jos but also to the rest of the family and assists in the removal of curry as something unfamiliar and foreign by transitioning it to a "home cooked meal" that encourages community and unity both within the immediate family and Great Britain.

Even though Thackeray attempts to cultivate a positive image surrounding Anglo-Indians and their culinary interests, the inclusion of curry in *Vanity Fair* harbors some suspicion. While the Sedley family and Becky Sharp are willing to try the fare, they are unable to ingest it. This inability by non-Anglo-Indians to consume curry ultimately shores up the still-standing division between the English and Anglo-Indians. However, the diners are open to sampling the dish, which depicts a movement toward an acceptance of Anglo-Indian food within the English household.

Though this scene encourages Britons to try Anglo-Indian food, Thackeray still urges caution when doing so. During this dinner, Becky agrees to sample curry especially made for Jos to impress him and entice his romantic intentions. She has “never tasted the dish before” and, when it turns out to be spicy, she “suffer[s] the tortures with the cayenne pepper” (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 29). To add insult to injury, she is tricked into eating a chili by Jos, which she believes will ease the heat in her mouth because a “chili was something cool, as its name imported” (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 29). Instead, the unfamiliar pepper ends up making the spiciness worse. Her English palate finds the heat of the dish overwhelming and when her “flesh and blood could bear it no longer,” she calls for “Water, for Heaven’s sake, water!” to soothe the pain (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* 30). Consuming curry ends up being a terrible experience for Becky, an experience that starkly contrasts with Jos’s enthusiastic gorging of the foodstuff. By presenting curry in this way, Thackeray informs readers that Anglo-Indian cuisine *can* be eaten by the British but should be done with caution due to their unfamiliarity with it. Additionally, Jos’ culinary deception further alienates him from conventional English society and informs readers to be wary of Anglo-Indians until the unfavorable effects of living in India can be overcome. Even though English people are consuming curry, the dish is still a foreign food and

should be eaten with caution. Becky's unquestioning ingestion of the fare is a caution to others to carefully try foreign foods to ensure it is tolerable for English consumption. This scene, therefore, facilitates the transformation of curry from an othered fare and consequence of prolonged exposure to India to one acceptable for *all* Britons to consume (though with some prudence).

This dinner is an excellent representation of the mingling of English and Indian culture. The Sedleys gather around the dining table, likely laid out with beautiful plates and cutlery ideal for a traditional English meal, but are served curry, an Anglicized dish of Indian origin. Though the family is open to experiencing curry, they do so within the confines of British dining practices. While Jos regularly consumes Anglo-Indian food in Boggley Wollah, it is extremely unlikely he eats it in the established Indian manner (with his hands). Instead, he likely employs the standard British dining practices of utilizing plates and utensils to consume the Anglo-Indian cooking. Thackeray doesn't demonize Jos's penchant for curry (though this is not to say the character's obsession with India isn't used comically throughout the novel). Instead this scene illustrates to readers how Jos's enjoyment of curry in Boggley Wollah is not a sign of his succumbing to Indian practices but rather a pairing of British dining etiquette with Anglo-Indian food. This combination depicts how the British in India reappropriated and "civilized" Indian dishes by fusing them with "refined" eating practices on the English table.

This scene is vital in the transformation of English consumer meanings regarding Anglo-Indian cuisine. At the time *Vanity Fair* was published, Anglo-Indian food wasn't common within English households even though the British Empire's presence and influence in India was constantly increasing. As with anything new, Indian goods were met with some trepidation and Thackeray's handling of this scene, likely due to his own firsthand experience in India, attempts

to quell English suspicion. Readers are shown that while the *dish* is foreign the *practice* is not. The Sedleys haven't sidelined their Britishness to consume curry. In fact, it could be argued that eating the foodstuff in a *British* home on an *English* dining table with plates and utensils illustrates how the fare has been domesticated and made appropriate for Britons. Thackeray similarly constructs this scene with instances of comedy, demonstrating to his readers that while Anglo-Indian food tastes strange, it isn't threatening. Instead, the Sedleys unfamiliarity in eating curry inspires laughter rather than suspicion, which is in contrast to Scott's characterization of Touchwood's consumption of Anglo-Indian food in *Saint Ronan's Well*. The pairing of curry with English dining customs illustrates to readers that curry isn't solely a meal Indian natives eat but a food acceptable for the sophisticated English dining table. Ultimately, the British put their "civilizing" hand upon the fare, improved it, and made it suitable for the nation's ingestion.

Aurora Floyd

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel *Aurora Floyd* (1863) depicts Britons' increased knowledge of Indian food and its consumption within the English household. Set after the Indian Uprising of 1857 and the handover of control of India from the East India Company to the British Empire, *Aurora Floyd* illustrates how the relationship between Britons and Indian cuisine continued its transition to acceptance within the British home. Though some suspicion still remains around these dishes and its consumers, Braddon utilizes her English characters to show the nation's expanding familiarity with Anglo-Indian food and its role in modifying the relationship these individuals have with the cuisine. Though only Colonel Maddison, a former East India officer, has experienced India firsthand, the remaining characters exhibit knowledge of various Anglo-Indian foodstuffs, which can only be in part through the increasing familiarity of Anglo-Indian culture within England.

Aurora Floyd's publication occurred five years after the dissolution of the British East India Company's rule within India and the transference of power to the British Empire, which established total British control. While the Company had been a major part of the introduction of Indian goods into England, the absolute authority instituted over India solidified the presence of the Empire in the country, ultimately sustaining and expanding the presence of Britons within the colony. The increased British presence in India introduced more English citizens to Indian traditions and customs as more and more Anglo-Indians returned to England and shared their experiences with family and friends. *Aurora Floyd* demonstrates the transitional period between the suspicion surrounding the transformative effects on the English from a prolonged residence in India and the acceptance of these influences as the English became more familiar with the colony and emerging Anglo-Indian culture. This divide within the novel shifts the cultural meaning of Otherness associated with the culinary fare to a more positive reception. Specifically, Braddon's attention to Colonel Maddison and the characterization left by his tenure in India signifies the importance of the presence of the British Empire in India to maintain order and governance. The effects of extended time in India by English personnel was a minor consequence to increased control and improved management of the colony to prevent altercations between Great Britain and its colony.

While *Aurora Floyd* includes a scene in which Anglo-Indian food is served, the reactions by the novel's character still exhibit suspicion regarding the presence of Anglo-Indian cuisine in England. Following their marriage, John and Aurora Mellish decide to host a dinner party at their residence, Mellish Park, and include an invitation to Colonel Maddison, a former British East Indian officer. There seems to be an understanding that Maddison prefers Anglo-Indian recipes, a consequence from his time abroad, and the Mellishes want to ensure his enjoyment and

comfort during the meal. This preference causes some distress for Mrs. Powell, the housekeeper, who, inquiring about the Colonel's dining preferences, "asked meekly; yet with a pensive earnestness which suggested that her life, or at any rate her peace of mind, depended on the answer. 'I am so anxious to know, for of course it will make a difference with the fish,—and perhaps we ought to have some mulligatawny; or at any rate a dish of curry amongst the entrées'" (Braddon 329). John Mellish tells Mrs. Powell to consult with his wife and not long after Aurora informs her staff to cook and serve "side-dishes specially provided for [Colonel Maddison] . . . [of] chutnee, and boiled rice, and preserved ginger" (Braddon 340, 333). Unlike *Vanity Fair*, these dishes aren't prepared for the entire dinner party but solely for the Colonel's consumption. His status as an Anglo-Indian and preference for its culinary fare isolates him within England. The foods are designated as "side dishes" and seemingly unworthy of a "main" dish status that the English foods receive on the Mellish's dining table. Treating these foods in this way stigmatizes Anglo-Indian cuisine as lesser than purely Anglo foods and situates Colonel Maddison as removed from the rest of the guests.

Though the colonel doesn't specially request to have Indian food served during the meal, it seems his particular tastes are already known, whether that's because Aurora assumed that as a former Indian resident the colonel acquired an inclination for Indian fare or she had been made aware of the Colonel's dining preferences. Either way, Aurora associates Indian fare as an integral part of former Indian residents' diet and attempts to include a familiar dining experience for the Colonel. What is of particular interest is that Mrs. Powell, a servant, is aware of the different types of Anglo-Indian food, including mulligatawny and curry. No recipe is asked for or provided, which seems to insinuate that the cook already has the knowledge to prepare this recipe. While the Mellishes may not indulge in the Anglo-Indian meal, the popularity of the

cuisine is significant enough within England that Mellish Park's household staff has the knowledge to prepare these recipes when required. Their awareness of this fare is significant in comparison to *Saint Ronan's Well* and *Vanity Fair* in that the recipe had to be provided to Dame Duds and Mrs. Sedley.

The inclusion of these dishes during dinner allows Braddon to remark on the increasing existence of Anglo-Indians and their preferences within Great Britain. Colonel Maddison's characterization is wholly situated within his former role as a British East Indian officer. During his tenure in India, the gentleman "had distinguished himself in some terrific manner by bloodthirsty demolition of Sikhs [Mutiny participants], far away in the untractable East" (Braddon 340). The characterization of the Colonel as an officer who helped reduce uprisings from the native populations illustrates the power hold the British have within India. Though these violent actions would not be acceptable within England, the Colonel is outside of the nation within the "untractable East" and his actions are tolerated because the colony needs a guiding—and sometimes forceful—hand in order to be properly handled. Colonel Maddison describes native Indians as violent and odious, insinuating that force is necessary to instill order. This description of India creates a particular image of the nation as one that is primitive and unmanageable and ultimately needs the "bloodthirsty demolition of Sikhs" to establish an effective rule by the British. The creation of these divisions between the English and Indians assists in forming English perceptions and understandings regarding India: it is wild and uncivilized but can be tamed through the guidance and control of Great Britain.

Throughout the Mellish dinner, the officer attempts to regale the other guests with stories of his adventures. While conversing with John Mellish and Mr. Lofthouse, the "Indian officer chose to talk for the amusement of his friend and his son-in-law" by recounting "stories of the

pig-sticking and the tiger-hunting” during his time abroad (Braddon 356). Even his stories demonstrate England’s mastery over its principalities. The Colonel describes how during a hunting expedition “the tigress was crouching for a spring, upon the rising ground exactly above us, sir, and when, by Jove! Charley Maddison felt himself at pretty close quarters with the enemy, sir, and never thought to stretch his legs under this mahogany” when faced with peril (Braddon 356). Even when faced with a deadly animal, Maddison is undaunted and remains courageous in the face of danger, showing him to be brave and tenacious. Since the military officer is a representative of the British army, his stories are a symbol of the strength of the military in India. This illustration ultimately informs readers of the power and supremacy of Great Britain in India. Though the Colonel is regarded as unusual for a typical British gentleman, the character does aid in forming positive perceptions regarding Great Britain’s endeavors abroad.

Braddon seemingly approves of the Colonel’s former presence within India as a means to ensure the continued existence of Britain within India, but she still distinguishes him as an outsider within England. Maddison believes his stories to be interesting to his audience but neither Mr. Lofthouse nor Mellish are especially interested in the Colonel’s stories: “Mr. Lofthouse was well up in all the stories, and knew exactly which departments of each narrative were to be laughed at, and which were to be listened to with silent and awe-stricken attention” though “John Mellish made a very bad audience upon this occasion” by simply not paying attention (Braddon 356). While the Colonel’s identity is deeply rooted in his former Indian life and is something in which he takes immense pride, there is little interest by his fellow diners. Mellish’s indifference toward these stories may come from his lack of a strong relationship with Maddison. Unlike the Sedley family, who are interested in learning about Jos’s experiences

abroad in *Vanity Fair*, Mellish has no personal ties to the Colonel as he is the father of their friends, the Lofthouses. This variance indicates the early introduction of the Anglo-Indian lifestyle into England, which was initially positively received by friends and family who had personal investment in these Anglo-Indian experiences through their overall interest in these individual's lives. In conjunction with the Sedley family who partake in trying Anglo-Indian food through their connection with Jos, the Mellishes lack a close relationship with the Colonel. However, the inclusion of these dishes during the dinner party illustrates a movement of the social and cultural acceptance of former Indian residents within England through the acknowledgement and acceptance of their culinary habits within the English home.

The Colonel's Anglo-Indian characterization is completed by his delight and hearty consumption of Anglo-Indian cooking. The officer "attacked the side-dishes specially provided for him, and praised the Mellish-Park cook" for the delectable food (Braddon 340). The foodstuffs' inclusion on the Mellish Park dining table hints at the beginning of their integration into everyday British practices. While there is still a stigma associated with the cuisine, as observed through the peculiarity of Colonel Maddison, the cuisine's consumption has become more acceptable within England. However, even though the other dinner guests are familiar—at least in some capacity—with Anglo Indian cuisine, only Colonel Maddison enjoys these dishes. The other diners' lack of consumption maintains the division between Britons and Anglo-Indians as well as that between England and India. Mellish describes Anglo-Indian fare as the "unpleasant things that Indian officers live upon" (Braddon 333). His comment continues to support the ideology instituted in *Vanity Fair* that Anglo-Indian cuisine should be reserved for Anglo-Indians because they have grown accustomed to the "exotic" tastes of India. Yet paradoxically is because of this preference that Anglo-Indian cuisine became an established

aspect within the British culinary sphere. The transportation of these foods by the growing number of former Indian residents returning to England provided the bridge for non-Anglo Indians to consume these dishes. Though Braddon doesn't situate the cuisine as something representative of British life, the awareness expressed by numerous characters does depict its increasing indoctrination into English culture and the changing consumer meaning regarding Anglo-Indian food.

“Silver Blaze”

As the nineteenth century progressed, Anglo-Indian food continued its transition into an acceptable British dish. In “The Adventure of Silver Blaze” (1892), a *Sherlock Holmes* short story, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's almost off-handed inclusion of curried mutton within the text illustrates a drastic shift from the beginning of the century, especially when compared to the suspicion and unfamiliarity of Dame Duds regarding Touchwood's request for Anglo-Indian fare in *Saint Ronan's Well*. Unlike previous novels, it is not the curry itself that is demonized in “Silver Blaze” but the way in which it is utilized as a vehicle to carry out a theft. The recipe is represented as a dish commonly consumed by Britons and its involvement in the crime isn't initially considered by Holmes until after more evidence has been gathered. The detective's lack of suspicion regarding curry depicts how the transformation of the meal—as well as Anglo-Indian food in general—had become normalized in England and how this indoctrination within the British home led to its eventual appropriation as a national dish.

“Silver Blaze” follows Sherlock Holmes during the investigation of the theft of Colonel Ross's prized race horse, Silver Blaze, and the death of the animal's trainer, John Straker. During Holmes's inquiries, he discovers that a meal of curried mutton was served to the stable employees for dinner the night of murder. The culprit utilized the intense flavor of the spices in

the recipe to mask the opium that drugged the stable boy into unconsciousness, allowing Straker to steal Silver Blaze. Holmes explains to the Colonel how:

Powdered opium is by no means tasteless. The flavor is not disagreeable, but it is perceptible. Were it mixed with any ordinary dish the eater would undoubtedly detect it and would probably eat no more. A curry was exactly the medium which would disguise this taste. (Doyle)

Both the meal's usage to drug the stable boy and the utilization of opium to instigate the robbery seem to signify caution regarding foreign goods to readers. Straker's inclusion of opium within the stable boy's curry transforms the Anglo-Indian dish into an unsuitable food once more and allows Straker to execute his plans. Not only is the theft of Silver Blaze reprehensible, but it also leads to Straker's death.

The use of opium is of particular interest. Opium, a commodity associated with China, has a lengthy and tumultuous history within the British Empire. Though the British Empire produced opium in India, many considered opium a "Chinese drug," which was thought to have "addictive and debilitating effects" upon its users (Jenkins 157). Unlike other foreign imports (including tea, whose Chinese origin "barely haunts what we think of as 'English tea'"), "opium represented the failure of such assimilation, the reification of the Chinese object's negative qualities in an orientalized menace to the English social body" (Jenkins 157). The unfavorable characteristics that surround opium establish an adverse consumer meaning around its use, and Straker's use of the drug reinforces this ideology. Though curry is also an "oriental" product, its successful integration into English life constructs a positive consumer meaning around the food. The juxtaposition of the two imports within "Silver Blaze" assists in supporting what items British consumers should purchase. This short story enforces the idea that curry, as a foreign,

Asian ware, should only be served in the English home after it has been transformed from its Indian roots and made appropriate for English consumption through the removal of its unpalatable foreign ingredients. In contrast, opium's unsuccessful refinement depicts its harmful effects on the British body, which are reinforced by the stable boy's unconsciousness, the theft of Silver Blaze, and Straker's death.

The juxtaposition between the unadulterated and poisoned curry constructs a particular consumer meaning. The untainted curry is acceptable for consumption as it is made according to a proper recipe without any unapproved ingredients. Mrs. Straker follows the established recipe in the initial unadulterated batch of curry for herself and the other stable hands, making it suitable for consumption. However, "the opium was added after the dish was set aside for the stable-boy" by Straker since "the others had the same for supper with no ill effects" (Doyle). Straker's deviation from the accepted recipe illustrates to readers the importance of only consuming approved commodities. After all, it isn't the unadulterated dish that gains Holmes' attention but that which is tainted with opium.

In the nineteenth century, Britons unfamiliar with curry would have turned to popular cookery books of the period to aid in their recreation of this Anglo-Indian culinary commodity within their home. Well-known recipe books like Isabella Beeton's *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* and Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery* included tested and approved recipes by British housewives suitable for British consumption. In *Mrs. Beeton's*, the titular author informs readers that curry powder should be "purchased at any *respectable* (emphasis mine) shop . . . [because it is] generally speaking, far superior" than making it at home (Beeton 133). Beeton's encouragement for cooks to buy Anglo-Indian items from a "respectable" shop informs readers that there are inferior curry blends, which may alter the spice mix. Additionally,

this almost seems like a plug for readers to buy pre-made curry powder, a ware “‘fabricated’ by British colonials” that encouraged the “commodification of [India] for British taste [and] was linked to the notion of eating India itself”; its production by English manufacturers for British consumption made it a domestic product and therefore safe for Britons to consume (Leong-Salobir 44). In *Spicing Up Britain*, Panikos Panayi notes curry powder and pastes, the “ultimate synthesis and anglicization of Indian food . . . [were] often advertised in curry cookbooks” in order for British cooks to make these curries within the English home (Panayi 123). The advertisement and purchasing of British-made curry powder encouraged multicultural consumption amongst the English. In addition to adulterating curry with uncalled for ingredients, Doyle seems to inform his readers that buying foreign goods not sourced within the Empire could also potentially have harmful effects upon the British body. This encouragement of buying British-sourced goods promoted ethnocentric consumption.

Mrs. Straker’s preparation of curried mutton for the stable employees’ dinner illustrates how the dish is also enjoyed by the working class. A century before, this social class would not have been able to afford the recipe’s ingredients—if they even knew the meal existed. Previous novels, such as *Saint Ronan’s Well*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Aurora Floyd*, all situate these dishes within the middle and upper classes. These social spheres had increased exposure to India through trade, travel, and high-ranking positions in the government than the lower classes. Furthermore, their ability to afford imported goods from India would have been a method to display one’s wealth, and these goods would not have been available to the lower classes. Instead in “Silver Blaze,” Anglo-Indian food is consumed by working class employees, a stark difference from the pageantry displayed by Touchwood or the spectacle shown in *Vanity Fair*. The availability of mass produced curry powder, higher demand, and increased stock of Indian

edible commodities led to the permeation of Anglo-Indian cooking throughout the classes and the seemingly everyday consumption of this cuisine within England. This transition of the dish from the upper class into the working-class kitchen demonstrates the increasing popularity and familiarity of curry upon the English dining table.

This consumption also illustrates how common Anglo-Indian food had become. In fact, no mention of an Anglo-Indian is made in reference to the curried mutton's consumption. Instead, the meal is served without fanfare or explanation as part of the worker's evening meal. The mention of curry mutton is cursory as though the reader would not find its inclusion on the dining table of a Briton out of a place. Unlike the period's earlier works, which seem to highlight the fact that the inclusion of these dishes during a meal was the consequence of an Anglo-Indian presence at the dinner table, "Silver Blaze" lacks this form of clarification. This absence of comment on curried mutton's Indian roots or exotic ingredients depict the widespread consumption of Anglo-Indian food within British eating habits. The stable employees ingest it without question or suspicion, demonstrating how the lines between British and Indian cuisines have blurred.

Kim

By the end of the nineteenth-century, Great Britain thoroughly established dominance in India. At this time, the effects of colonization had marked these cultures so much that they had transformed each other to accommodate these "foreign" influences, resulting in irreversible hybridity. In Rudyard Kipling's 1901 novel *Kim*, Kipling's characterization of Kimball "Kim" O'Hara, a young boy raised on the streets of India, provides a "window into [the] cultural intersections" experienced by Britons in India (Maynard 296). The influence of both British and Indian cultural practices shape Kim, who symbolizes the strong hybridity that emerged from the

relationship between the two nations. The character's existence within both civilizations and the difficulties he has in understanding his place within them demonstrates how Indian influences were changing English society and how Britons reacted and dealt with these transformations within their culture, community, and lives.

Though the child of an English "nursemaid in a Colonel's family" and a "young colour-sergeant of the Mavericks, an Irish regiment," Kim was raised primarily by a "half-caste" Indian woman after his mother "went out when I was born" and his father died (Kipling 1, 87). Kim has never left India, but his upbringing is wholly influenced by both Indian and British ways of life, garnering him the nickname "Little Friend of all the World" (Kipling 3). If Kim represents the "hybridism of East and West", Kipling also utilizes the character to caution about the mixing of two civilizations and the effects it can have on the population (Kipling 239). Raised in India, Kim's only designator of his Britishness is his fair skin and baptismal certificate. Otherwise, Kim is characterized by his Indian traits, including his mannerisms, eating habits, and the way he "translated in his own mind from the vernacular to his clumsy English" (Kipling 89). Kipling utilizes Kim's hybridity to show readers how these effects can be both positive and negative traits in an English citizen if they are utilized in the appropriate method through British management.

Like Thackeray, Kipling was born in India and educated in England but, unlike Thackeray, Kipling returned to the country of his birth as a teenager to work as a journalist and author (Brantlinger 74). His experiences observing the fusion of Anglo and Indian cultures within the South Asian country under the dominating presence of colonial Great Britain is thoroughly expressed in *Kim*. Kipling's initial description of the title character establishes his cultural identity: "Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke

the [Indian] vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white” (Kipling 1). Kipling makes it clear that that Kim is both English *and* white, contrasting these designations around Kim’s more “native” physical features of darker skin and Indian tinged English. This provides both a fascinating and worrying indication of the results of imperial rule abroad and its effects on white Britons and their understanding of their Englishness. In doing so, Kipling reminds his readers that while Kim has “gone native,” he is still British yet represents the effects of colonization upon English citizens.

Kim’s distinct hybridity subsists on a fine line between the acceptable reappropriation of Indian culture as a means of exhibiting a colonizer’s power over its colony and the negative effects that full indoctrination can have on an individual in a foreign civilization. Prior to coming in contact with Reverend Arthur Bennett, the Anglican chaplain for the Irish Mavericks regiment in India, Kim’s indoctrination into Indian customs and traditions has a perilous effect on his Britishness. Bennett notes that Kim has an “abrupt way of putting” English phrases together due to his lack of proper English schooling. His Anglo-Indian language hybridity is also marked by Kim’s inability to recall or “know the English word” to describe the objects in his “tinny, saw-cut English of the native-bred” (Kipling 84). Kim’s indoctrination into Indian culture is so deep that he dreams “in Hindustanee, with never an English word” (Kipling 193).²⁸ The deaths of his mother and father prevent Kim from obtaining the “appropriate” upbringing of a British subject. Instead, Kim is surrounded by Indians, and he ultimately learns their language, eats their food, and obtains their mannerisms.

²⁸ Dreaming in a foreign language is considered to be a sign the speaker has obtained advanced fluency.

The “hybridizing” produced “multiplied personalities” within the boy reflective of his multicultural upbringing. His English and Indian citizenships create a “kind of dual cultural citizenship” that constructs his life as an Anglo-Indian and is further supported through the foods he ingests (Maynard 296). Throughout the novel Kim attempts to make sense of the two seemingly different cultures in which he participates. Kim is Irish (with the papers to prove it), but his mannerisms and physical traits indicate that he has been raised by India, “a wild child of the streets who looks like an Indian but underneath is an Irish boy” (David 97). When Father Victor and Bennett catch Kim, they are both initially convinced that Kim is a “native.” It is only when the priest “opened the front of Kim's upper garment” and observed his white skin that he declares, “You see, Bennett, he's not very black” (Kipling 86). Kim’s outwardly dark appearance designates the Indian culture as the most influential impact? on his upbringing. He lacks the “British” education that would have provided him with the conventional British social capital Father Victor and Bennett initially sought to prove that Kim is British. The absence of these English mores and practices causes Bennett to assume he is “evidently neglected” (Kipling 86). Kim’s rearing primarily by an Indian woman means he has experienced Britain from a colonial standpoint, rather than as a citizen of the nation. Rather than being fed Anglo-Indian dishes like kedgeree and mulligatawny soup, Kim would have likely eaten customary Indian cooking. His exposure to traditional Indian practices, rather than English ones, does not provide him with the foresight to reappropriate these dishes to meet British expectations. Instead, he consumes Indian foods in more conventional methods, with his hands while sitting on the ground (Kipling 14). Though he speaks English and understands that he is British in an abstract way, his acknowledgement of this identity comes from being treated as a colonial subject rather than a

British citizen. It is likely that his comprehension of Great Britain is of a dominant imperial ruler rather than a mothering nation.

Many of the British who interact with Kim abhor the influence India has had on his person, but this is ultimately the product of colonization. Much like Anglo-Indian food, which incorporates both British and Indian ingredients, Kim is a mixture of the two nations: he is an Anglo boy who has incorporated characteristics of native Indians, ultimately becoming a physical representation of this hybridity. With the deaths of his parents, Kim's upbringing and understanding of his place within the colony changes.²⁹ If his parents had raised him, Kim's comprehension of India and the role of the British Empire within it would have been drastically different through the establishment of British-influenced ideologies regarding India and its people, culture, and food. The boy would have made sense of his place within the Empire as sovereign and superior over the colonies and its subjects, especially with his close connection to the military through his father. Instead, Kim experiences India as a colonial Indian subject through his personal encounters with its native people and way of life, which allows him to understand and integrate himself into the society.

Kim's ability to transition between the British and Indian civilizations is represented in his eating habits. The boy is shown easily subsisting at the British dining table and on the ground "cross-legged" in the "native fashion" with Indian friends (Kipling 31, 15). Within these scenes, Kim becomes the physical embodiment of Anglo-India. His ability to move between these two cultures also demonstrates his duplicity. Unlike previous Anglo-Indians, who reappropriated Indian dishes to reinforce their mastery and dominance over India, Kim has not interjected

²⁹ What is never fully explained, however, is why Kim's father chose an Indian woman to raise his son. Why not another family from his regiment? Or perhaps an English orphanage? It is an interesting query and one that would be intriguing to explore further.

himself into India as an outsider but as a native resident who has been raised on the literal fruits of the nation. His preference for Indian cuisine further solidifies his place as an Indian resident. Under the “pallor of hunger,” it is “curry, pulse, cakes fried in fat, and sweetmeats. Specially sweetmeats” that Kim requests, not Anglo-Saxon fare (Kipling 195). His penchant for the cuisine shows how integral his bicultural upbringing has become. Even when he is sent to St. Xavier’s to learn how to be British, Kim dislikes the “raw beef on a platter at the barrack-school” and “yearn[s] for . . . mutton stewed with butter and cabbages, for rice speckled with strong scented cardamoms, for the saffron-tinted rice, garlic and onions, and the forbidden greasy sweetmeats of the bazars” (Kipling 125). Though he straddles two cultures, his prolonged exposure to Indian culture has cultivated his preferences to be more Indian rather than Anglo.

While Kipling himself is an Anglo-Indian, there seems to be an aura of concern regarding Kim’s intense indoctrination within Indian culture in the novel. Kipling casts a wary eye on the fine balance that exists within this Anglo-Indian lifestyle through Bennet’s character. Upon first interacting with Kim, Bennett fears the boy has “leagued with all the Powers of Darkness” (Kipling 87). The absence of a British education and cultural experiences in Kim’s upbringing has tipped the boy into the unacceptable realm of Anglo-Indian hybridity. Rather than incorporating Indian influences into the British nation through their reappropriation and Anglicization, Kim becomes a part of the Indian culture and nearly loses his sense of British self.

After he is apprehended by Father Victor and Bennett, the pair send Kim to be educated at St. Xavier’s in Partibus at Lucknow, “the best schooling a boy can get in India” both intellectually and socially (Kipling 94). Here he obtains the English cultural and social knowledge he failed to acquire on the streets of India. His formal British education provides him with an understanding of both English culture and his place as a British citizen within the

imperial hierarchy. Though Kim knows how to interact with native Indian citizens, his English education teaches him how to communicate with other “civilized” people and the global world. His schooling, essentially, “idolize[s] an England known only through words, pictures, and stores” and upholds “cultural practices” that attempt to demonstrate to Kim that “England [is] a tangible alma mater, not a distant speck on the map” and that he should “overlook [his] Indian surroundings” and embrace his British heritage (Plotz 45). His British education allows the boy to understand his place within the Empire as a British citizen and to see how his hybridity is an asset to the overall success of imperial Great Britain. The British Empire is able to use Kim’s familiarity with India to gain stronger insight into the South Asian colony. This knowledge ensures Great Britain maintains its hold on India by having citizens who exist in both cultures. However, the completion of Kim’s British education at St. Xavier’s exemplifies the importance of maintaining strong ties between India and Great Britain so Britons don’t lose their sense of Britishness while abroad.

His ability to comprehend and pick up on a culture’s customs and practices provides Kim with the necessary qualities to become an effective spy for Great Britain through his ability to blend in and remain anonymous through his understanding of Asian traditions and practices. The two vital educations Kim receives—as both a native of India and as a British citizen—encapsulate the transformation of Britons within India. Ultimately, his duality is not observed as a negative facet, but one that can be utilized for the benefit of the Empire. Kim’s “[e]xposure to—and eating with—all these ‘native friends’” is a vital aspect of his success as a British spy (Chan 4). By consuming Indian food with the nation’s native subjects, Kim has an insider’s knowledge of how the country, people, and culture function, providing a competitive advantage

for Great Britain within the Great Game with Russia as these two nations seek to gain control of the Central and Southern Asia.

His “ability to acquire and consume indigenous dishes offers an eloquent index to his mastery of both Indian society, and, in a sense, the whole of India” that the majority of Britons would be unable to access (Chan 1). Kim is shown “lovingly” consuming “steaming vegetable curry, clapped [with] a fried cake atop, and a morsel of clarified butter on the cake, dabb[ing] a lump of sour tamarind conserve at the side” as he navigates his way through the streets of India (Kipling 14). This ingestion of Anglo-Indian foods characterizes his superiority and mastery over India as a Briton and his capacity to ingest these dishes without any adverse side effects depicts a merging of these two cultures with his body. Ultimately, his effortless “consumption of curry enables him to master India and to protect British interests” through his reappropriation of Anglo-Indian cuisine as a citizen of Great Britain (Chan 3). Whereas the consumption of this fare by Touchwood, Jos, and Colonel Maddison was represented as a negative consequence of prolonged exposure to India, Kim’s ingestion symbolizes the British Empire’s mastery over its colony. Indian dishes are no longer unacceptable for English consumption but instead a demonstration of Great Britain’s dominance through its reappropriation into British culture through well over a century of colonization. This commandeering of native Indian foods shows to readers a positive imperial presence in India in which their consumption of Anglo-Indian foods sustains and promotes the endeavors of the Empire within its colony.

Kim’s hybridity aids in the continuing transition of Anglo-Indian fare onto the British table. Like Touchwood, Jos Sedley, and Colonel Maddison, Kim has garnered a love for the cuisine and there is little doubt the character would have served and consumed Anglo-Indian dishes in his new home. His own shift from the Indian sphere symbolizes the movement of these

foods into the English culture. In transferring his eating practice from being “cross-legged, ash-smearred, and wild-eyed” to sitting at a dining table at St. Xavier’s, Kim sophisticates the Anglo-Indian cuisine, moving it from the Indian cookery realm to become acceptable British fare (Kipling 159).

Additionally, Kipling describes Kim’s meals in mouthwatering detail, providing his readers with a sensory overload of gastronomic descriptors regarding the curry the young man euphorically consumes. Kipling describes Kim’s meals of “a little rice and some dried fish atop—yes, and some vegetable curry” and “cold fowl stewed to rags with rice and prunes” (Kipling 14, 227). Kipling utilizes this imagery to entice his readers’ taste buds to promote their own consumption of Anglo-Indian fare. By marketing these foods to his literary audience, Kipling promotes a positive consumer meaning around this culinary fare. His use of specific ingredients to aid his readers by vicariously tasting Kim’s foodstuffs also seems to suggest that readers would have been familiar with Anglo-Indian dishes such as curry, clarified butter, and tamarind. Even though Kim consumes these foods in India, rather than in England, Kipling’s inclusion of these foreign foods is positive. The favorable portrayal of Kim’s hybridity situates the character as an imperial and colonial citizen and demonstrates the influences of India upon England. The boy’s knowledge of India aids in promoting and supporting the British Empire’s goals and endeavors within its colony and Kim’s hybridity is a positive representation of the effects of colonialism—in this case Indian influence—upon Great Britain. The British Empire’s ability to maintain a stronghold on its territories is accomplished through its comprehension and knowledge of its colony. Kim’s understanding of India through an imperial lens by the conclusion of the novel, demonstrates to readers how an awareness of the East Asian country is beneficial to Great Britain as this information can be exploited to strengthen the control of the

Empire in India. Ultimately, while not every Briton attains this form of hybridity, these individuals' experiences did impact England. Novels like *Kim* depict the incorporation of Anglo-Indian foods into the British culinary identity and demonstrate the hybrid food's influence within England and the acceptance of it by the English.

In *Kim*, we observe the titular character attempt to make sense of and come to terms with his hybridity. As he navigates his realization of self, the only thing that remains constant is that "I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim"; but as he begins to understand and interpret the bearing these two cultures have had on his person he wonders, "Who is Kim?" He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before" (Kipling 117-118). The influence of India on Great Britain creates a similar question of cultural identity within England. The impact of colonization upon the nation produced both positive and negative effects, many of which were irreversible. As depicted within Kim's journey from Indian street urchin to educated British spy, Kipling informs readers of the importance of maintaining and promoting British customs, practices, and mores, regardless of location. Ensuring the continuation of English culture abroad allowed Britons the opportunity not only to civilize the colonies but also to expand British influence around the world. As Kipling illustrates, failure to heed this duty could cause potential harm. English colonial hybridity obtained through England's presence in India, is ultimately a positive outcome that supports the British Empire's quest for global power. The favorable usage of Kim's hybridity for imperial gain demonstrates to readers how their consumption of Anglo-Indian food supports the Empire and its ideals through the reappropriation of East Asian foodstuffs into the British culinary identity. The cultural meaning created around these foods encouraged a minor form of hybridity and the consumption of these Anglo-Indian dishes solidified the British Empire's control over India. Even though many Britons did not have

firsthand experiences in India, the connection of Anglo-Indian foods as “British” tied them to the colony and further fortified Great Britain’s presence within the nation.

Conclusion

The amalgamation of British and Indian culture has had lasting effects on Great Britain. Even though the British Empire dissolved and many of its former colonies are now self-governing countries, the influence of colonization still marks the nation. These foods are no longer “too ‘native’ or too exotic” and have become a cultural staple with Great Britain (M. Roy 74). The importance of Anglo-Indian cuisine within the history and culture of England are observed through the multitude of restaurants serving the fare throughout the country that represents its citizens’ enjoyment of the cuisine. Its incorporation as a vital part of the English cultural identity situates Anglo-Indian foodstuffs as a “synecdoche for the reciprocal and constitutive process of cultural transmission which produced composite, national identities” through the combination of two civilizations (M. Roy 74). Through the former British Empire’s reappropriation of its colony’s traditions and practices as a means of establishing power, a hybrid identity and eventual transformation of the British way of life occurred. By incorporating aspects of Anglo-Indian colonial life into English society, culinary tastes were reshaped. As these dishes lost their foreign signifiers and transitioned into “English” foods they became normalized within everyday practices.

Through this “changing palate of the English” and the commandeering and altering of traditional Indian recipes to suit Anglo tastes, the British “domesticat[ed] the exotic, which in turn, transformed the domestic” way of life in England (M. Roy 72). While India’s colonizers assumed their reappropriation of Indian foods was another method of asserting their dominance over their colony, it was not a one-way change. The British may have adjusted curry,

mulligatawny, and kedgeree to suit their particular preferences, but in doing so they introduced their nation to new dishes, which captured and modified the nation's culinary interests forever.

The evolution of the cuisine is clearly demonstrated within the literature of the period; first suspicion (*Saint Ronan's Well*), then begrudging acceptance (*Vanity Fair*, *Aurora Floyd*), and finally adoption as a familiar foodstuff representative of the British Empire's strong presence and hold on India ("Silver Blaze", *Kim*). These literary representations of consumption helped promote and transform the consumer meaning associated with Anglo-Indian cuisine. By making the cuisine acceptable, these foods strengthened and supported the British Empire's power within India and the economical consumption of Indian commodities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cultural Fusion: Mixing Great Britain with its Colonies in Christmas Pudding

Introduction

While Christmas pudding's original inception began during the Medieval period, the dessert's heyday begins within the nineteenth century through the global expansion of the British Empire. One can attribute the dish's popularity to the expanding world market and the subsequent decrease in prices of its vital ingredients, including spices, exotic fruits, and imported alcohol, due to global trade. Though mince pies and Christmas cake also figure into the traditional English Christmas dinner, Christmas pudding holds the place as the *pièce de résistance* of the holiday dinner. Covered in a blue flame and topped with holly, the pudding is nothing short of spectacular.³⁰ The dessert began its journey as "plum pudding," a recipe consumed throughout the year, but over the years it transitioned into something more commonly enjoyed during Christmas. One can credit this transformation to Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens's contemporaries, and the rise of the Victorian Christmas. These factors reshaped the dish to become a significant part of the familial and national Christmas celebration and its continued importance within the country's festivities today.

Christmas pudding is arguably vital to the British holiday celebration and an excellent example of the British appropriation of foreign goods into English culinary habits. One cannot assemble the dish without the acquisition of foreign ingredients such as rum, lemon and oranges, and spices that give the dessert its distinctive flavor. The combination of imperial commodities with domestic British wares makes Christmas pudding possible and ultimately produces a form of cultural fusion representative of the effects of colonialism on British consumption and

³⁰ Traditionally, after a Christmas pudding has sat for thirty or more days, it is heated up by pouring brandy or rum on top and setting it alight.

consumer habits. On the surface, the combination of domestic and imported goods indicates consumer cultural behavior as these products are important in maintaining Christmas pudding as an intrinsic part of the British holiday celebration. However, on a deeper level it also represents the merging of colonial and domestic cultures within Great Britain and the creation of a national cultural meaning around the dessert that ensures the continued purchasing and consumption of these needed goods from abroad. Nevertheless, English nationalism classified Christmas pudding as a *British* food, not a colonial one, which shows that even while colonial imports inundate the recipe, the cultural meaning of the dish as “British” trumps its foreign ingredients. The production of this fare by an English hand ultimately civilizes the non-native components and makes Christmas pudding as an essential food in England necessary to properly celebrate holiday celebration.

Christmas Pudding

Christmas pudding has been a part of the English culinary repertoire for centuries. The recipe for “plum pudding” dates back to medieval England and its consumption during the English Christmas season has foundations in the Roman Catholic Church. The Church decreed that “pudding should be made on the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, that it be prepared with thirteen ingredients to represent Christ and the twelve apostles, and that every family member stir it in turn from east to west to honor the Magi and their supposed journey in that direction” (Bloomfield 149-150). Not only did the creation and eating of Christmas pudding maintain medieval Britons’ participation in church activities, but it also promoted familial community and the consistent ingestion of the dish during the holiday season. While Christmas pudding is no longer principally associated with religious practice, the concept that it is a collective effort,

usually amongst family and close friends, to create and eat the dessert remains an important element of its enjoyment and consumption.

Christmas pudding incorporates sweet and aromatic spices (such as cinnamon and cardamom), several types of sugar, citrus fruits, and brandy (if not other alcohols), and flour, eggs, and breadcrumbs. This amalgamation of ingredients produces a pudding that weighs about a pound and is rich in taste. The Puritans considered the heady flavor of spices and alcohol too sumptuous and consequently banned the dessert in the 1660s. Not until King George I ascended the throne in 1714 did the dish return to prominence during Christmas following the king's request to have it served during his first Christmas in England. The dessert maintained its popularity and by the 1740s an early "plum porridge" recipe appeared in *Christmas Arrangements* (Broomfield 150).

The making of Christmas pudding is fairly straightforward. The cook places all the ingredients in a large bowl and mixes them together. In Victorian times (and still today), families would make the pudding on "Stir Up Sunday," the last Sunday before Advent, when all members took a turn mixing the batter. As part of the Christmas pudding custom, "all the family rose and proceeded in mirthful procession to the kitchen" where a bowl "containing the mixture of raisins and currants, and flour and spice, and eggs and suet, and all other good things appertaining to an English Christmas-pudding" sat on a long table. The mistress of the house began the "mystic rite" by giving the bowl "a hearty stir. She then falls back, and the eldest son then succeeded her, who gives it another rousing stir; and then in succession every member of the family . . . [performs] the same ceremony" ("Family Institutions" 147). Sometimes small trinkets would also be included, such as a "thimble (for spinsterhood), a ring (for marriage), a coin (for wealth), [and] a miniature horseshoe (for good luck)" to be discovered by the family as they joined

together to consume the dessert (Broomfield 150). This stirring process encouraged familial community and allowed them to share in this important holiday activity. The act of each member stirring the pudding represented the unity and fulfillment of tradition within the family. The stirring process also allowed them to participate in a national pastime with other Britons, which unified them with other Britons around the country and world.

Once the pudding ingredients were thoroughly mixed, the pudding was wrapped tightly in a pudding cloth.³¹ The cloth helped the food maintain its globular shape and ensured the food didn't fall apart during the steaming process. The pudding cloth is both literally and metaphorically the "material that binds all of the ingredients of Empire together" through its role in fusing together during the cooking process (Moore, "National Identity" 146). The strength of the cloth, which must be strong enough to hold the weight of the pudding without breaking, is like the might of the Empire, whose strength and protection holds its colonies securely together and safeguards them from outside forces. Once the dessert had been covered, it was then either steamed or boiled before being left in a cool, dark place to dry out for at least a month and up to a year. Before serving, it was reheated by dousing it in brandy before setting it alight and then served with brandy butter, rum butter, cream, or custard.³²

The transformation of Christmas pudding from a national dish to a product representative of Empire can be traced in Victorian portrayals of the dessert within the period's novels and periodicals. These writings situate Christmas pudding as a national food that transcends geographic boundaries through its consumption around the world. No matter where Englishmen or women travelled in the world, they "always had plum-pudding," and "this habit was carried

³¹ A pudding cloth is typically a piece of cloth similar to muslin or cheesecloth.

³² Rum butter is a mixture of rum, butter, and brown sugar traditionally spooned over desserts such as minced pies and Christmas pudding.

out not only in the paternal home, but in the houses of the children who had married and settled—some in India, and some in England” (“Family Institutions” 146). This “paternal home” was both the individual’s parental and cultural home. England was considered the “parent” of its colonies and as Britons immigrated to the colonies, they brought with them the customs of their home country that lived on outside of their “paternal home.” In doing so, every Briton residing in an English colony, “whatever its latitude...retain[ed] its old associations and loved usages” of British Christmas traditions. By consuming Christmas pudding, “long absent” settlers could still have the “happy Christmas of his boyhood” regardless of location (“South American” 325). The importance of incorporating Christmas pudding when away from home demonstrated settlers’ need to retain their Englishness even when surrounded by a foreign environment. Establishing these traditions abroad allowed settlers to incorporate these practices within the colonial environment, slowly replacing indigenous traditions with British ones that aligned with the Empire’s quest to civilize their territorial holdings. Christmas pudding ultimately became a symbol of the British Empire’s appropriation of its colonies. The inclusion of both English domestic and colonial goods became a strong symbol of the successful incorporation of the colonies into the Empire and the indigenous people’s submission to imperial ideals.

Comparatively, Anglo-Indian food, which was reappropriated from its original form to become acceptable for British eating standards as a demonstration of the British Empire’s domination over its colonies. Instead Christmas pudding seems to encompass a more harmonious and successful integration of their colonial subjects into English culture. The pudding portrays the unity of Great Britain and its principalities as they worked together through the exchange of goods and services that ensured a strong world power. Much like the solid construction of the pudding, their secure bond through economic and commercial trade unique to the different parts

of the Empire created a praiseworthy and enviable realm rather than a complete eradication of a colonial society's culture.

Establishing Cultural Meanings and Ethnocentrism

Even though Christmas pudding has long been a part of the British festive celebration, the expansion of trade routes by the British Empire and the increase of available commodities in England made the dish more accessible to a wider audience of Britons. In addition, the inclusion of Christmas pudding in literary works played a significant role in encouraging the English to consume the dessert during their holiday gatherings. These portrayals sought to reinforce to Britons that the food was an important aspect of their identity as both English and imperial citizens. Nineteenth-century writers constructed scenes of eating and consumption that supported and maintained England's ties to its colonies and the exports they produced.

To expand consumerism of the pudding, manufacturers and merchants needed to successfully advertise these ingredients. In "Trade, Consumption and Development Alliances: The History Legacy of the Empire Marketing Board Poster Campaign," Uma Kothari analyzes the advertising manufactured by Great Britain's Empire Marketing Board and the campaign's effect on British consumerism. Kothari examines the Board's poster campaign that sought to increase the purchasing of imperial goods from 1926-1933 by encouraging English customers to buy items from Australia, South Africa, or other colonies rather than those from outside the Empire. In her research, the author suggests that advertising campaigns "incorporate culture into consumerism and hence capitalism is not simply an economic, but also a cultural process" and that successful advertising exploits potential buyers' emotions, ideals, and mores to best convince them to purchase their product over competitors (Kothari 46). Even today, marketing inundates viewers with print, radio, and television advertisements that incessantly employ this

tactic.³³ The advertising strategies essentially seek to capitalize on and also transform buyers’ cultural understandings and identity with particular commodities. Convincing buyers that consuming certain goods will enhance their social status, improve their circumstances, or allow them to connect more deeply with their community transforms their perceived national identity. In the case of the Empire Marketing Board, its advertisements endeavored to construct a national identity and community by telling English consumers that their duty as citizens was to buy imperial commodities in order to support the national economy. Advertising’s ability to mold a nation’s culture forms a “projection, not a reflection, of the economy” and the culture in which the customer exists (Kothari 46). It isn’t the purchaser who creates culture but the advertisers who strive to sell their items by capitalizing on the needs and experiences of their clients. Ultimately, these representations influence a viewers’ outlook on culture and their relationship



Figure 4 – McVitie’s and Prices, The Queen’s Dominions

with it. The innate desire to be included in mainstream society is the reason why advertising is successful in convincing consumers to acquire certain items.

Victorian advertising took advantage of Britons’ sense of nationalism to sell their wares. Even the biscuit manufacturer McVitie and Price (Figure 4) frame their

food as both national and global. Though the cookies are produced in Edinburgh, they are seemingly available throughout “the Queen’s Dominions” (noted in red), which testifies that

³³ One I especially enjoy utilizing with students when teaching about and exploring the effects of advertising is the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals campaigns seeking pledge from its viewers by showing mistreated animals in need of love and care that can only be obtained through a monetary donation.

every Briton, regardless of location, has the opportunity to purchase and consume McVitie and Price biscuits and ultimately maintain their Britishness even while away from England.

As with Christmas pudding, if buyers believed the dessert was an integral part of the holiday celebration, it would satisfy both their need to participate in the national community and need to be familiar with social mores. For Victorians, their “society had perceived national or dominant values” and the “noble standards



Figure 5 - Victorian Christmas Card, 1843

many participants liked to believe that they and their neighbors held” influenced their consumption choices within the English marketplace (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 24). Beyond the cookbook, Christmas pudding could be found on Christmas cards, story illustrations, and advertisements. The English were inundated with images touting the relationship between pudding and Christmas, which further emphasized the dish’s importance to the holiday. This Victorian version of “keeping up with the Jones’s” worked to increase the consumption of Christmas pudding within the nineteenth century. Britons assumed that all English citizens enjoyed the pudding during their Christmas celebrations and therefore Britons attempted to satisfy this expectation.

Print advertising wasn’t the only method utilized to influence English consumers’ buying habits. The marketing characteristics exemplified in print advertisements that exploited Britons’ sense of national pride and community can also be found within nineteenth-century written texts as well. Adverts strongly emphasized British unity and dominance through the use of specific goods. Similarly, literary representations depicted characters joining together and sharing foods

that highlighted the greatness and superiority of Great Britain. The period's novels, short stories, and articles specifically position Christmas pudding as a communal dish, just like print advertisements. The centering of Christmas stories around family and friends also constructed the holiday as one celebrated as a community. The reintroduction of Christmas to England may stem from a nation "seeking the lost ideals of its past in order to unite a society" during a period when England was undergoing numerous changes (O'Conner 131). Traditional Christmas customs "brought rich and poor together . . . [in a] society had become too stratified" and their practice allowed strengthened of local and national communities through citizens' participation (Pitts et al. 411). These gatherings allowed Britons active involvement in England's imagined national community and encouraged the facilitation of relationships. In holiday stories, "[t]he home became and remained the central focus for Christmas nostalgia" through its exploitation of readers' innate desire for community (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 26). Portraying the enjoyment of eating Christmas pudding with family and friends in holiday stories strengthened Britons' pride in and support of their nation and their willingness to participate in national community.

In addition to improving participation in the British national community at large, Christmas stories increased English consumption of imperial goods. As the British Empire expanded during the nineteenth-century, the colonies' economic success in turn increased the prosperity of the Empire. By the end of the nineteenth century, Great Britain's colonies made up a quarter of the globe and possessed a population of 412 million citizens and colonists (Ferguson 301, Maddison 97). Suffice it to say that the Empire had a viable and steady revenue source at its disposal. To tap into this market, the British Empire needed to convince its citizens of their duty to purchase imperial commodities to demonstrate their national unity, identity, and support of the British Empire. Colonial advertisements were a direct method in informing citizens of available

goods for purchase. Due to the consistent marketing of these goods, it is likely it had an indirect influence on authors of the period. Nineteenth-century English domestic novels include and reference of British-sourced goods. These works, such as Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm*, encapsulated the nation's culture, and their effective literary representations wove together a story to engage readers with common experiences

Britons were aware of the imported ingredients that made Christmas pudding special. However, their belief in their superiority within the world allowed them to recognize their civilizing influence upon these commodities through the integration of these goods into the dessert during the cooking process. In *The Book of Christmas: Descriptive of the Customs, Ceremonies, Traditions, Superstitions, Fun, Feeling, and Festivities of the Christmas Season*, Thomas Hervey refers to Christmas pudding as a "blackamoor [which has] received an English education and taken an English form, and he has long ago been adopted into the family of Father Christmas" through the pudding's reappropriation into English national culinary practices (Hervey). While the English had to import fruits, spices, and alcohol to create this dish, they believed they had refined them not only through the mixing and cooking process but also through its long-established place within the English culinary repertoire. Its lengthy tenure within the eating habits of the English essentially made it inherently "British" as the original foreignness associated with these goods had been removed.

Christmas pudding's establishment as a vital part of the British holiday celebration meant that English consumers used a significant portion of their money to purchase the rather lengthy ingredient list needed for the recipe. While domestic goods, including eggs and flour, were inexpensive, spices and exotic fruits were costly. Unfortunately, the British Empire did not have the monopoly on many of the ingredients needed for Christmas pudding. France and the

Netherlands had their own colonies in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and were able to supply rum, spices, and dried fruits to British buyers for the recipe. This market competition could potentially deprive the British Empire of available capital from its own citizens if English



Figure 6 – Empire Marketing Board, “Have an EMPIRE Xmas Pudding,” 1926

consumers chose to acquire these products from one of their foreign competitors. To ensure their colonies were economically viable, the Empire needed to influence its citizens to shop for British imperial goods to retain English economic wealth within the nation. Additionally, by encouraging Britons to purchase “higher quality” imperially-sourced goods, the British established a demand that only the Empire could meet and therefore solidified and validated an imperial presence within these territories.

To persuade Britons to “buy Empire,” a transformation of the cultural meanings held by the English

associated with foreign, imported goods needed to occur. Cultural meanings were “[re]formed by emphasising [the colonies’] cultural similarity to Britain and, at the same time, distinguishing them from the dependent empire [Great Britain]” as having their own functioning economies that needed the help of British customers to be economically successful (Barnes 64). By increasing financial support through the purchasing power of imperial citizens, the British Empire could strengthen its hold over its colonies and guarantee a return on its investment within these regions. Situating the colonies as “Britain’s, and British, farming hinterlands” transformed settlements from “exotic outposts of empire” to extensions of England itself (Barnes 64). The territories ceased being a faraway place dissimilar to Great Britain and were transformed into an extension

of England. Imperial consumerism then became a vital aspect of the English national identity and what it meant to participate in British culture. Promoting the consumption of colonial goods encouraged Britons to “recognise the significance of their role as consumers in maintaining the Empire” (Kothari 44). Buying imperial commodities recycled economic capital back into the British Empire and helped maintain imperial presence and endeavors within the colonies. The multitude of Christmas dishes displayed Briton’s purchasing power and wealth and “encouraged Victorians to take stock of their status as the world’s most powerful empire” through the foods chosen for their tables (Broomfield 149).

Modern observers can view Christmas pudding’s symbolism in various ways: through its fusion of domestic and non-native products, its spherical shape that represents Great Britain’s mastery over its colonies and the world, and the dessert’s representation as both a “celebration of modernity and a celebration of traditions” that “evoked many people’s nostalgia and longing for old ways and customs” (Broomfield 149). The dish’s long-established traditions and its incorporations of new techniques captured and emphasized England’s unique past and extraordinary present. This period was one of rapid expansion in which the former slow-paced agrarian society was barely behind them and a rapidly expanding industrial world unfolded ahead of them.

The ingredients, preparation, and shape of Christmas pudding all encapsulated the dessert’s representation and ties to the British Empire. A recipe advert published by the Empire Marketing Board in 1926 lists the ingredients and their places of production (Figure 7). The instructions call for foods from all over the British Empire, including currants from Australia; bread crumbs, beef suet, and flour from the United Kingdom; ground cloves from Zanzibar; ground nutmegs from the British West Indies; brandy from Australia, South Africa, Cypress, or

Palestine; and rum from Jamaica or British Guiana (“Empire Christmas Pudding”). The wide breadth of locations from which these goods derive demonstrates the vast size of the British Empire and its ability to supply these foods to its citizens. There is ultimately no need for them to purchase these commodities from foreign merchants, such as France or the Netherlands. Listing the colonies from where these ingredients were grown and cultivated not only informs Britons as to the location source of these items within the Empire, it also ensures they’re “buying Empire” when they shop.



Figure 7 – Empire Marketing Board, “The Empire Christmas Pudding,” 1926

Possessing this consumer knowledge allows them to specially request imperial products from merchants.

All social and economic classes included Christmas pudding in their winter holiday festivities. Even the working classes, who normally couldn’t afford the expensive spices and fruits needed to make the pudding, joined “Christmas clubs” and “did their best to store away the dried fruits and spices fundamental to the pudding’s success” over the course of the year (Broomfield 150). Though the global economy of the British Empire attempted to make the products needed for the recipe available, they were still costly for individuals with limited disposable income. Christmas pudding is, after all, an expensive dessert with its imported spices, fruits, and alcohol for poorer Britons who normally could not afford these expensive commodities. These Christmas clubs were popular during the nineteenth-century and encouraged households “to put aside a few pennies a month in order to purchase these necessities at

Christmas” (Broomfield 149). The inclusion of the dessert during the Yuletide dinner was such an integral part of their celebration that individuals who often struggled to make ends meet found ways to ensure they could still participate in this important cultural right as a British citizen.

A Christmas club is likely how the Cratchit family was able to afford the Christmas pudding Mrs. Cratchit serves at the conclusion of their holiday meal. Considering Scrooge’s miserly ways, Bob Cratchit receives a low wage and the family arguably has little to no expendable income. Whether Mrs. Cratchit saved what little money she could to obtain the necessary goods or stockpiled ingredients throughout the year, it wasn’t enough to make a pudding adequately sized to feed such a substantial family. However, even though the pudding is undersized, “nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing” (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). Its inclusion means they’re not so poor that they can’t have a proper Christmas. Their consumption allows them to participate in Christmas fully and to have one fleeting moment of being equal to other Britons through their shared enjoyment of the pudding. Even with their economic constraints, the Cratchits and other British families still found ways to ensure a pudding found its way upon their table.

The process of making Christmas pudding seemingly eradicates these lines, making the entire dessert a *British* food. The British belief in their superiority and refinement consequently masks the colonial imports, which are appropriated and refined by an English hand. As Moore states, “Plum pudding cannot thrive in the lands that produce its raw ingredients” because they lack the cultural sophistication and refinement the English possess (Moore, “National Identity” 144). Instead, the English cook transforms these exotic products from their unrefined state into a domestic dish, producing a symbol of their mastery of their colonies. This process exemplifies

the objective of the British Empire to seize and conquer the globe and its various commodities. Christmas pudding not only “represents idealization of an English identity through Christmas, but, most importantly, it signifies a celebration and clear consumption of Empire” (Moore, “National Identity” 146).

Christmas pudding essentially represents the diversity of the British Empire in edible form. Those who ingest it cannot escape the influence and effect of imperialism. Eaters symbolically accept and support the colonial endeavors of the Empire through their consumption. In Christmas pudding, Britons “consume not only the product of a spice trade, but also an emblem of English cultural dominance and colonial economic exploitation” (Moore, “National Identity” 144-145).³⁴ Even though the British saw themselves as the dominant civilization through the outward installation of English ideals and culture into their colonies, the result was a byproduct of two cultures. While the integration of colonies into the British Empire sought to conceal and change the “unrefined” culture of their overseas territories through the incorporation of Anglo principles within these nations, the end result was a combination of these two places. The Empire may have considered it something purely “British,” but it would not have been possible without the combination of the colonizer and its colony. From its ingredients to its globular shape, Christmas pudding was a strong representation of the effects of Empire and imperialism on British eating habits. The narrative promoted through advertisements and literary texts instilled a need to include the dessert during their holiday festivities. The connection between community, national pride, and Christmas pudding assisted in ensuring the nationwide

³⁴ Even two centuries later, twenty-first century Britons still produce and consume Christmas pudding during their holiday celebrations. However, the dominant representation of the dessert is no longer the power and breadth of the British Empire but of community on a familial and national scale. For modern English citizens, Christmas pudding encourages families to gather and share the dessert while simultaneously supporting and sustaining their national heritage.

purchasing of these goods and the continued consumption of it. This helped situate the pudding as a holiday fixture and supported the narrative of national superiority and fraternity within the country.

Christmas Pudding in Literature

Victorian Christmas texts are “typically abundant [with] descriptions of Christmas feasts” that include a variety of different types of foods (Moore, “National Identity” 144). As Victorian era authors “described and depicted their version of what it looked like to be an English person celebrating Christmas, they engendered expectations within their readership” of how Britons should celebrate the holiday, including the foods they should purchase (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 12). The authors’ inclusion of specific foods played a large role in how Victorians came to celebrate Christmas. Christmas stories supported the idea of family, both domestically and nationally, and encouraged Britons to show their support of the English ideals of familial and imperial relationships through their participation. In Victorian Christmas stories, the holiday “celebrated the sanctity of family as much as the sanctity of Jesus’ birth, and the tradition of all family members stirring the pudding was often referenced” (Broomfield 150). Authors ensured the “continuity of their . . . Christmas print matter, by investing the reader with national identity and a desire to re-establish this identity annually by consuming Christmas literature” (Moore, “National Identity” 150). Just as they indulged in Christmas pudding around the holidays, readers indulged in Christmas literature, which encouraged and reinforced the social requirement to be active consumers in the season’s festivities. Through the formation of joyous and carefree celebrations that seemed within their grasp, readers sought to produce these experiences within their own lives. This form of persuasion led to increased consumption not only of literary materials but also of the products described in the text, including foods like Christmas pudding.

Prior to the reemergence of selected Christmas traditions that reframed the holiday from a liturgical event to a festive celebration during the Victorian era, “it was not unheard of for English citizens to pass the day unobserved, and the holiday was practically outlawed in parts of Scotland” (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 11).³⁵ The day had ultimately become antiquated and celebrated only by the very religious. However, with the help of Hervey and Dickens as well as Sir Walter Scott’s *Marmion* and Washington Irving the *Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, which include short stories on Christmas and its traditions, Christmas swept back into English culture as a fashionable and popular celebration that reinforced the holiday’s emphasis on family and community through the inundation of holiday literary stories. The texts cultivated national customs and practices that persuaded Britons it was their responsibility as English citizens to celebrate and participate in its observance. The impact of these national narratives was so strong that the effects are still felt in twentieth-century Great Britain and its former colonies.³⁶

In Hervey’s 1837 publication *The Book of Christmas*, “both author and illustrator package Christmas as a transference of ethnically English traditions” distinct to Great Britain (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 13). Even though some of these “English” customs may have been reappropriated from other European nations, Hervey situates these customs as unique, already established and celebrated within England and the text becomes a reference manual for Britons on celebrating the holiday. By shaping the book in this manner, Hervey shows to his readers that their particular Christmas customs and traditions set them apart from other nations. Even if these countries have their own Yuletide festivities, their celebrations would still set them apart from

³⁵ In 1575, the Scottish Reformation banned “all days that heretofore have been kept holy besides the sabbath day, such as Yule day [Christmas]” (Todd 124). This ban remained as law until 1958 when Christmas became recognized public holiday (Todd 129).

³⁶ Even India, a predominately non-Christian nation, celebrates Christmas with Christmas pudding. This tradition is undeniably a holdover from its time as a British colony.

the English. The English saw themselves as culturally, socially, and economically superior to their global counterparts and the construction of their Christmas traditions reflected this ideology. The emphasis on family and community attempted to distinguish the nation by making it a holiday available to all citizens, regardless of location, economic status, or belief. For Great Britain to preserve its cultural superiority in the world, *The Book of Christmas* provides them with the information to maintain British customs to ensure the English way of life continues and was not changed due to foreign influence or social neglect.

The success of Christmas books had a major impact within England both economically and socially. The popularity of these texts created a new publishing season in the month leading up to Christmas. Following the publication of *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, the “Christmas book trend mushroomed . . . [with] more than two dozen Christmas books published in the 1840s, with the largest numbers turning out for the 1844, 1845, and 1846 festive markets” (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 19). The specific “Christmas market of the 1840s stands out because it evolved to incorporate specific Christmas and domestic ideologies” promoted through the “increased materialism . . . of middle-class leisure and wealth . . . [that suited] the reading needs and spending habits of a wide range of customers” (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 18, 5). These buying practices influenced how Victorians celebrated the holiday and helped establish a commodity culture distinct to the holiday through Christmas stories, cards, and foods. Dickens and his contemporary authors saw an increase in the publication and sales of holiday texts. By 1850, sales from the Christmas issue of *Household Words*, which included Christmas stories, carols, and artwork, “soared to 80,000, and subsequent holiday numbers of the magazine published through 1858 would hold steady at that number” (Standiford 210). This popularity incited William Makepeace Thackeray to refer to the “trend as ‘that new branch of English

literature’” (Moore, *Victorians in Print*, 19). The widespread consumerism of Christmas texts educated readers on the national holiday practices of England, much like Hervey’s *The Book of Christmas*. In buying these texts, the “consumer purchased a ticket into the emotional performance of Christmas” (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 20). Their emotional investment in these texts influenced their own practice of these traditions. Singing carols, spending time with family, and eating Christmas foods established a particular national custom of celebrating the holiday in which all Britons were expected to take part.

Even though regional practices prevailed in England, these stories focused on the national community within the country and its practices. These novels and periodicals ultimately brought Britons together through creation of “Englishness” by framing these customs as previously established rather than newly constructed ones fit for English society. These descriptions of Christmas celebrations around England showed Britons how to participate actively in the holiday. Ultimately, authors like Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Wilkie Collins shaped the Victorian Christmas tradition through their illustrations of British holiday practices. While it seems they are merely reporting on already established holiday traditions, Tara Moore argues these authors’ “process of describing national identity created national identity” (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 12). Texts implied that these celebrations were commonly celebrated around England, which persuaded readers to become participants themselves in order not to be considered un-English. The literary establishment of particular Christmas practices like the consumption of Christmas pudding as part of the national holiday identity ultimately instituted and solidified these customs as vital and nonnegotiable aspects of the English festive season.

Christmas stories conveyed knowledge about how the English celebrated Christmas and helped establish Victorian holiday practices. These narratives influenced what customs readers

practiced and how to do so correctly. By the mid-nineteenth century, fictional descriptions of the holiday's dinner featured Christmas pudding as the crowning moment of the meal. In the conclusion of Anthony Trollope's *Harry Heathcoat of Gangoil: A Tale of Australian Bush-Life* (1874), the author describes a scene in which former English residents gather together to celebrate a "reproduction of the Christmas dinner" in the Australian bush with a "real English-plum-pudding" (Trollope, *Harry Heathcote*). This harkens back to a comment made at the beginning of the book in which the titular character reminisces about having a "great pudding come into the room all afire—just to remind one of the old country" (Trollope, *Harry Heathcote*). Even though "Christmas dinner at Gangoil was eaten with great satisfaction," the pudding is the only food described to readers (Trollope, *Harry Heathcote*). The lack of description for the other foods arguably reveals the importance of Christmas pudding in maintaining Englishness abroad, demonstrated through both personal identity and tangible traditions. These new Australian immigrants come from a variety of different backgrounds and geographic locations but find commonality through the holiday celebration and the consumption of Christmas pudding. Even when "Sergeant Forrest and his man" arrive unannounced and "were in want of their Christmas dinner . . . it was given to them with no grudging hand," emphasizing the fraternal and optimistic ideology associated with the holiday (Trollope, *Harry Heathcote*). Trollope shapes the scene in such a way that any reader, regardless of class or economic standing, is positively impacted by the group's joy and excitement of sharing this meal together. This favorable depiction of friendship and food would have influenced readers to include the dish within their own Christmas celebration.

The construction of particular celebrations within these novels built an "image of communion" amongst the nation's citizens that encouraged all Britons to participate (Anderson

6). The celebration of Christmas thus became a type of imagined community in which English citizens enjoyed a distinctive holiday. By “infusing fiction with holiday scenes and an evolved Christmas ideology” that incorporated Victorian culture and mores, Britons also found themselves actively participating in the holiday to keep up with the period’s fashionable trend (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 10). Readers observed literary characters actively participating in Christmas in a variety of ways, but most notably through the specific depiction of food. By creating scenes of culinary consumption within a recognizable environment, the authors allowed readers to transition into the text and imagine themselves intimately connected to their fellow citizens. These Victorian Christmas texts ultimately support the idea of a national Christmas meal. This imitation ultimately transformed these Christmas traditions from perceived national practices into genuine traditions.

While scholars often cite Charles Dickens for reigniting the mass English participation in the holiday, other authors aided the growth of the celebration around England, reflecting “its exponents’ current beliefs, anxieties, self-understandings and prejudices, while seeming to stand for timelessness and genuine cohesion” of the overall national cultural and social sphere (Moore, *Victorians in Print* 13-14). Representative titles include *A Christmas Carol*, Wilkie Collins’s *Mr. Wray’s Cash-box*, and Anthony Trollope’s *Orley Farm*. These stories were vital in establishing customs like the consumption of Christmas pudding. The detailed description of the fare and the characters’ obvious enjoyment of it within these literary scenes not only appealed to readers’ appetites but also centered the food as an established and expected practice for the holiday. Rather than introducing the pudding as something “new,” these authors utilize the dessert’s lengthy English culinary history to root it in the national and cultural Christmas tradition with which all Britons should comply.

In “National Identity and Victorian Christmas Foods,” Tara Moore states that while roast beef, goose, and the “newly imported turkey” were also important to the Christmas meal, “these meats were in flux depending on the trade situation of the times.” However, Christmas pudding and the ingredients needed to make it “remained current throughout the nineteenth-century” as a featured Yuletide dessert (Moore, “National Identity” 145). This availability likely kept prices affordable and provided a large enough supply to meet market demand in England. The constancy of Christmas pudding on the English table year over year aided in solidifying the dish within the holiday’s expected meal. While the Christmas meal included no required type of meat, a Christmas meal without its namesake pudding would not be a proper holiday feast.

However, the inclusion of Christmas pudding within nineteenth century Christmas stories is very small. This scarcity, considering the book market for Christmas novels and the cultivation of Christmas pudding as the *pièce de résistance* of the Christmas meal, is surprising to me. While literary depictions of Britons ingesting Christmas pudding are minor when compared to the number of Christmas novels written during the Victorian period, the dish’s placement in these novels still informed readers of both the significance of the dessert within the English national festive celebration and the method of its consumption. Even without the inundation of novels with references to Christmas pudding, the success of holiday novels like *A Christmas Carol* had a major impact on how the English celebrated Christmas.

The Rise of Christmas

One cannot discuss the Victorian Christmas and its customs without first discussing Charles Dickens’s role in the holiday’s resurgence in Great Britain. His influence and impact on the holiday, especially following the publication of *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, are a major inspiration in the establishment of nineteenth-century Christmas practices. Social historians cite

Dickens as “opening the door to the nostalgic, backward-looking, but commercialized new Christmas” that permeated Victorian England (Moore, *Victorians in Print*, 22). Dickens “championed and promoted the spirit of Christmas constantly in his weekly magazine *Household Words*, in his novels and short stories, and in his private life” (Broomfield 149). Not only did Dickens popularized the “themes and associations of Christmas in settings accessible to his readership,” but he also “turned Christmas into a publishing event” that commodified the holiday season for both the publishing industry and the English economy (Moore, *Victorians in Print*, 22). Through his various publication outlets, Dickens took advantage of the consumer meanings of family, national pride, and community and successfully created a Christmas market. His fervor for the holiday and ability to transport readers into his stories were essential to the renewed British participation in the holiday as well as its lasting establishment in England.

Even though Dickens’ contribution to modern Christmas practices cannot be discounted, he wasn’t the sole creator of the holiday. Les Standiford explains in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* that the “decorative elements and amusements mentioned in *A Christmas Carol* . . . were not so much Dickens’s inventions as traditional elements given a fresh gloss by their appearance in such splendid literary surroundings” (Standiford 186). These Yuletide festivities highlighted in *A Christmas Carol* actually appear in earlier English novels dating back to the eighteenth century, which “enumerate any number of the features that characterize what are now thought of as belonging to the ‘Victorian’ or ‘Dickensian’ Christmas.” In *Marmion*, Sir Walter Scott includes a “vivid description of a Christmas feast” similar to that found in *A Christmas Carol* (Standiford 177). Readers observe a holiday dinner containing:

The wassel round, in good brown bowls
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls

There the huge sirloin reck'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie.
Nore [sic] failed old Scotland to produce
At such high tide, her savoury goose
Then came the merry maskers in
And carols roar'd with blithesome din. (Scott, *Marmion* 6:64-71)³⁷

Scott creates an inviting and mouthwatering dinner that is overflowing with foods and “merry maskers,” depicting the time as joyful and social. This scene constructs the holiday as communal, with guests gathering around an elaborately laid table to enjoy both food and entertainment. Christmas may have been a less commonly celebrated holiday when *Marmion* was published, but the sense of community and merrymaking is just as poignant as later Victorian Christmas stories.

Additionally, the inclusion of plum pudding in *Marmion* shows a dessert already established on the Christmas dinner table. The pudding may have made its mark prior to the publication of *A Christmas Carol*, but Dickens’s championing of the modern Victorian Christmas nonetheless transformed the fare into an essential commodity for the holiday’s celebration. Dickens was “well aware of the traditional celebration of the Christmas holiday” and had “enjoyed it, and he had written of it with enthusiasm on a number of occasions” prior to the publication and success of *A Christmas Carol* (Standiford 176). His popularizing of the holiday

³⁷ Wassail (or wassel) is a spiced ale or cider traditional drunk from a wassail bowl while “wassailing,” the singing of a jovial and convivial Christmas carols: “Wassail, or rather the wassail bowl, which was a bowl of spiced ale, formerly carried about by young women on New-year’s eve, who went from door to door in their several parishes singing a few couplets of homely verses composed for the purpose, and presented the liquor to the inhabitants of the house where they called, expecting a small gratuity in return” (*Brewer’s Dictionary*).

reinvigorated these customs by situating them in Victorian England, harnessing readers' familiarity with the setting and (re)introducing them to Christmas practices.

A Christmas Carol has come to signify holiday stories and while the text is a literary masterpiece in its own right, promoting family, a giving spirit, and help for the poor, one must remember the other Christmas stories that aided in establishing the holiday and its unique practices and customs within England. Following the publication of *A Christmas Carol*, a plethora of Christmas stories inundated the British literary environment. Within these stories, there is a strong pro-Empire attitude influencing readers to support the established English national identity through adherence of traditional Christmas practices. A wide audience across England read these stories in Victorian periodicals. These texts covered a range of topics and sometimes included serialized stories as well as short narratives. Like their lengthier novel counterparts, periodicals included Christmas stories that promoted the celebration of the holiday to readers through the encouragement of commodity consumption. Whereas nineteenth-century holiday novels seem to lack an abundance of references to Christmas pudding, periodicals in contrast contain a considerable number of references to the dish.

The Victorian press also played a key part of the construction of the nineteenth century Christmas practices. Long before radio, television, and the internet, print media was where readers learned about domestic and world events, fashion trends, and social gossip. Unlike novels, periodicals tended to be more succinct in their content, with articles tailored more specifically to fixed topics rather than an overarching story (the exception being the serialized narratives). Periodicals tended to focus on specific aspects of holiday activities, including the creation and consumption of Christmas pudding, whereas novels incorporated these items as a method of scene building rather than the focal point. The marketing of Christmas pudding by

periodicals aided in shaping readers' celebratory practices through stories and illustrations included within these texts. Popular periodicals, including *Household Words*, *Punch*, and *The Leisure Hour* all cultivated a particular Christmas ideology to readers, one that promoted a domestic, national, and imperial community through consumption.

During his lifetime, Charles Dickens edited two periodicals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. *Household Words* was a weekly magazine published during the 1850s and its low cost (a tuppence) made it accessible to many Britons, though the content was mainly geared toward the middle class (Huett 70). The publication eventually folded in 1859 after Dickens ran into differences with his former publisher (Drew 135-136). During its tenure, however, *Household Words* included numerous references to Christmas pudding. As the writer of *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens obviously understood the significance and meaning of Christmas to his readers and sought to capitalize on their desire through the inclusion of pro-England and Empire articles. One that is especially interesting is "A Christmas Pudding" (1850), written by *Household Words* contributor Charles Knight, which recounts the dream of Mr. Oldknow, the patriarch of a traditional Victorian family, about the creation of the dessert and the importance of its continued consumption to England and the British Empire. There is no mistaking this article's wholly pro-Empire stance through the support of the traditional English national identity.

In a traditional Victorian patriarchal society, Mr. Oldknow isn't familiar with culinary recipes or the goings-on of the household kitchen. When he informs his wife that "we must have a second pudding," she humors him, calling him a "precious cook . . . You think a Christmas pudding can be made as easily as a pancake" (Knight 300). Mr. Oldknow argues "fruit is cheap" and that he wants the "Porters to have a pudding, and old nurse Franklin and the Corderys" (Knight 301). For Mr. Oldknow, Christmas pudding is an important national tradition and he

wants to ensure everyone has one to consume on Christmas day so they can partake in the country's festivities with their fellow English citizens. While his intentions are good, his wife informs him "they always *do* have a pudding, every one of them" (Knight 301). This sentence could be a good-hearted admonishment from a wife to a husband, but it packs much more meaning. Mrs. Oldknow infers *everyone* they know, regardless of class or economic standing, has a pudding ready to be covered in brandy, lit, and eaten for Christmas. This exchange supports the notion that Christmas pudding is a vital part of the holiday celebration and enjoyed by all Britons. It also informs readers that if they do not have one for their dinner, their feast is lacking and inferior to other meals within the nation. "A Christmas Pudding" consequently plays on the consumer meanings of nationalism and community by constructing the dessert as a symbol of these concepts.

This ideology is further exploited by Dickens within the story. After this conversation, Mr. Oldknow falls asleep as he "mused and mused over the mercantile history of the various substances of which that pudding was composed" (Knight 301). His pondering influences his dreams, which take him on a journey around the world. He "travels" to the Spice Islands, Zante, and the West Indies to discover how each location benefits the Empire. He recounts the British Empire's victory over the Dutch for the "cinnamon groves of Ceylon—they are yours" and how their colonization satisfies a "large demand at moderate prices" and how this consumption aids in "diffusing comfort and equal laws, opening roads, encouraging industry, [and] destroying forced labour" within the country. This positive effect has generated a lucrative cinnamon trade that has the Empire "selling cinnamon to all the world" (Knight 302). Not only are the British extolling virtuous trade practices, but they have increased supply in order to satisfy the large demand around the Empire. Mr. Oldknow learns that Zante houses "twelve thousand acres of our little

grapes under culture for your festivities,” which produce “fifty million pounds of currants for your puddings and your cakes” (Knight 302). On a West Indian sugar plantation, Mr. Oldknow observes “its canes ripening under the tropical sun” and how their free market trade (e.g., without slaves) provides inexpensive sugar to Britons, who “rejoice that the great body of the British people could buy their sugar at half the price that their fathers paid” without the use of slave labor (considered a successful moral “grand experiment”) (Knight 303). Mr. Oldknow’s global journey depicts the breadth of the British Empire and its strong, robust, and moral commercial enterprises, likely meant to signify the nation’s superiority amongst other colonizing powerhouses. Dickens tells his readers that the dessert is a vital component of their holiday celebration and also a representation of the British Empire’s economic and commercial might. “A Christmas Pudding” provides a strong representation of pro-English propaganda and supports the “accumulation of English wealth and power through the dogma of free trade” while “identif[y]ing the commercial weaknesses of other nations” through their substandard trade and ethical practices (Moore, “National Identity” 145). This text promotes both the British Empire’s economic and colonial strength and its moral superiority. Readers observe how the purchasing of imperial goods benefits the colonies and improves the livelihoods of their inhabitants, bringing them out of savage and uncivilized societies to become part of the modern world.

“A Christmas Pudding” also includes Mrs. Oldknow’s Christmas pudding recipe. Based on the instructions in the “Family Receipt Book,” readers learn that the family’s pudding is comprised of:

One pound of raisins; one pound currants; one pound suet; one pound bread-crumbs; quarter pound orange-peel; two ounces citron-peel; two ounces lemon-peel; one nutmeg; one teaspoonful powdered ginger; one teaspoonful powdered

cinnamon; one wine-glassful brandy; seven eggs; one teaspoon salt; quarter pound raw sugar; milk enough to liquefy the mass, if the eggs and brandy be not sufficient for this purpose. (Knight 300)

When compared to the works of Eliza Acton and Isabella Beeton, the inclusion is not a “true” recipe” because it lacks cooking instructions. However, this list of foods does help specify the ingredient checklist for Christmas pudding. Dickens’s implied author assumes that all English citizens will consume the dessert for the holiday and the list helps in systematizing what goods are used, ultimately by removing any variances and standardizing the pudding so it is the same across England and its colonies. Suggesting that all Britons eat Christmas pudding promotes the dessert as an essential part of the Victorian Christmas and also increases demand for these products within the English marketplace through the article’s marketing of these goods for a proper, traditional Christmas pudding.

Household Words also includes stories titled “Christmas in the Frozen Regions” (1850), “Christmas Day in the Bush” (1850), “Christmas in India” (1850), and “South American Christmas” (1852), which all contain references to the consumption of Christmas pudding in foreign regions, demonstrating to readers that while all Britons aren’t physically in England, they’re able to transport their traditions around the world.

Text wasn't the only way periodicals were instilling the importance of Christmas pudding into English culture and eating habits. In 1848, *Punch*, a weekly magazine published throughout the nineteenth-century (and whose publication only just ended in 2002), printed an image entitled "John Bull Showing the Foreign Powers How to Make a Constitutional Christmas Pudding" (Figure 8). John Bull, the national personification of Great Britain, sits with these other nations around a large, spherical Christmas pudding inscribed with the English values

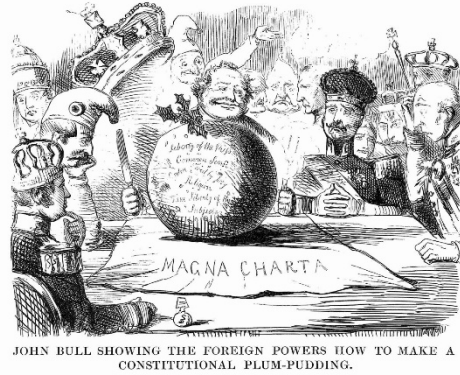


Figure 8 – John Bull Showing the Foreign Powers How to Make a Constitutional Pudding, 1848

of "Liberty of the Press," "Common Sense," "Order," "Trial by Jury," "Religion," and "True Liberty of the Subject," in front of him. The pudding sits atop of a paper labeled "Magna Charta" and John Bull holds a knife in one hand, which "testifies to his right and ability to carve up the globe" (Punch; Moore, "National Identity" 146). This is a powerful image. On one hand, it depicts Great Britain's domination of the world and its ability to colonize and conquer whatever lands they desired. On the other, it represents the nation's perceived duty to uphold and spread English virtues around the world. The placement of the Christmas pudding on the Magna Carta could represent the fusing of England with its colonies. The original purpose of the Magna Charta was to make peace between King John and a group of rebel barons that implemented the protection of particular rights between the king and the barons. The centralization of John Bull amongst the other national dignitaries situates Great Britain as the dominating power ("the King") over the other nations ("the rebel barons"). This image champions the British Empire's right to colonize and spread English culture throughout the world and utilizes a symbol of British

national identity and imperialism—the Christmas pudding—to demonstrate how they believed global domination is a given right vital to the success and development of the Empire.

Additionally, this image portrays Christmas pudding as a figure of Britishness and superiority. Food *is* a representation of a nation, its culture, and values, and in ingesting that particular cuisine, the eater figuratively subscribes to that ideology. Christmas pudding is inherently *English* and represents the nation's culture and history. Its consumption by both colonizer and colonized throughout the British Empire shows how the nation imparts its values around the world. In this image, John Bull exhibits the pudding, showing the other nations the superiority of the English way of life and imposes British values on these other nations. Through its colonization efforts, the Empire indoctrinated its new colonists through the incorporation of British values, laws, and food into its newly acquired territories. Changing eating practices is one method to challenge and change a nation. The consumption of Christmas pudding abroad would have signaled the influence of the Empire within these colonies and their subsequent transformation.

References to Christmas pudding are also found in *The Leisure Hour*, a British general-interest periodical that ran weekly from 1852 to 1905, which sought to target a wide audience of readers. In December 1859, the periodical published “Plum Pudding,” which relates the historical importance of this “indispensable” dessert to the British Christmas. When Britons “added candied lemon-peel, citron, spices, [and] brandy” the “pudding had its throne upon the Christmas board”; it was a “revolution” of culinary ingeniousness that made its mark on England (“Plum Pudding” 809). The association of the dish with English customs marked it as “England’s Representative of Cookery” and “represents us in the imagination of foreigners” whenever they ponder on it (“Plum Pudding” 809-810). Christmas pudding is so wholly ingrained within

England and its citizens that foreigners who attempted to replicate the fare abroad were unable to do so because they weren't English and lacked the technical aptitude to properly make and store the food (including using a pudding cloth and boiling it) ("Plum Pudding" 810). This short article is poignant, demonstrating to readers that everyone around the world associated the dessert with England and that, as something entirely British, the "intricate and complex conception" should be made only by the English who were educated in the proper way to make Christmas pudding ("Plum Pudding" 809). Because Christmas pudding was the edible embodiment of England, it had to be made by a Briton to be considered a truly genuine "Christmas pudding." Even if the physical creation of the pudding was made by a colonial subject, the pudding's construction was still overseen by the "guiding" hand of the English. As Thomas Hervey stated in his *The Book of Christmas*, plum-pudding is a "truly national dish, and refuses to flourish out of England." Without the knowledgeable and guiding hand of the British, any attempt to produce the pudding by a foreigner was impossible because they lacked an understanding of English traditions, culture, and history. Instead, "Plum Pudding" reinforced Christmas pudding's cultural meaning to Britons.

While modern readers aren't as familiar with the Christmas stories printed in Victorian periodicals, they were still essential to inserting Christmas pudding into British holiday practices. Positioning the fare as an inherently English food representative of the nation's ideals and mores affirmed Britons to assemble and eat the dish to display their patriotism and support. This exploitation of British nationalism led citizens to increase their consumerism through buying the needed ingredients to create Christmas pudding. This immense purchasing power not only ensured that the Empire maintained good economic standing within its colonies but also

solidified the dessert's place within the English culinary repertoire through the standardization and expectation of the food within the Christmas celebration.

A Christmas Carol

If asked, most people will remember the Cratchit Christmas dinner scene in *A Christmas Carol* and the flaming Christmas pudding Mrs. Cratchit presents to her family at the conclusion of their dinner. It is arguably one of the most poignant and descriptive literary accounts of the dessert as an integral part of the holiday. In this scene, the entire Cratchit family is gathered together and as Mrs. Cratchit carves the goose, “the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!” The pleasure the Cratchit family receives from simply being in each other's presence is enough to satisfy their appetites. Food creates a space for the family to have time together and reaffirms relationship ties. It not only quenches their physical hunger but their social appetite, as well.

Their merry meal is concluded with a Christmas pudding Mrs. Cratchit meticulously attempted to make properly (so much so that she is “too nervous to bear witnesses” should it be inferior) (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). Dickens portrays a positive scene of family and love through the consumption of the dish, essentially cultivating the consumer meaning that would eventually become associated with and integral to the eating of Christmas pudding. The Cratchit family's happiness and excitement shines most when the Christmas pudding appears. At the conclusion of their dinner after the family has consumed what she set before them, Mrs. Cratchit remarks with “great delight . . . they hadn't ate it all at last!” and “left the room alone . . . to take the pudding up and bring it in” as the finishing touch to their Christmas meal (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). The dessert is the pinnacle of the meal and seems the most stressful aspect

of the entire process for Mrs. Cratchit. As she makes her way to the backyard to retrieve the pudding, her mind conjures up all sorts of horrors. She fears lest she should she not be able to provide a suitable Christmas pudding, “[s]uppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed” (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). The loss, or even damage, of the pudding would ruin the family’s holiday celebration and, similarly, a defective pudding would symbolize a problem within the home and, more widely, the nation. Dickens shapes Christmas pudding’s consumer meaning to signify the family and the pleasure that it emits from the home, which positively impact the country and separates England from other societies.

The novel also reintroduced British Victorians to other Christmas customs that had fallen by the wayside. *A Christmas Carol* beautifully incorporates descriptive scenes of “blazing fireplaces, mince pies and wassail bowls, carol-singing, plum puddings, holly sprigs, mistletoe, fiddling and dancing, blind-man bluffings, and the parlor game of forfeits” that came to define the Victorian Christmas (Standiford 186). The impact of *A Christmas Carol* “was to make the incorporation of such elements seem obligatory for anyone’s proper Christmas” and the lack of participation a signifier of an individual’s lack of festive spirit and appreciation for the season (Standiford 186). Dickens’s literary scenes of Christmas cheer and food consumption showed readers what holiday customs were to be practiced during the holidays. His Christmas stories and periodical articles crafted the ideal celebration. By encountering characters in a contemporary setting and cultivating positive experiences around the holiday, readers could relate to these scenes and place themselves within these fictional representations. These experiences

encouraged them to imitate Christmas practices within their festivities and gave way to an “English Christmas.”

Though Dickens may not have “invented” Christmas in the traditional sense, he was instrumental in resurrecting the holiday as a major celebration in nineteenth-century England through his establishment of the consumer meaning of family and community in *A Christmas Carol*. In the nearly two centuries since its publication, *A Christmas Carol* has been adapted into a musical, used in a variety of satires, and “creatively” refashioned into a variety of interpretations (including a *Muppets* movie). The popularity of *A Christmas Carol* is so intrinsic within both the British and global culture that the novel’s “readership is said at the turn of the twentieth century to be second to only to the Bible’s” (Standiford 5). With a readership that transcends national, economic, and class boundaries, it is no wonder the novel came to be, and has remained, so influential and made Christmas feasts popular.

Prior to the publication of *A Christmas Carol*, participating in holiday festivities wasn’t in vogue and without the participation (and money) of the upper classes, Christmas remained a sacred holiday only observed by the religious few (Standiford 180). Dickens’s interpretation of Christmas, however, removed the religious connotations, creating a “secular counterpart to the story of the Nativity—which is, after all, the basis for the celebration,” which resonated with Britons who may not have seen the value in the religious aspect of the holiday (Standiford 180). Instead, the “meaning of Christmas” became that of community and nationalism. The conclusion of *A Christmas Carol* depicts the poor, working-class Cratchit family celebrating the holiday with the wealthy, upper class Scrooge, illustrating to readers how these customs cross class boundaries and create unity amongst Britons, regardless of social standing. The festivities these

individuals participate in allow them to connect, however briefly, through a shared national pastime, which aids in maintaining a strong union within Great Britain.

It is Dickens's numerous references to Christmas foods within *A Christmas Carol* which helped shape the foods England enjoyed during the holiday. Standiford notes that the inclusion of a turkey as the main entrée in *A Christmas Carol* had such an impact on what Victorians ate for Christmas dinner that England's consumption of the poultry item following the novel's publication nearly brought the "nation's goose-raising industry to near ruin" (Standiford 185). William Makepeace Thackeray noted in *Fraser's Magazine* that *A Christmas Carol* was so influential on the celebration of Christmas that "a Scotch philosopher, who nationally does not keep Christmas-day . . . sent out for a turkey . . . [after] reading the book" only to find that there was "not a turkey left in Norfolk" (Thackeray, *Critical Papers* 299). Dickens' influential effect on what foods became dedicated to the Victorian Christmas were aided by readers' desire to recreate the literary scenes read about in *A Christmas Carol*. The redemption of Scrooge and the happiness exuded at the conclusion of the novel captivated readers who sought to experience similar outcomes in their own lives.

During the Cratchit dinner scene within *A Christmas Carol*, the family gathers around a table laden with various foods cooked carefully by the matriarch, Mrs. Cratchit, who shows her appreciation and love for her husband and children through her feast. Though the family is very poor, they are happy and excited to be together, even if for just a short period of time. Christmas is one of the few times a year the older Cratchit children can take time away from their apprenticeships to come home and spend time with their family. For Martha, "a poor apprentice at a milliner's," Christmas is a "holiday she passed at home" rather than away at the shop (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 53). Her return to the Cratchit home represents the important

elements of community through the smaller faction of the family. For Britons, Christmas is one of a few days during the year when they all join in the same festivities not only around the nation, but around the world. In this scene, the Cratchits are happy to just *be* with each other and the food they eat is a vehicle for them to come together and spend time together. The gathering of the entire family together puts Bob Cratchit in “high spirits” and his children “danced about the table . . . [with] such a bustle” of excitement as the family prepares to begin their meal (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 49). Through this domestic celebration of the festive holiday, readers can perceive how the holiday encourages merriment and joy through the family’s coming together around the observation of Christmas. The depiction of the holiday’s ability to transcend hardship and poverty to provide a jovial occasion shows readers how the celebration of the day can boost morale not only domestically but nationally as well.

Dickens describes Mrs. Cratchit’s return with her prized Christmas pudding with flourish and enthusiasm as she “entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding” (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). This spectacle causes awe and wonder for the family and “Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage” (which, considering his poor wife has given him quite a quantity of children, is saying something) (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 51). This high praise from Mr. Cratchit illustrates to readers how the inclusion of the foodstuff can have such a positive effect on otherwise disheartening situations. The Cratchit family has many predicaments: Tiny Tim’s sickness, the absence of the older children for various apprenticeships, the meager pay Mr. Cratchit receives from Scrooge. Despite all these problems, the family forgets their worries as they sit and celebrate together around a table laden with Christmas treats. This scene is a poignant exhibition of familial affection and holiday spirit and Dickens’s careful construction of

it helped establish the consumer meanings Britons associated with the holiday. Britons desiring to recapture this literary event were persuaded to reenact it within their own homes, essentially buying into the established consumer meanings and becoming contributors in the consumption culture that surrounded it.

While *A Christmas Carol* focuses its attention on the Cratchit dinner, they aren't the only characters preparing for and eventually enjoying the holiday. Dickens situates the tradition of Stir Up Sunday as a communal village affair in which everyone comes out to participate:

The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret. (Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* 15)

Every person, from servant to politician, is invited to give the pudding a stir. The Lord Mayor, an important figure within the village, participates in this tradition with his cooks and butlers as well as the working-class tailor. The harmonious nature of the act situates Christmas pudding as available to every Briton and one produced—and eventually consumed—by everyone. By having the different classes participate in the stirring of the pudding, Dickens shapes the dish's perception as one eaten by everyone together as a nation, regardless if that communion is physical or intangible as long as there is a spirit of community.

A Christmas Carol is without argument the most important text in the creation of the Victorian Christmas and is still influential in modern-day Christmas's celebration. Dickens's intense description of food and the positive depictions of community surrounding the pudding's consumption cultivated the culinary atmosphere of the holiday. The fanfare surrounding the

eating of specific foods, especially Christmas pudding, influenced how the English ate during the holiday. The novel helped establish the pudding as a national dish to be appreciated by all Britons on Christmas, regardless of economic or social standing. Other literary works, including *Orley Farm* and *Mr. Wray's Cash-box*, assisted in cultivating Christmas pudding as an integral part of the holiday celebration through the incorporation of similar themes, including family, community, and nationalism.

Orley Farm

While not considered a Christmas novel, Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm* (1861) does include holiday scenes within its narrative. The novel follows a legal dispute after the death of a family's patriarch, Lord Mason. Though he bequeathed the family estate to his eldest son, Mr. Mason, a codicil has left the family farm to his second wife, Lady Mason, and younger son, Lucius. Lady Mason is accused of forging the codicil and the family becomes embroiled in a court case. Trollope utilizes *Orley Farm* to critique the English justice system and the influence of wealth and class on judicial decisions. Though the novel primarily follows the legal dispute, it also represents English life, and Trollope includes several scenes set during the Christmas season. They capture similar values and characteristics featured in *A Christmas Carol*, including the gathering of family, the holiday dinner, and Christmas pudding. The incorporation of these elements supports the components laid out by Dickens, demonstrating how *A Christmas Carol* became the framework not only for Christmas publications but also for Christmas scenes within the British novel as a whole. Within *Orley Farm*, Trollope utilizes Christmas and the inclusion of Christmas pudding to promote community and the festive spirit.

In *Orley Farm*, Trollope utilizes the Christmas pudding to critique the miserliness of the wealthy Mrs. Mason, the wife of Lord Mason's oldest son. Mr. Mason requests that their dinner

include “real roast beef, plum-pudding and mince-pies,” which are the traditional British Christmas celebration (Trollope, *Orley Farm* 232). However, Mrs. Mason considers the inclusion of “Mince-pies and plum-pudding together . . . vulgar . . . but in spite of the vulgarity [Mr. Mason] had insisted” on their inclusion. Trollope notes that Mr. Mason “had himself gone to the neighbouring butcher, and ordered the surloin [sic] of beef, knowing that it would be useless to trust to orders conveyed through his wife” as she would order the smallest and cheapest cut of meat to serve their guests. Unfortunately, he is unable to do the same with the Christmas pudding and their guests receive a “small” pudding that wasn’t “black and rich, and laden with good things as a Christmas pudding should be laden” (Trollope, *Orley Farm* 237). Though it is unclear what ingredients are missing from the dessert, the cynical description seems to reprimand Mrs. Mason for her stingy household management. This scene reminds readers of the importance of giving and sharing with their fellow Britons. Additionally, Mrs. Mason’s refusal to provide a properly made Christmas pudding shows a disrespect for the holiday and the values it symbolizes. Ultimately, this unsuitable pudding extends the fighting between Lady Mason and Mr. Mason rather than bringing them together had an appropriate dessert been presented. Mrs. Mason’s penny-pinching is a strong contrast to the Cratchit family dinner in *A Christmas Carol*. Mrs. Cratchit attempts to provide the best possible meal for her family regardless of their small means. Mrs. Mason’s choice to feed her guests the cheapest cut of meat and smallest pudding shows her disrespect for her guests and lack of holiday spirit.

Mrs. Mason’s miserly ways do not mean she completely disregards the holiday. She does, after all, still present a Christmas pudding in keeping with tradition. Due to her penny-pinching, she attempts to unite with her fellow Englishmen with as little expenditure as possible. Ingredients for Christmas pudding are expensive, both in price and quantity, and she manages to

be part of the celebration—albeit arguably on the fringes—with her frugal pudding. The invitation provided to the Greens to Groby Park (the Masons’ home) for Christmas dinner shows Mrs. Mason’s adherence to social expectations, but Mr. Mason desires to provide a proper dinner to the Greens so as to not insult them by only providing the cheapest foods. The couple’s disagreement results in a substandard meal. By not including traditional dishes, the Masons aren’t full participants in Christmas and have eliminated essential values that have come to symbolize the holiday. While the family is wealthy and resides high in the social hierarchy, their failure to appropriately participate in national customs could make them outcasts amongst their peers. Mrs. Mason straddles a fine line between proper involvement and a lack of care for her friends, community, and nation.

Trollope contrasts the Masons’ Christmas meal with the festivities at Noningsby, the family home of the newly wealthy Judge Staveley. The Staveley family are the near opposite of the Masons: they’re *nouveau riche* and their grand uses of money demonstrate their desire to become acquainted with other wealthy Britons. Their home is new “from the cellar to the ceiling . . . and all the newest appliances for comfort had been attached to it. But nevertheless, it lacked that something . . . Noningsby was a delightful house; no one with money and taste at command could have created for himself one more delightful; but then there are delights which cannot be created even by money and taste” (Trollope, *Orley Farm* 215). Though the Staveleys are rich and are able to afford the best luxuries, the newness of the home and its furnishings lacks the social and historical foundation of established gentry families. They have yet to prove themselves worthy of the economic means they have acquired that “old money” believes they demonstrate. The Staveleys lack this understanding and believe they must outwardly display their wealth, which even includes the foods served for Christmas dinner. They prepare a feast with a “turkey

twice as big as it ought to be” and a “mountain of beef, and the pudding weighing a hundredweight” that is able to satiate any appetite while tangibly showing off their immense wealth (Trollope, *Orley Farm* 218). The heaviness of the pudding emphasizes the sizeable amount of money paid for the spices, imported fruits, and other ingredients to create a Christmas pudding that large. The pudding is a stark contrast to the small one served by Mrs. Mason. While the Masons have the economic means to adequately feed their guests, the economic capital spent is only just enough to be appropriate. Even though these two desserts are drastically different in size, both the Masons and the Staveleys include them in their Christmas dinner. Trollope seems to inform his readers that regardless of where one falls within the class and economic spectrum, performing one’s duty as an English citizen is more important. In doing so, the novel supports the crucial values and mores engaged within Great Britain and upholds the nation’s standing of a pinnacle of civilization in the world.

Trollope’s contradictory depictions of Christmas and the serving of the holiday pudding in *Orley Farm* present readers with a clear understanding of how Britons celebrate the holiday. The author emphasizes the importance through the careful construction of a Christmas celebration representative of an individual’s appreciation and affection for friends and family. In addition to his remarks on the suitable size of pudding, he includes scenes of merrymaking and game playing amongst guests at the Staveleys (but not the Masons). Trollope shows family and friends appreciating time together, surrounded by a bountiful meal that concludes with a delicious Christmas pudding. In continuance from Dickens’ novel, *Orley Farm* utilizes these positive representations to show readers how all of England celebrates. The novel encourages readers to replicate these customs and practices within their own homes and holiday parties, to create a space where family and friends can convene and enjoy time together. This inclusion of

specific commodities frames the novel as an advertisement of consumption, with the Christmas pudding as an essential aspect of this gathering. In eating this dessert, readers adhere to consumer meanings developed through the novel, subscribing to England's national identity and community.

Mr. Wray's Cash-Box

While critics consider Wilkie Collins's Christmas text *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box; or, the Mask and the Mystery* (1851) a "story for a Christmas Fireside," the text doesn't solely focus on the holiday season. The majority of the short story revolves around the theft of Mr. Wray's prized mold of a Shakespearean death mask, a symbol of the old gentleman's identity as an Englishman and actor, and the mask's subsequent recovery. However, at the end of the story, once the mask is recovered and harmony restored to the Wray household, Mr. Wray celebrates Christmas with his granddaughter Annie and employee Martin. The festive gathering of these individuals commemorates the successful retrieval of the stolen mask and the dreadful ordeal's inability to ruin their holiday. Like *A Christmas Carol* and *Orley Farm*, Annie's beautifully made pudding tops the celebration and delights her companions, bringing the terrible experience to a final close.

Mr. Wray's Cash-Box depicts Christmas as a familial and communal holiday. Even though the family lacks wealth and has weathered "all poverty's hardening disasters," they "had hitherto enjoyed it happily and lovingly together, as the blessed holiday of the whole year!" (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 23). Despite their grievances, Mr. Wray, Annie, and Martin are simply happy to be in each other's presence. Even though they are monetarily poor, they are rich in love and community, which is a major theme throughout Victorian Christmas literature. Even with their limited means, the family members are still active participants in the holiday. In this

festive scene, Collins barely focuses on the dinner consumed, only noting that the diners “were comparatively genteel and quiet, till Annie's pudding came in” and at the sight of it “Mr Colebatch set up a cheer” (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 30). While these characters celebrate the holiday in community and are content to be together, it is Annie's pudding that brightens the day. The presentation and consumption of the dessert depicts to readers how it can enliven a room and create joyfulness amongst its eaters. In showing how the mood of the dinner changes almost instantly from calmly refined to excited portrays Christmas pudding as a food that brings merriment to its consumers. It is as if Collins is arguing within this scene that the inclusion of the dish during the holiday meal will make it jovial and memorable, which are sentiments many Britons wanted to emulate and capture in harmony with the rest of the nation.

While the Wrays' Christmas celebration initially includes just the family members, they discover—quite sadly—that Mr. Colebatch “must eat my Christmas dinner without wife or child to sweeten the taste to me of a single morsel!” (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 29). A bachelor, Mr. Colebatch lacks a family which whom to commemorate the day and Annie, “her pale face covered with blushes . . . looked softly at Mr. Colebatch” and implores him to join them for dinner as she doesn't want the bachelor to “say you're lonely sire! If you would let me be like a grand child to you, I should be so glad.” She further attempts to persuade Mr. Colebatch to join them by informing him, “I always make the plum-pudding sir, on Christmas Day, for grand-father.” Mr. Colebatch is so pleased with the offer that “catching Annie in his arms, and fairly kissing her,” he declares his intention to “invite myself here to a Christmas dinner” (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 29-30). The associations of family and community are so engrained within the Victorian Christmas celebration that the concept of the lonely bachelor being alone on the holiday is unacceptable. *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* maintains these principles, reminding readers of

their duty to ensure every Briton has the opportunity to make merry with others. Annie's distress at Mr. Colebatch's plight and her effusive invitation capitalize on readers' emotions in order to persuade them to include individuals who lack community. By encouraging readers to take in those less fortunate, the novel champions the Christmas values of giving and family, cultivating a national custom of fraternity and compassion.

After Mr. Colebatch is invited to Christmas, he proclaims, "all the dinner, except Annie's pudding, shall be done by my cook . . . we'll have such a feast, please God, as no king ever sat down to! No apologies, my good friend, on either side: I'm determined to spend the happiest Christmas Day I ever did in my life; and so shall you!" (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 30). The bachelor's excitement at having companions to enjoy the holiday with incites his giving nature, an important characteristic associated with Christmas. The Wray family is poor but Mr. Colebatch is a wealthy lawyer with no dependents and he is happy to share his prosperity in order to ensure everyone receives a proper Christmas celebration. Additionally, Mr. Colebatch's aid in restoring the Shakespeare mask to Mr. Wray creates a bond between the bachelor and the family, a symbol of England's national community on a small scale. Though Mr. Colebatch and the Wrays aren't related by blood, they are all English, which makes them all members of the same national family. Families take care of each other and Mr. Colebatch ensures in providing a Christmas feast that everyone is satisfied relationally, emotionally, and physically.

Annie takes great care to cook a dish good enough to sit alongside Mr. Colebatch's elaborate dinner because she is aware the Christmas pudding is the most important part of the holiday dinner. She feels the "responsibility of having a plum pudding to make" and worries her "one little item of saccharine cookery" will look out of place at the "savory feast which Mr. Colebatch had ordered" (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 30). However, she has nothing to worry

about as the guests eat the pudding with gusto. Though the meal is “comparatively genteel and quiet” until this point, the moment Annie sets her pudding upon the table, the mood of the dinner changes:

At sight of [the Christmas pudding], Mr. Colebatch set up a cheer, as if he had been behind a pack of fox-hounds. The carpenter, thrown quiet off his balance by noise and excitement, knocked down a spoon, a wine glass, and a pepper box, one after the other, in such quick succession, that Mrs. Buddle thought him mad; and Annie—for the first time, poor little thing, since all her troubles—actually began to laugh again, as prettily as ever. Mr. Colebatch did ample justice, it must be added, to her pudding. Twice did his plate travel up to the dish—a third time it would have gone; but the faithful housekeeper raised her warning voice, and reminded the old gentleman that he had a stomach. (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 30)

Like *A Christmas Carol*, *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* describes the pudding as the epitome of the holiday celebration. When it arrives at the conclusion of dinner, the fairly tranquil meal becomes one of elation. Colebatch's enthusiastic enjoyment of the food depicts it as so enticing that he must have seconds... and thirds. Readers see the high level of appreciation English citizens have for the dish. This positive illustration markets Christmas pudding as irresistible and mouthwatering. This sort of product description entices readers to indulge in the food themselves in order to find out whether the pudding is as delicious as it appears in *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box*.

The text of *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* is rich with consumer and social meanings that encourage the English to celebrate Christmas as one nation, regardless of class or economic means. The characters are able to share what means they have; whether it's monetary, culinary,

or simply excellent company, good cheer and community are the byproducts Britons should issue during their celebration. Mr. Colebatch isn't bothered by Annie's small Christmas pudding, knowing that her contribution is just as meaningful as the dinner he provided. Collins's crafting of this exchange shows how the fare transcends social and economic divisions. Regardless of background, the pudding is craved and consumed throughout England and is a representation of their national citizenship. Whether the Christmas pudding is large or small, in eating the dessert all Britons transcend these divisions and unite together through this shared national pastime.

Conclusion

The conscientious modeling of Christmas traditions by nineteenth-century writers impacted how Victorians connected to the holiday and each other. In building an environment of community, merriment, and altruism, the English felt enticed to emulate these events in their own homes. As the entire nation undertook this endeavor, its people not only bought in to the scenes presented in these writings but also assisted in cultivating a countrywide system of practice through the England's mass participation. The cultural meanings that came to define the Victorian Christmas demonstrate the impact nineteenth-century literature had on readers. These works' inclusion of Christmas pudding increased the dessert's consumption and led to its place as the crowning dish for any holiday feast. The pudding represents the relationship between old England and its valuable history with its newer and globally diverse counterpart. Britons are able to connect with time-honored traditions while simultaneously embracing the changes within their nation, further represented by the blending of established domestic goods with newly attained British colonial items. This effect on consumer habits also urged Britons to eat the pudding en masse but their purchasing power benefited the British Empire economically and its colonization of particular regions as it strove to provide the needed edible products to meet English demand.

The inclusion of Christmas pudding in holiday texts helped reappropriate otherwise foreign commodities. In showing readers that these goods were suitable for English consumption, authors “symbolically ‘cook[ed]’ the colonial ingredients with their rhetoric,” masking the foreign influence with British culinary techniques to remove any “harm” the food might pose of the nation (Moore, “National Identity” 147). The dish’s utilization as a symbol of England’s superiority and civilization further justified the concealment of these imported items within the pudding. As communities of Britons gathered to eat Christmas pudding together, the practice suggested a united country around a set of ideals embodied within the dessert. Literary scenes show how the food crossed class and economic divisions as individuals shared and enjoyed the pudding in communal harmony. This cultural meaning supported the ideology of an English national community that was represented through the ingestion of Christmas pudding. In creating this consumption, the pudding receives a unique consumer meaning. The consumption of the dessert symbolizes an individual’s membership within the national community and to attain this affiliation, they must purchase goods from around the British Empire. This constructs and promotes another form of family—the imperial—through the bonding of English and colonial items to create a Christmas pudding.³⁸ The English were convinced that their patriotism was shown through acts of ingestion. Including the dessert on their holiday menu demonstrated their support of and involvement in their nation.

This consumer meaning and its English adherence established Christmas pudding as a crucial piece of the nation’s celebration. Though the pudding doesn’t receive as much literary space as other “English foods,” its preservation and continued enjoyment into the twenty-first

³⁸ The idea of the “imperial family” was quoted by Queen Elizabeth II during the speech given on her twenty-first birthday in 1947 in which she devotes her service to the “great imperial family to which we all belong” (“The Royal Household”).

century shows how entrenched the food has become within England and its celebration of Christmas. The importance of having it adorn the holiday feast has even led to vegan and gluten free recipes to ensure everyone has the chance to take part. Christmas stories were not only successful in marketing goods and creating commodity consumerism, but these texts also established principles and practices associated with the holiday that have maintained this purchasing cycle for nearly two centuries. Literary works have an immense influence on its readers, and authors like Dickens, Trollope, and Collins recognized this fact and exploited their readerships' mores and values to increase their own sales. In doing so, they supported established Christmas practices, like the eating of Christmas pudding, and ultimately contributed to these customs' continued observance within England.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that food is a significant facet of society. It's a social instigator, relationship builder, and comforter. People can relate to one another through the creation, serving, and consumption of food. It can set a nation apart from others while simultaneously bringing its people together. Societies take pride in their unique dishes and the culture surrounding these foods and England is no exception. Arguably, tea is the most well-known signifier of "Englishness," even though the beverage has only been drunk on a countrywide scale for a few hundred years and has in recent years begun to lose popularity amongst the younger generations.³⁹ A personal curiosity and investigation into why and how tea became such an integral part of English culture began my journey into the relationship between food and literature. The nation's love for the beverage intrigued me and as I learned more about how tea arrived in England and the colonial and economical dealings that made it more widely available to the nation, I discovered the relationship between food, culture, and literature through passing references in other scholars' connections between historical events and famous literary novels. This connection between literature and food culture that many historians and literary scholars had analyzed prompted me to investigate how literature could impact a nation's eating habits.

Delving into English food practices and their importance in the creation of the modern British state has long held historians', and more recently literary historians', interests. This dissertation used several of these works, including Andrea Broomfield's *Food and Cooking in Victorian England*, Julie E. Fromer's *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England*, Panikos Panayi's *Spicing Up Britain: The Multicultural History of British Food*, and Tamara S. Wagner

³⁹ According to the UK newspaper *Metro* in a September 2017 article "Treasonous British People Now Prefer Coffee to Tea," 65% of British surveyed prefer the taste of coffee over tea. Similarly, a poll from *Express*'s October 2017 article "Is the UK's Tea-Drinking Tradition Under Threat?," states 61% of Britons prefer coffee to tea.

and Narin Hassan's *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Although scholars have devoted much attention to the importance of cookbooks during this time period, they only recently began examining the intersection between food and literature.⁴⁰ This small body of work is surprising considering the importance and impact of the literary culture in nineteenth-century Great Britain. Historians and sociologists have found value in examining how society is formed through food culture and its impact in these respective fields. Similarly, literary academics often study how written works remark on and transform contemporary society. While these two academic areas have significant value in their own right, using the two in conjunction provides another method to further examine this unique time in British history. In uniting these two fields, I discovered how nineteenth-century literary culture impacted, revolutionized, and shaped English food culture and created a national identity around the consumption of specific dishes.

In nineteenth-century British literature, food both portray common eating practices and promotes specific food customs to readers. These methods are similar to ones consistently used by marketers to persuade viewers to purchase specific items. While the Victorian era had its own brand of advertisements, we can observe modern advertising techniques in the period's print advertisements employing the appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos to encourage consumers to purchase British-sourced goods, which relied on the English citizens' sense of national pride and superiority to persuade them to consume certain foods. Similarly, nineteenth-century texts implemented the same marketing practices as their contemporary advertisers. Novels especially appealed to the logical and emotional sides of readers by emphasizing their responsibility as Britons; this duty compelled them to buy imperial goods to benefit the British Empire.

⁴⁰ During the timeframe in which this dissertation was written, Annette Cozy's *The Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* has been the only full-length scholarly text to examine the connection between literature and food.

Whereas in nineteenth century marketing campaigns the selling of a particular commodity is clearly the primary goal of an advertisement, food in literature is not the focal point of a narrative scene. Instead, edible commodities become background items which aid in constructing an environment to which readers can relate. These items are secondary to the scene but still play a vital role in informing readers about Englishness. Narrative commodities become a subtler representation of the English way of life and how their consumption provides Britons a method to demonstrate their national pride and adherence to cultural practices. The inclusion of certain foodstuffs is important to the construction of the domestic novel. Readers are able to connect with the literary narrative through the incorporation of familiar commodities and cultural practices. Novels often have more time to set a scene with readers than the cursory glance typically taken for a printed advertisement. With literature, an individual is able to more clearly understand how particular commodities fit into everyday British life and how to properly implement them within personal lives through a literary character's performance with these goods. For example, readers observe how the tea ritual is a communal act in which people gather around a table laden with tea and small foodstuffs to socialize and strengthen relationships. The importance of engaging in this shared experience is more thoroughly felt through a narrative description than a simple printed advertisement that is predominately attempting to sell a commodity rather than a lifestyle. With novels, readers can more fully observe and analyze the idiosyncrasies of a food's effect on individuals, their community, and the nation as well as its promotion of a certain way of life for the consumer that is often lost with traditional advertising. Literature allows individuals to put themselves in a character's metaphorical shoes and experience how these specific foods establish unique English habits and customs that establish a British citizen's membership to the country's national culture.

Purchasing colonial goods like spices, rum, and tea returned English economic wealth to British territories, guaranteeing that these dominions remained lucrative and beneficial to the nation and thus aided in ensuring the British Empire remained a major global power. Purchasing British goods also became an ethical duty. It was the responsibility of English citizens to ensure that the Empire remained a strong presence in the world through their economic support of purchasing imperial goods. In combining these appeals together, British marketing efforts successfully increased English consumption of British-sourced goods. The success of these marketing endeavors was so favorable that goods which previously held no prominence in England are now highly regarded as “national” foods. Nineteenth-century advertising efforts convinced Britons that it was their duty to purchase imperially, bringing specific foods into English homes and making these goods a common part of the British household. Today in modern English households, people commonly consume tea, rum, Anglo-Indian food, and Christmas pudding.

Afternoon tea

Although English aristocrats consumed tea since the seventeenth century, the beverage did not receive its title as a “national food” until several hundred years later during the Victorian era. The expansion of the British Empire into India during the nineteenth century contributed considerably to the popularity growth of the commodity within Great Britain. When the British fought and gained total control of India during this period, the nation became a major world producer of tea. As a result, tea’s price dropped as the English removed the middlemen and streamlined the good’s production process. Britons now found themselves able to afford a luxury once reserved for the rich a century prior. Authors noted this increased consumption and incorporated tea drinking into the plot lines of their English domestic novels. Scenes of literary

tea drinking in popular nineteenth-century novels like Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* worked to establish the cultural meaning associated with the beverage. Readers saw how sharing tea with family, friends, and acquaintances strengthened and promoted relationship-building within a community. This positive association effectively marketed the beverage to readers, and tea drinking during the nineteenth century rose predominately throughout the nation, permeating into the various social and economic classes.

Literature situated tea as a unique community builder in England. In these literary scenes, the beverage crosses social, economic, and geographic boundaries and creates a welcoming space for Britons to converse and connect with each other. Victorian authors appealed to their readers' desire for community and relationships by emphasizing this aspect of tea drinking. The social aspect of tea displayed cheerful and friendly characters participating in the tea table ritual. This interaction cultivated a space to improve community members' social status and comradeship within their community through the cultivation of relationships. These interactions not only built strong local camaraderie but also a national community of patriotic Britons.

Authors also utilize tea to depict broken relationships between individuals and the negative impact of the conflict on the community. Solitary tea drinking or the exclusion of others from the tea table symbolizes disunion between people. Novels often demonize and punish individuals who purposefully exclude others from engaging in tea drinking.

The framing of these two tea consumption practices aided in establishing the normative tea drinking methods within England. The construction of a cultural meaning around tea consumption emphasized the community and friendship of tea drinking as a collective social activity. Popular nineteenth-century novels encouraged this ideology of tea and community

through carefully constructed scenes of tea drinking that influenced readers' own consumption practices and relation to their nation and fellow Britons. The availability to purchase and drink this beverage also symbolized the health and vitality of both a person and the country.

In *Mary Barton*, tea symbolizes the emotional and economic state of England through the experiences of the Barton family. At the beginning of the novel, the Manchester community is thriving and the Barton home is described as “possess[ing] many conveniences” and “seemed almost crammed with furniture (sure sign of good times among the mills).” Mrs. Barton can serve tea to her guests on a “bright green japanned tea-tray,” a show of conspicuous consumption demonstrating the family's improved economic status (Gaskell 15). Their capacity to buy and consume tea in a beautiful imported tea set represents economic and social prosperity for this working-class family. Unfortunately, this financial security ends as the mills face global competition, and in an attempt by the owners to cut costs, the Bartons fall on economic hard times. The Barton family's inability to purchase the “necessary luxury” of tea emphasizes the hardships of poverty and hunger and results in drastic consequences. They struggle to create new or reinforce old relationships and a divide between the classes occurs without the shared activity throughout the classes or nation. This isolation has negative consequences. John Barton's desperation provokes him to take immoral and unlawful measures to regain his place in the national society. His earnestness to return to his community motivates him to shoot and kill Harry Carson to gain the mill owners' attention. Readers observe that when tea becomes too expensive for these working classes families to afford, civility and community suffer. Britons' abilities to buy tea symbolizes the health of the nation and when citizens do not have the economic capacity to purchase the commodity, their inability to acquire the most basic necessity of Englishness produces negative consequences for England.

Similarly, tea drinking in *Jane Eyre* provides a sense of comfort in otherwise intolerable circumstances. Jane Eyre's living circumstances at Lowood School are appalling. Teachers verbally and physically abuse her and she receives little food during mealtimes. While teachers receive tea during mealtimes, students do not, which further stresses the deplorable environment and the inevitable sickness that befalls the school. However, this unsympathetic environment is briefly made bearable when she is shown kindness through Miss Temple's invitation to tea. Miss Temple's room is warm and inviting, a stark contrast to what Jane has experienced during her tenure at Lowood. Outside of Miss Temple's room, Jane's poor treatment and poor living conditions emphasizes the lack of strong community between herself and the majority of her fellow students and teachers. When she and Helen visit Miss Temple for tea, the trio's ability to gather around a communal meal forms strong relationships. Years after this scene transpires, Jane and Miss Temple still consider themselves good friends, as denoted by Jane's invitation to Miss Temple's wedding. Though the friendship between Helen and Jane never matures past Jane's first year at Lowood due to Helen's untimely death, the tea table is a space in which their friendship strengthens as the two girls could converse freely without the prying eyes of other students and teachers. Within this scene, the tea table becomes a space outside the oppression of Lowood where these characters can forget about their dismal and heartbreaking circumstances, such as Jane and Helen's lack of familial support and affection, and where they are able create relationships that fills this void.

In contrast to Jane's contented reprieve from the dispirited Lowood, her exclusion from her Aunt Reed's tea table emphasizes that character's cruel and unsympathetic actions toward young Jane. Her aunt prohibits Jane from joining her aunt and three cousins during teatime, which symbolizes the disharmony between Jane and her extended family. Without established

familial connections, Aunt Reed has no reservations about sending Jane away to Lowood School under the pretenses that the girl is a violent liar. The relationship between these two characters remains strained for the entire novel and the ramification of Aunt Reed's lack of compassion is the untimely death of her beloved (yet brutish) son that essentially leads to her own passing by means of a broken spirit. Through the contrast of Jane's goodness and Aunt Reed's cruelty, Bronte reminds readers that community is a vital aspect of a healthy and prosperous nation. Jane's active promotion of relationship-building and community throughout *Jane Eyre* creates an inclusionary space for whoever desires to join regardless of background. In comparison to Aunt Reed, Jane's desire to create relationships with those around her eventually rewards her with a husband, children, and stable home at the conclusion of the novel.

The tea table as an instigator in forging new relationships is definitively emphasized in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. The familiarity of the tea ritual soothes the awkwardness of the first meeting between Walter Hartright and Marian Halcombe. The tea table allows them to "[sit] down together at the breakfast-table in as cordial" manner and converse in as "customary a manner as if we had known each other for years." The two character's shared cultural experience and Miss Halcombe's "lively familiarity of manner with a total stranger" with Hartright makes it "impossible to be formal and reserved" within this space (Collins, *The Woman in White* 59). This initial meeting also establishes the eventual friendship these two characters share in *The Woman in White*, with Miss Halcombe and Hartright becoming close confidants throughout the novel. Readers observe tea serving as an important instrument in setting the foundations for this friendship, which emphasizes tea's importance in community building

Novels marketed tea drinking to readers by capitalizing on an individual's desire for community. Literary scenes show characters of varying social, economic, and geographic backgrounds consuming the beverage with family, close friends, and new acquaintances. In showing positive representations of British life within these novels, authors helped create tea's specific cultural meaning and practice within Great Britain as a community builder. These texts popularized a pastime in which every English citizen could participate. Even though socioeconomic divisions existed through the quality of tealeaves, china, and food included with the beverage's consumption, a national community around tea emerged in England and all Britons were able to partake. In making afternoon tea and tea drinking a "British" custom, the English set themselves apart from other nations and situated tea and their specific methods of drinking it as distinctive to British culture.

The inclusion of tea in nineteenth-century British literature had an irreversible effect on the drinking habits of the English. This period transformed England into a nation of tea drinkers through the expansion of the British Empire, the colonization of India, and the vertical integration of tea production.⁴¹ The low cost and wide availability of tea within England created a drinking culture around the beverage that allowed nearly every English citizen to purchase and consume tea. While socioeconomic boundaries still existed around the types of tea available to each social class, the beverage connected the nation together through the shared habit of tea drinking: the wealthy socialites to working class mill worker engaged in and enjoyed tea as a method of relaxation and relationship building. This positive cultural meaning gave rise to tea's popularity and solidified its place as a traditional English custom.

Rum punch

⁴¹ Vertical integration is an arrangement in which the entire supply chain of a company is owned by that company.

Community is a major aspect of cultural food practices, which is observed within the national food narrative of England. Like tea, rum is consumed in group gatherings as a social lubricant. When transformed into its punch form, rum punch became a vehicle to facilitate and encourage relationship and community building amongst Britons. The specific mixture of rum, citrus, sugar, and water produced a particular cultural meaning around how Britons could consume rum. During the nineteenth century, there was fear that eating colonial foods in their raw form could influence a person's manner through drunkenness. To counteract this effect, the English encouraged rum's adulteration through the adding of other ingredients. The recipe made both a delicious drink and lessened how quickly the alcohol could cause intoxication. Nineteenth-century novels endorse this theory through positive illustrations of community and gaiety around rum punch while simultaneously warning citizens of the negative consequences of not adhering to social expectation. Not only did the less alcoholic rum punch reduce intoxication amongst drinkers, it also represented the British Empire's ability to reform their colonial holdings to uphold English ideals. The English showed their superiority and ability to civilize their newly acquired territories through the transformation and appropriation of colonial foods into ones unique to England's culinary repertoire. Literary depictions of rum emphasize the importance of altering the alcohol to ensure it was acceptable for the English disposition. Failure to dilute the alcohol represented vileness, criminality, and isolation from British society. Nineteenth-century literature outlines the appropriate methods for rum consumption which regulated how Britons consumed the beverage. By establishing social regulations, the English could show their refined and civilized nature while simultaneously utilizing rum as a moral compass for the nation.

While rum wasn't always considered a positive symbol of the British Empire's overseas territories, the liquor does represent the shared history between the Empire and its colonies. The ties between colonizer and the colonized created an unbreakable entwined history and rum's relationship with England depicts this connection. Before the colonization of the West Indies by the British in the seventeenth century, the liquor did not exist and is not an indigenous commodity from the Caribbean. While rum can trace its origins as a byproduct of colonialism, the alcohol became an unfavorable representation of the British presence in the West Indies. In fact, many English viewed the alcohol as an inferior product that symbolized the uncultured lifestyle of the islands. But as the division between colonizer and colonized blurred and the relationship between the two countries became more amiable, England established a favorable connection with rum. The removal of the colonial aspects associated with the beverage made it more palatable through the inclusion of sugar and citrus and permitted English citizens to enjoy the beverage without social repercussions. The reappropriation of these colonial commodities transitioned them from foreign items into an English beverage that represented the ability of the British Empire to tame the colonies, which symbolized the transformation of rum into rum punch. In creating a drink more palatable for the refined tastes of the English, the mixed beverage came to symbolize how the Empire improved its colonies through its presence within these territories.

Rum's representation of Englishness also situated the alcohol as a symbol of the nation's morality. Nineteenth-century literature established a cultural meaning in which rum drinking signified a character's inward nature and morality. Novels further emphasized the adherence to this cultural meaning through depictions of positive scenes in which fictional figures socialize and build community through the beverage's inclusion at social events. Novels like *David*

Copperfield and *The Virginians* depict social gatherings as meaningful times for community members. However, even though rum punch is an acceptable drink, novels made sure to remind their readers to not overindulge because it could lead to drunkenness and violence, which are unacceptable actions for Britons. Scenes of overindulgence reminded readers that while rum punch was delectable, they should drink it with caution to maintain a sober and civilized temperament. In *Scenes of Clerical Life*, Mr. Dempster overconsumes rum punch and becomes too rowdy to remain within polite company. He is escorted out of the party and back to his home by another townsman. While Dempster's exit from the party removes his drunkenness from the party, the intoxication remains. When he returns home, his cruel temper causes him to beat his wife. The unacceptability of his actions eventually leads to his death, informing readers of the importance of not overindulging and remaining good-natured when consuming rum punch.

Consuming the alcohol unadulterated symbolized a character's immoral and villainous disposition. Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* highlights Daniel Quilp's heinous and depraved nature through his preference for scalding hot rum. His ability to easily drink the alcohol straight off the stove represents his hardened personality and lack of empathy and compassion toward other characters in the book. The robbers from Wilkie Collins' *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* are vicious and dishonorable. The pair drinks rum in a secluded corner of the pub, planning out their robbery of Mr. Wray. When the pair discovers the cashbox only contains a mask of Shakespeare rather than money, the two men beat Mr. Wray severely. Coupling the consumption of pure rum with antagonist characters warned readers of the ill effects of drinking the improperly consumed alcohol on their constitution. Contrasting rum punch with its undiluted counterpart illustrated the importance of refining the drink to remove its negative components.

By doing so, readers ensured their adherence to England's national community through their observance of the country's cultural and social practices.

The construction of a strong consumer meaning of community and British superiority around rum punch played a key role in the drink's integration into English society. Even though rum finds its distillation origins in the British-owned colony of Barbados, a place known for its vulgar and unrefined history, rum manufacturers and sellers found a way to make it acceptable for the civilized tastes of England by "removing" these negative aspects of drunkenness and debauchery through its transformation into a delicious and sophisticated drink. This alteration symbolized the power of the British Empire to improve and civilize its colonies and in drinking rum punch, Britons supported this imperial ideology. The particular recipe for rum punch that the English followed established a new cultural meaning around rum and reclassified the once unsuitable alcohol as allowable for English consumption. The mixing of rum with citrus, sugar, and water dilutes the intoxicating effects of the liquor and makes the drink acceptable for the English constitution. Rum punch became a symbol of the British Empire's ability to civilize its colonies. The purchasing of the drink's ingredients and its consumption became a symbol of the English's support of the Empire's civilizing efforts abroad.

Anglo-Indian food

Anglo-Indian food symbolizes the strength and dominance of the British Empire through its reappropriation of India's indigenous food culture. While rum punch sought to elevate a colonial good in order to make it acceptable for English consumption, Anglo-Indian food is a response to the natural fusion of two cultures existing within the same space. India heavily influenced Britons living in the East Asian country in various ways, including the food they consumed. The employment of Indian domestic helped provide a way for Indian dishes and

culinary techniques to permeate the English dining table. The influence of Indian cooking in British homes in India aided in establishing a unique cuisine from the melding of these two cultures. Additionally, the unavailability of specific English commodities in the Indian marketplace prompted Britons to substitute unattainable ingredients for foodstuffs native to the colony. The swapping of these foods created a union of English techniques with Indian foodstuffs that created the unique Anglo-Indian fare now considered an integral part of modern British food culture. While the English initially saw their changes to Indian food as a means to remove the unsophisticated and unrefined aspects of Indian culture in order to make it acceptable to their palettes, Britons' acceptance (at least in part) of the East Asian country's foods also depicts the British Empire's immersion into India. As Great Britain became increasingly more involved in India economically and politically, the number of Anglo-Saxons residing in the nation grew. Even though the initial melding of these two culinary cultures met disapproval, as British domination and power grew more secure, Anglo-Indian culture became more acceptable and eventually became a fixed aspect of English life. The transition can be observed linearly in nineteenth-century English domestic novels, which illustrate the change of disapproval to acceptance.

The duality of Anglo-Indian food is symbolized by the dishes that emerged. Since certain vegetables, meats, or dairy products were either unattainable or too expensive in India, Britons substituted traditional English ingredients for Indian ones. Additionally, the employment of Indian cooks in British households also introduced native dishes to their employers (albeit a milder version), which imparted a taste for Anglo-Indian cuisine to the British in India. These alterations led to a milder cuisine more appropriate for English palettes which symbolizes the melding of the two cultures and the domination of Great Britain over its colony through the

transformation of Indian dishes to the more palatable Anglo-Indian cuisine. When Anglo-Indians returned from abroad, they brought with them the taste for this hybrid cuisine.

Nineteenth-century British novels like William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Silver Blaze", and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* were instrumental in forging Anglo-Indian dishes as acceptable for English citizens. While earlier novels, like Sir Walter Scott's *Saint Ronan's Well* and Wilkie Collins' *Aurora Floyd* depict Anglo-Indians and their penchant for the fusion cuisine as a negative consequence of too much time abroad, they were integral in introducing Anglo-Indian dishes to English readers. While Anglo-Indian became associated with these foods, these scenes are clear that these characters are still *English*, even though they acquired a preference for the East Asian fusion cuisine. These former Indian residents bridged the gap between English and Indian culinary practices and helped transform Anglo-Indian dishes into acceptable cuisine within British dining habits. The slow shift from unacceptance to acceptance is due in part to the growing Anglo-Indian population and the emergence of Anglo-Indian food into English society. As more British returned from India and brought back East Asian ingredients as well as the taste for Anglo-Indian foods, it became more acceptable for these foods to be consumed in England.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Anglo-Indian food had become a staple within British eating practices. In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Silver Blaze," the working-class employees of Colonel Ross are served mutton curry for dinner. Unlike previous novels, these characters do not have close ties to India but consume the food nonetheless. These connections seem to signify that curry has become an everyday dish for most Britons. Even though Doyle situates curry as a commonly eaten food, the author uses the intense flavor of curry as a tool to drug the stable hand to steal a prized racehorse. Although serving curry is now commonplace in

Great Britain, Doyle's situating of the dish as a vehicle for harm emphasizes the importance of ensuring the Anglo-Indian food is appropriate for English consumption through the purchasing of ingredients from reputable sources.

Like "Silver Blaze," *Kim* stresses the importance of maintaining the *Anglo* aspect of "Anglo-Indian" to ensure that Britons don't lose their sense of Englishness through the incorporation of too many foreign influences. *Kim* warns against incorporating too many foreign influences lest the idea of "Englishness" is lost. While Kipling establishes Anglo-Indian food as a representative of the unbreakable entwinement of England and India, he is careful to remind readers that the Indian influence should never surpass the British. In *Kim*, the titular character of Kim O'Hara is just as much a part of India as he is England through his upbringing within both Indian and English cultures. Though Kim seems to prefer his "Indian side" through his predilection for the Anglo-Indian foods of curry and fried cakes from street vendors, he cannot become fully ingrained in Indian culture. After his apprehension by Father Victor and Reverend Arthur Bennett, Kim attends an English boarding school to finish his British education and to ensure he remains British rather than Indian. The character's partiality to Indian culture illustrates India's effect on the English that, if left unchecked, can mask over the favored English side of culture and refinement. Though Kim eventually returns to his British roots, the Indian upbringing he obtained is as strong a part of him as his overall Britishness, which becomes a symbol of the deep connection between Great Britain and its Indian colony.

The increased availability of Anglo-Indian food in England eventually encouraged Britons, regardless of whether they had travelled to India or not, to create and eat these foods. This consistent consumption eventually led to its standardization within English culinary habits,

eventually becoming as English as fish and chips.⁴² The mainstream consumption of curry—and Anglo-Indian foods in general—represents how colonialism substantially impacted the dining practices of England. The integration of India into the British Empire, the introduction of Anglo-Indian dishes into Great Britain, and the eventual reappropriation of these foods as inherently “English,” symbolizes how food became an integral force in citizens’ outward support of the British Empire’s colonial expansion around the globe.

Christmas pudding

Like Anglo-Indian food and rum, Christmas pudding is the merging of the British Empire with its colonies. However, unlike its culinary compatriots whose origins were rife with suspicion and disapproval, Christmas pudding is a positive celebration of the co-existence of Great Britain with its colonies. Its origins can be found in the cheerful celebration of Christmas as family members gather together to spend time together through the creation of the pudding on Stir Up Sunday. In the nineteenth century, Christmas pudding was already an established dish within the English holiday celebration but became popularized during this period due in part to both the publication of Christmas novels, like Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, and the expansion of the British Empire, which made the once-expensive ingredients for the dish affordable. The dessert’s combination of domestic and imported goods represented a positive symbol of imperialism. The melding of diverse ingredients in Christmas pudding symbolized the successful inclusion of the colonies into the British Empire and also signified the Empire’s power through the appropriation of these foreign goods into the English culinary repertoire. The mixture of imported colonial commodities, like citrus fruits, spices, and alcohol, with English ingredients such as wheat, ale, and apples, masked associated foreign stigmas and tastes. The

⁴² Fish and chips, funny enough, are a combination of two different foreign dishes: chips originated in Belgian or France and frying fish is a Jewish tradition.

dessert conveyed to Britons how the British Empire improved its colonies through its guidance and reappropriation of colonial goods, customs, and people.

The success of the Christmas pudding within nineteenth-century England is, in some degree, attributed to Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The novel's success came partially from Dickens' acknowledgment of traditional (albeit nearly forgotten) English Christmas customs. He capitalized on Britons' sense of nostalgia and national pride, making his holiday story an instrumental tool in the reemergence of Christmas as a major celebration within England. His careful inclusion of Christmas specific foods and practices were influenced by other authorial predecessors, including Thomas Hervey and Sir Walter Scott. Scott's *Marmion* and Hervey's *The Book of Christmas* impacted Dickens' own understanding of the holiday. Dickens' interpretation of specific practices led to the creation of the Victorian Christmas and provided an example for other authors to support and cultivate these practices within their own stories. Specifically, his use of Christmas pudding situated the dessert as the *pièce de résistance* of the holiday dinner, which emphasize Mrs. Cratchit's loving yet painstaking creation of the dish for her family and their excitement over its inclusion in their meal. The enthusiastic reception the Christmas pudding situated the dish as a food representative of the cheer and joy of the season and the community of people who gathered together to celebrate.

The popularity and success of *A Christmas Carol* encouraged other Victorian authors to write holiday stories that included Christmas dishes like Christmas pudding, which further highlighted the need for these foods to grace the English holiday table. Wilkie Collins' *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* similarly supports how Christmas pudding facilitates community. Whereas *A Christmas Carol* emphasizes how Christmas brings *family* members together to celebrate, *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* expands this idea to illustrate how the holiday produces a space in which

everyone—friend, family, or acquaintance—can come together to spend time and build relationships. In *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box*, the Wrays invite the bachelor, Mr. Colebatch, to Christmas dinner because Mr. Wray and Annie abhor the idea of Mr. Colebatch spending the day alone. The Wrays' desire to ensure Mr. Colebatch is able to celebrate the holiday in community emphasizes the idea that the holiday should be commemorated with family and friends, rather than alone. The meal is a happy one as the individuals socialize and make merry. Though dinner is "comparatively genteel and quiet" affair until the pudding appears. Mr. Colebatch's excitement at seeing the dessert is ecstatic "as if he had been behind a pack of fox-hounds." He proceeds to have two servings of pudding and "a third time it would have gone; but the faithful housekeeper raised her warning voice, and reminded the old gentleman that he had a stomach" (Collins, *Mr. Wray's Cash-box* 30). Both *A Christmas Carol* and *Mr. Wray's Cash-Box* include exuberant and joyful descriptions of Christmas pudding and situate the dessert as an integral part of producing a cheery and enjoyable holiday meal for both family and friends. Like the dessert, which includes ingredients from around Great Britain and its Empire, Christmas creates a space where the English—regardless of place, economic background, or social standing—can come together to celebrate. This emphasis on community ultimately produces a national celebration in which all citizens can be part. In consuming Christmas pudding, Britons demonstrate their unity as a nation and their support of the British Empire's endeavors abroad through the amalgamation of cultures within their nation.

Even today, Christmas pudding is still a symbol of colonialism's effects on England. The expansion efforts of the British Empire transformed the English's culinary habits, including what they craved and ate. The formation of the dessert as a symbol of the Empire's breadth and majesty similarly supported this ideology. The use of ingredients from both England and the

colonies represented the co-dependent relationship between the colonizer and colonized. Unlike Anglo-Indian food, which was a byproduct of Britons' prolonged exposure to India, Christmas pudding's popularity during the nineteenth-century was bolstered through the inexpensive availability of foreign ingredients and the promotion of the dish within advertisements, periodicals, and literature. These medias depicted the importance of including the dish within the English holiday celebration through the encouragement of British nationalism. Their use of patriotism to sell the dessert made it a staple on the dinner table as a representation of a family's adherence to British culture and tradition as well as a demonstration of support for the Empire's colonizing and civilizing objectives around the globe. Christmas pudding became a symbol for Great Britain's superiority and power and in eating this dessert, English consumers were able to support and be active participants in the Empire's ventures.

Conclusion

British foods were instrumental in establishing specific cultural meanings which created particular national food traditions. The expansion of the British Empire and the growth of consumer products available in the English marketplace transformed England's culinary culture and the types of foods Briton's purchased and ate. The enjoyment of and desire for these foods by British citizens through their eating habits retained the Empire's presence and domination of their colonial subjects. The careful inclusion of afternoon tea, rum punch, Anglo-Indian cuisine, and Christmas pudding within Great Britain's literature influenced many English to purchase and consume these products, solidifying these foods as important indicators of Britishness. These dishes also demonstrate the division created between the colonizer and the colonized through the assimilation of these products into England's culinary habits. The transformation of traditional Indian food into foodstuffs more palatable to English tastes both allowed for the previously

“inedible” dishes to become incorporated into Great Britain’s dining habits and promoted an ideology of British superiority over the Empire’s non-white colonial subjects. The British Empire demonstrated their power by removing India’s food identity and history through the assimilation of these dishes into the British culinary identity.

While the reappropriation of ethnic foods demonstrate how the British Empire sought to assert their dominance over their colonies through the establishment of ethnic divisions, these “national” foods also segregated England. While the quality of goods individuals purchased depended on their economic means, the method in which these commodities were consumed also depicted their social class. The upper class was able to leisurely take their afternoon tea, using fine china and expensive tea blends, whereas the lower class often drank their brew quickly during the short tea breaks given at their places of employment. Even though the consumption of tea was considered a national right for all Britons, its consumption still established socio-economic boundaries that upheld Great Britain’s class system.

The research conducted in this dissertation is meant to be both a tool for other academics and those interested in the connection between literature and culture as well as a foundation for the continued examination and research into how fictional works impact the society in which they are written. The construction of English ideals and consumer meanings through both positive and negative representations of food consumption created the modern culinary identity of England. The inclusion of certain foods in nineteenth-century literature and their presentation to readers influenced the purchasing and eating choices of Britons. Without the works of authors like Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, William Makepeace Thackeray, Jane Austen, and Wilkie Collins, and their inclusion of specific foods, the culinary landscape of Great Britain could be entirely different. These authors’ determination to write domestic novels that

highlighted and promoted Anglo-centric dishes supported the British ideals of superiority and world domination. Through its ability to establish an imagined community, food serves as both a political symbol and a creator of national identity. The English could demonstrate their unity through their food choices which built relationships with other Britons through the sharing of these dishes. Additionally, these dishes helped strengthen the ties between England and the rest of the British Empire and assisted in establishing a national global community that is still prevalent within British culture.

My dissertation examined what I considered to be four of the most recognizable British foods—tea, rum, Anglo-Indian cuisine, and Christmas pudding—that were both popular during the nineteenth-century and found frequently in the period’s literature. However, I know there are more “English” foods that have come to define the nation and its particular eating habits, including fish and chips, Yorkshire pudding, a full English breakfast, and Shepherd’s pie. While the nation’s chefs, cooks, and other culinary experts over the last few decades have challenged the stereotype that British food is mediocre in comparison to the rest of Europe, the remnants of this idea still remain. Colin Spencer’s *British Food: An Extraordinary Thousand Years of History* and Allison James’ “How British is British Food” explore British food’s transformations over the centuries and its impact on the nation’s culture and society. These “comfort foods” are beloved by many Britons and have come to define their society and sense of national identity, even when the rest of the world views British food as bland, unrefined, and working-class. Foreigners may consider these pinnacle English dishes as subpar relative to Great Britain’s European neighbors—especially French cooking—but these foods are still crucial in understanding the nation, its past, people, and how the country transformed throughout its history due to the eating habits of its population.

I think it would do my field a disservice if additional work is not conducted. There is so much more to be discovered and understood within literature and the food identity of England (or any nation for that matter), including further study on the gendering of foods, cuisine as a signifier of social class, and regional adaptations of certain British dishes that created localized fare. Whereas my dissertation focused predominately on the role of nineteenth century British novels in promoting imperialism, colonialism, consumerism, and national identity, this is only one branch of research that stems from the relationship between literature, food studies, and the idea of “Englishness.”

Though England certainly has “national” foods that the majority of its citizens partake in and enjoy, the country’s regional foods are equally just as fascinating and important. For example, there’s an age-old debate between Cornwall and Devon on how to “properly” eat a scone with jam and clotted cream. Is the jam added first and topped with clotted cream (Cornish style) or is it better with the clotted cream first and then jam (Devonshire style)? Regardless of preference, these two regions have strong opinions on the order of jam and clotted cream which define the area’s culinary habits. This scone preference is one of the many regional foods consumed in England. While my dissertation looked at food in literature through the scope of nationalism and imperialism, applying similar tactics to a more concentrated lens of literary analysis would be equally beneficial. England consists of many regional communities who embrace pride for their nation and local district. How then were these locally-based foods established? What is their history and importance to these regions? What role do identity and community play in these groups? How do citizens balance membership to both their national and regional community? Do these two spheres work together or are they at odds?

Additionally, while my dissertation touches briefly on gender and food, a more intensive study and analysis of the construction of gendered foods to indicate a social and cultural masculine or feminine identity could prove fascinating. How do the foods an individual consumes illustrate his or her adherence or rebellion to established gender norms? How were these standards created and by whom? What role do novels perform in upholding or overcoming social gender constructs? Do we associate characters as more feminine or masculine based on the foods they consume? If they consume foods in contrast to one's typically assigned to their gender, does that challenge our perception of whether that character is "good" or "bad"? Why is this important and how does that challenge our understanding of masculinity and femininity?

Lastly, it is important to discuss the inclusion and exclusion of foreign foods in canonical and non-canonical nineteenth-century novels. This dissertation carefully selected works that emphasized the effect of imperial edible commodities within the English domestic novel. While there is an abundance of tea drinking throughout the period's literature and the influence of imperialism in Great Britain is well-documented, references to other colonial goods that impacted England's eating habits were more difficult to discover. As noted in Chapter Four regarding Anglo-Indian food, finding references to kedgeree in literature was difficult, even though the dish was—and arguably still is—a breakfast staple in England as well as many of its current and former territories. Why are references to some food practices more abundant than others? Is the inclusion or exclusion of a specific food dependent on whether the writer is male or female? Does an author's background influence his or her incorporation of particular foods in their writings (e.g. Kipling and Thackeray's status as Anglo-Indians and the subsequent inclusion of Anglo-Indian food in their novels)?

In pairing literary criticism with the historical significance of food within a particular timeframe or novel, we can further appreciate and recognize the exceptional and unique aspects of a culture that are otherwise hidden from nonfiction historical accounts. My dissertation illustrates how important literature is in providing another technique to examine and understand a culture. A nation's literary narrative is just as vital in contributing to an understanding of a society, its people, and history as the information gleaned from other fields of cultural study. While scholars have begun to look at the intersection between literature, history, and sociology, there is still much to discover. Expanding our understanding of the impact of nineteenth-century British literature's inclusion of specific foods will provide a deeper understanding of how literary works constructed the nation's unique culinary habits. This dissertation only provides a minor look into an expansive pool of unexamined research topics, which further emphasizes the crucial need for further research within the field of literature.

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ABSTRACT

STIRRING IT UP: THE CHANGING OF THE BRITISH NATION THROUGH FOOD

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Food is an integral part of life. It sustains us, inspires us, and pleases us. Societies often come together around it, using meals as a time to socialize, strengthen bonds, and create community. Our world is intimately tied with food, so much that cultures are often defined by it and take pride in upholding these traditions. Several questions arise, however: how did these particular dishes become associated with these cultures? Who decided? How were particular dishes promoted to citizens so they knew which dishes were “theirs”? Annette Cozzi in her text, *The Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, argues that food is “one of the most fundamental signifiers of national identity, and literary representations...reveal how that identity is culturally constructed” (Cozzi 5). In food and literature, cultural identity is constructed and revealed. Writers utilize literature to emulate the culture that is discovered around them and support specific food practices that their readers may perform themselves.

Within nineteenth-century British literature, food is depicted as an integral aspect of British domestic life. There are numerous dinner scenes, afternoon teas, balls and dances, and drinks in front of the fire that can be observed throughout the century. The inclusion of colonial

foodstuffs is vitally important to understanding the culinary landscape of Great Britain during this period. Dishes that have become synonymous with British life—afternoon tea, Indian food, Christmas pudding, and punch—can all find their roots in colonialism. What sets them apart from their origin, however, is the methods in which the British Empire reappropriated these goods. The transformation of colonial goods ultimately demonstrates Great Britain’s mastery of its colonies. It is able to alter these foods so much that they have become representative of the British culinary palette.

We can see the civilizing transformations of British foods through the ritualization of recipe creation for popular food and drink. Specifically, this dissertation project will examine afternoon tea, rum punch, Anglo-Indian dishes, and Christmas pudding. These four foods have become synonymous with British culture and all have roots within and would not have been possible without the expansive nineteenth-century British Empire.