

INTRODUCTION

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PACIFIC RIM: VICTORIAN TRANSOCEANIC STUDIES BEYOND THE POSTCOLONIAL MATRIX

By Tamara S. Wagner

THE VICTORIANS' DRIVING INTEREST in exploration and expansion is perhaps one of the best-known scholarly truisms about the age and its literature. While the British Empire was rapidly expanding and commercial competition began to stretch across the globe with a newly perceived urgency, Victorians at home throughout this expanding empire were at once fascinated and anxious in reading about the wider world. Armchair explorers might have confined themselves to a vicarious enjoyment of the gold-nuggets that seem to lay scattered throughout the expanding settler world, of adventures in an excitingly exoticised “bush,” and of shipwrecks and dubious impostors who sometimes seemed to return from the middle of nowhere. Readers could even indulge in a smugly self-congratulatory sense of amusement when witnessing the satirised ignorance of Flora Finching in Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857), when she famously evokes semi-colonial China as such

a country to live in for so long a time, and with so many lanterns and umbrellas too how very dark and wet the climate ought to be and no doubt actually is, and the sums of money that must be made by those two trades where everybody carries them and hangs them everywhere, the little shoes too and the feet screwed back in infancy is quite surprising, what a traveller you are! (152; ch. 13)

With its bizarre juxtaposition of exotic references and vague gesticulations towards imperial commerce's impact at home, Flora's confusion is first and foremost funny, and readers were clearly meant to recognise it as such. In the same vein, adventure tales set in far-off islands in the Pacific or in new settlements in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand certainly continued to feature the enticingly wild and exotic. Yet increasingly, popular fiction made it clear that we ought to know more about the world out there, and that this entailed a different sense of responsibility as well. It is tellingly the satirised, pompous characters who wildly joke about the hero's escapades “down under” in Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* (1879), while the novel instead shows that the widespread notion “that anything done in the wilds of Australia ought not ‘to count’ here, at home in England” (322; ch. 42) does no longer hold in a world that is clearly not only expanding, but contracting and narrowing in the process. But if these widely read Victorian triple-deckers show how aware readers were becoming of the

British presence throughout the world – including such indisputably still mystified, exoticised places as China – and how this impacted on literature and culture “back home,” the way the Victorians thought about, imagined, and discussed their own shifting place in this changing world was markedly wide and varied. Public interest in sinology, for example, as reflected in the magazines of the time, or contradictory accounts by missionaries, military officers, and emigration societies, and how these discourses were worked into popular culture productions, all testify to an ambiguous, contested field. The depiction of settler societies in particular underwent enormous shifts in the course of the century. How the most persistent images of the expanding settler and commercial empire were generated and circulated in Victorian Britain can be gleaned from shipboard diaries, popular ballads, broadsides, as well as from more official accounts such as the manuals and pamphlets produced by emigration societies. A close analysis of this rarely discussed material, in turn, compels a reconsideration of the way literary works engaged with discourses on emigration, travel, and imperial adventure. In going beyond what we see merely reflected in Victorian canonical literature, this special issue on nineteenth-century representations of the region spanning, roughly, what we now consider the Pacific Rim allows us to get a wider perspective on what “the Victorians” made of the changing world around them.

There is now a growing move to a more “global nineteenth century” within interdisciplinary Victorian studies. This partly overlaps with an urgent call to extend the parameters of transatlantic approaches and of comparative literature more generally, as well as to revise the limits of traditional postcolonial studies. Not only has the focus long remained geographically limited – marginalising the discussion of settler spaces in particular – but postcolonial readings have on occasion suffered from being overly politicised, obscuring literature’s active and often self-critical engagement with the debates of the time, as well as its ability to transcend these debates. Important work has recently been done in the field, changing forever how we read what Edward Said once so memorably diagnosed as the British Empire’s “codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction” (63). Over the last decades, postcolonial critics have increasingly brought to light how nineteenth-century imaginative literature rendered “the Empire both vivid and legible to readers in Britain” (Kaplan 191). Far from being only, pace Said, “marginally visible,” the British Empire is always “something more than casual background in [the] quietest of domestic stories” as “[i]mperialism influenced not only the tradition of the adventure tale but the tradition of ‘serious’ domestic realism as well” (Brantlinger 12). Literary scholars have thereby not merely teased out imperialism’s impact on literature produced “at the centre,” but also its conflicted relationship to Victorian ideologies of domesticity, while the growing diversity within postcolonial studies reflects the pressing need to go beyond established parameters. Thus, ongoing critical evaluations of postcolonialism have successfully argued for extending the discussion of colonial discourses outside Said’s original paradigm, even though the majority of these redefinitions still tend “to exclude the Pacific Islands, as well as Australia and New Zealand, entirely from the equation” (Keown 8). Only in the last few years, new interest in settler colonialism has helped us see what postcolonial criticism has traditionally left out.

Equally important, new attention has been directed to the Victorians’ own attempts to conceptualise the British Empire’s changing positioning in the world: how a more global perspective emerged within debates on a “Greater Britain,” even if precisely these debates also led to the admittedly most jingoistic self-definitions of nation and empire. Nonetheless, it is crucial to realise the distinctions that were so significant to the Victorians: that there

were different kinds or aspects of empire, for example – best known as the common split into India as the paradigmatic colony of conquest and colonies of settlement or trade, as we shall see – or how a settler world was emerging that sometimes even included that renegade colony that had become the United States of America. Even a cursory look at the sheer wealth of the continuous references to the larger world in Victorian literature and culture clearly and convincingly shows how aware readers were of the contradictory discourses in popular culture. The articles in this issue all deal with the way the Victorians envisioned, wrote about, and in the process continually redefined those spaces in and beyond the empire that did not easily fit into established parameters. Some of these places refused to be pigeonholed and therefore stirred the imagination in myriad new forms; some increasingly also produced their own literature, including critical representations from the vantage point of emergent colonial settlements as arguably the first form of “writing back.”

This special issue on the “Nineteenth-Century Pacific Rim” concentrates on the representation of the area and geopolitical space that we have now come to know as the Pacific Rim. A leading question that links together the different inquiries is the impact that exploration, settlement, and theories about them had on what postcolonial scholars are generally pleased to term the metropolitan or imperial centre. A related issue is the growing importance of the two-way exchanges that steadily arose especially in the colonies of settlement. But there is an equally important focus on spaces of imperialist interest that were neither colonies of occupation and conquest nor of settlement, like Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand (addressed at some length in this issue). Such places of primarily commercial interest included trading posts that were not formally incorporated into the empire until fairly late in the century as well as different zones of contact in Japan and China, often termed to be of semi-colonial status in the nineteenth century.¹

How did these seldom discussed areas of British cultural and political influence feature in Victorian literature and culture? Were the Victorians aware of the significance that the expanding settler empire, its intersection with that of other colonial powers, business routes across them, and increasingly also, the literary productions of the emergent settler cultures, had for nineteenth-century culture on a new, more global scale? What were the effects of cultural exchanges on nineteenth-century popular culture at large, and how did these effects change perceptions of these areas and of the British Empire’s, or the British presence’s, position within it? The contributions to this special issue of *Victorian Literature and Culture* combine a discussion of the cultural developments and interchanges within the regions situated around the Pacific Rim with a new attention to the changing forms in which these developments manifested themselves in Victorian culture. Bringing together these separate analyses, however, also compels us to engage in a much larger revision of current approaches to the Victorians’ idea of themselves in the world. Indeed, it at once necessitates and facilitates the conceptualisation of a more encompassing Victorian transoceanic studies that helps us to go beyond the limitations of the traditional postcolonial matrix.

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TO ADDRESS THE LITERATURE as well as the social and political issues of the Pacific Rim as a whole may have become a standard strategy in the discussion of contemporary politics and culture. Similarly, the study of nineteenth-century transatlanticism is now established as an acknowledged and continuously widening field. But how did the Victorians conceive

of and describe travelling, doing business, and living in a diverse geopolitical region that comprises such vastly different areas as the recently established colonial settlements in Australia and New Zealand the British trading posts and colonies in what were generally termed the East Indies beyond the Indian Subcontinent, and the less formalised presence of the British in China, Japan, or also British Burma (discussed in Stephen Keck's article in this issue), which has hitherto received hardly any attention at all in Victorian studies? Before I proceed to outline how the individual contributions in this issue work together to explore the wide spectrum of the resulting points of contact and their representation, I shall first briefly track current developments in scholarly studies of the regions under discussion. These areas' historical, cultural, social, political, as well as more specifically literary significance has recently been approached from within different fields of research. There is indeed an urgent need to bring these different approaches together. These separate areas of inquiry can be usefully grouped into three sets, each with its own theoretical paradigm, methodological framework, and focus: (1) new critical discourses on nineteenth-century global formations; (2) a rise in interest in settler colonialism; and (3) the extension of transatlantic studies approaches to the discussion of the transpacific or transoceanic.

Promising a full-scale redirection of how we think about the Victorians' most widespread ideas about the world and their place in it, current work on a form of nineteenth-century global studies is attempting to create a more encompassing picture of the nineteenth century that allows us to see it as more global. In their introduction to *Nineteenth-Century Worlds: Global Formations Past and Present* (2008), Keith Hanley and Greg Kucich speak of "nineteenth-century 'global formations,'" arguing that new attention to these formations enables us to extend

nineteenth-century critical studies . . . through an ever broadening range of scholarship on such topics as colonialism, cosmopolitanism, transnational politics and economics, international travel and communities, religious syncretism and conflict, international war, transatlantic slavery, women's worldwide struggles for equality, and "contact zone" experience in general. (2)

The study of nineteenth-century global formations may thus be said to pertain to everything that has to do in any way with the wider world, while it also posits that everything more or less did in the nineteenth century. After all, global formations necessarily always also had an impact at home. The focus of inquiry is hence as large as it gets. The methodology, of course, implies a specific concentration on what these formations were, what they did, and what new attention to them may tell us about the nineteenth century. Precisely because it is geographically so encompassing, this theoretical framework forms a good basis for a reassessment of the Victorian Pacific Rim. In fact, it at least technically comprises the whole globe and thereby convincingly argues for the comparative discussion of spaces of direct colonial influence and of such places of exploration or travel as the Pacific Islands, as well as of trade such as China. As important as the new interest in settler colonialism is for a reworking of categories beyond a traditional postcolonial matrix, it is necessarily focused on colonies of settlement alone, whereas transatlantic studies is only slowly – if with a vital impact on Victorian studies as a whole, as we shall see – being reconstituted to allow parallel investigations beyond other oceans apart from the Atlantic.

Still, the most important contribution to the emerging field of global nineteenth-century studies has so far rested in teasing out the complexities of the British Empire and the theories

the Victorians kept conceptualising and redefining in the course of the century. Its main focus has thus hitherto remained the empire and imperialism. In part, this is perhaps due to the fact that “[o]ne of the main fault-lines running through nineteenth-century British visions of global order concerned the role of the empire” (Bell, “Victorian visions” 9). Nevertheless, what is the most crucial to remark here is that, in the course of recent reinvestigations of nineteenth-century ideas of empire, it has emerged that they were significantly wide-ranging and often contradictory. This has generated a salutary warning against ahistorical concepts of the British Empire that underestimate the amount of doubt and contestation that involved its continuous redefinition at the time. In his introduction to *Victorian Visions of Global Order* (2007), Duncan Bell refers to “the ambitions and the prophetic mode of enunciation that characterised much of the thinking about empire and international politics” during this “age of grand (and grandiose) theorising,” and alerts us to the need to work across disciplines to reassess the resulting contestations: “Much of the most influential and interesting political thinking was articulated, moreover, in registers and formats that often escape the eye of historians of political theory” (“Victorian visions” 3). If this already prompts us to look beyond canonical sources, Bell goes further in his book-length analysis of what the Victorians attempted to conceptualise as “Greater Britain,” *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (2007), to suggest that the “quest for a global British polity was one of the most ambitious responses to the rupture in Victorian national self-confidence” (12). Far from being a display of confidence in imperial enterprises, nineteenth-century theories of empire were, in all their hubristic formulation, an articulation of growing anxiety. And much of this anxiety arose not from expansion per se, but instead from the way the world was consequently seen to be shrinking. Late-nineteenth-century commentators, Bell shows, increasingly “responded to the widespread perception that the world was both shrinking and becoming increasingly competitive, and that this was a world in which Britain was losing (or had already lost) its midcentury pre-eminence” (Bell, *Greater Britain* 2). As I have suggested in evoking well-known canonical mid-Victorian novels as different as *Little Dorrit* and *John Caldigate*, popular culture was more than reflecting this growing awareness. Fiction writers like Dickens and Trollope criticised – poked fun at and in the process admonished and often attempted to change – prevailing attitudes towards the myriad different places to which British influence was being extended, and where it was often transformed, turned into something else.²

In Victorian political thought, the farthest reaching response to the resulting atmosphere of uncertainty was the conceptualisation of a “Greater Britain.” There were controversial debates, involving contesting definitions. The most influential discussions operated through the adaptation of a term that had come into vogue after the publication of Charles Dilke’s best-selling travelogue *Greater Britain* (1868), although competing terms included the United States of England or a Federal Britain. Often invoked as the height of imperialist hubris, this “quest for Greater Britain” was really the product of complex international politics: “a product in the sense that the communications technologies facilitating increasing levels of economic interdependence also generated the cognitive shift that was necessary for people to conceive of the scattered elements of the colonial empire as a coherent and unified political unit, and even as a state” (Bell, *Greater Britain* 1–2). In cautioning against ahistorical approaches to the British Empire that see it as an uncontested, even coherent whole, the careful reading of the notably various publications on this issue at the time show how essential it is to be aware of distinctions that were crucial to the Victorians, and realise why they were.

What traditional postcolonial studies approaches, in fact, have tended to ignore is that the Victorians conceptually distinguished between their “empire of settlement” and what are now commonly termed colonies of conquest, in particular India.³ The historian J. R. Seeley summed up this distinction in his influential *The Expansion of England* (1883): that there were actually two separate Great Britains, one composed of new settlements – a “colonial empire” where “Government and institutions are all ultra-English” – and “the other of India, and that they were antithetical in important respects” (10).⁴ The resulting settler empire – what New Zealand historian James Belich has recently termed the “Anglo world” (*Replenishing the Earth*) – often included continued connections to lost colonies as well. In order to gauge the full significance of Victorian international politics, as Bell terms it, we not only have to keep the contestation surrounding these warring theories and definitions in mind, but also, as Annie Coombes has likewise remarked, “think comparatively and historically across different colonial contexts” as well as to consider the shifting meaning these spaces had “in the British metropolitan imagination” (“Memory” 11, 3). In *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (2006), Coombes thereby pinpoints the central premises that, she suggests, ought to characterise a much-needed reassessment of settler colonialism. This is not only meant to close a striking gap in postcolonial studies, but in drawing new attention to the connections between different colonial centres, such an approach is also a good way to get rid of the curiously persistent, but flawed idea of a metropolitan/colonial divide.⁵

The new interest in settler colonialism has indeed started to burgeon over the last couple of years. It had just recently begun to manifest itself on a more global scale – beyond Australasian studies circles – when ideas for this special issue were first under discussion in 2011, and it has since produced several very important works, in particular within literary studies. Diana Archibald’s breakthrough *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel* (2002) and Angela Woollacott’s *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (2001) have been followed by Janet Myers’s *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (2009) and Helen Blythe’s *The Victorian Colonial Romance with the Antipodes* (2014), while several recent collections on Victorian settler narratives have particularly argued for a reading in tandem of settler writing and British-based texts produced in the so-called imperial centre.⁶ James Belich’s highly influential study *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (2009) has, meanwhile, made an important impact throughout cultural histories of empire and in particular within nineteenth-century studies due to its focus on the nineteenth-century settler revolution (Belich, *Replenishing the Earth* 152–54).

The third field of current reassessment – transatlantic studies – is currently being extended to comprise a wider area of interest, and has attained a more specifically literary slant, enriched by interdisciplinary approaches. There is also a welcoming overlap between the above discussed approaches and a parallel extension of diasporic studies, as we can see in this special issue (Lilja Mareike Sautter’s article). A crucial impulse within the extension of transatlantic studies has, moreover, come from comparative literature. Thus, Paul Giles’s influential work on a “transatlantic imaginary” was originally meant to “set up a framework where the emergence of American literature can be re-read in the light of British culture and vice versa” (*Transatlantic Insurrections* 8). After convincingly arguing that we need to learn how to “read English literature transatlantically” in order to understand not just the different traditions (Giles thinks in particular of British and U. S. literary canons), but also the hitherto

seldom discussed connections between them (*Atlantic Republic* 10), Giles has now made a particularly intriguing move that brings us full circle to the idea of a more global nineteenth century beyond a focus on imperial culture.

In a fascinating article on “Antipodean American Literature: Franklin, Twain, and the Sphere of Subalternity” (2008), Giles posits that American writing ought to be considered not just “within a postcolonial matrix,” but in a matrix that situates Britain “at the apex of a triangle that held America and Australia, the old colony and the new colony, as its alternate points” (22–23). With his interest firmly on U.S. literature, Giles necessarily concentrates first and foremost on the “significance of antipodean inversions to the formation of US national narratives in the nineteenth century, the ways in which American culture was symbiotically bound to both its British antecedents and its Australian colonial counterparts” (“Antipodean American” 24). But his work brings to the foreground both the need to read nineteenth-century writing produced in different places in tandem and the even more urgent and potentially more contested need to go beyond the traditional postcolonial matrix. In joining these larger reassessments, the current special issue also voices a plea for a more transoceanic approach to global interconnections. Leaving the postcolonial matrix behind allows us to concentrate on the wider significance of the shifting and varied cultural interchanges that characterised the Victorians’ ever-changing engagement with the wider, if shrinking, world around them.

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IN SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS to this special issue, I have cast out the net deliberately wide. What has come up may, I hope, give us a better idea what moved the Victorians when they thought about, imagined, and wrote about these regions, although it necessary also reflects where current scholarly interest is being directed and for what reasons. The growing fascination with settler colonialism, in particular with the British settlements at the antipodes is reflected in a cluster of essays that focus specifically on Australia (the first three essays in this issue) and New Zealand (the next two essays). The following contributions are to a large extent likewise grouped together according to their main geographical focus, although we can see a range of different connections, thematic affinities, parallels, and contrasts emerge. Thus, there is a juxtaposition of military narratives (Stephen Keck’s article on military officers in colonial Burma), missionary discourses (Benjamin Fischer’s discussion of evangelical representations of China), and nineteenth-century (amateur) sinology (Anna Peak’s analysis of sinology and sinophobia in the *Saturday Review*). Similarly, the pairing of two articles on Isabella Bird Bishop’s ethnographical speculations in her travel writing directs attention to Bird’s still neglected significance for Victorian images and theories of “untrodden” spaces, while focusing on areas (the Sandwich Islands in Precious McKenzie Stearns’s article and Japan in Joohyun Jade Park’s) that have traditionally been left out in discussions of Victorian women’s writing. Overall, the individual contributions have been grouped together in order to map out the issue’s underpinning intention to broaden our perspective and shift it away from the so-called centre.

The present issue opens up with Dorice Williams Elliott’s discussion of convict broadsides. Victorian broadsides were an ephemeral literary form usually printed on cheap paper and chiefly targeted at the working classes. In “Transported to Botany Bay: Imagining Australia in Nineteenth-Century Convict Broadside,” Elliott looks at broadsides that specifically address convict transportation and argues that these popular culture productions

constitute one of the few means we have to guess how the British working classes imagined Australia as well as their own role as British subjects. In concentrating precisely on what was to remain such a persistent association – of the antipodes with convict settlements long after penal transportation to Australia had ceased – this intriguing analysis of a seldom discussed literary form then provides a good springboard for the subsequent analyses of settler culture and its representation in British-based works.

Highlighting how contested discourses on emigration and settlement were in the nineteenth century, Terra Walston Joseph's "'Saving British Natives': Family Emigration and the Logic of Settler Colonialism in Charles Dickens and Caroline Chisholm" and Melissa Walker's "Self-Made Maids: British Emigration to the Pacific Rim and Self-Help Narratives" both engage critically with particular emigration policies and methods of organised emigration. Joseph's careful reassessment of the fraught relationship between Dickens and Chisholm helps to foreground conflicting perspectives on settler spaces and their role in the British Empire. The famous pat ending of *David Copperfield* (1850), orchestrated through the exportation of a sizeable number of characters to Australia, may mirror Chisholm's concept of family emigration, which she was advertising in Dickens's *Household Words* at the time. Subsequently, however, Dickens notoriously satirised Chisholm in *Bleak House* (1852). Joseph teases out a curiously neglected shift: in the later novel, Dickens creates the fictitious Borriboola-Gha in Africa to stand in for Chisholm's Australia. This shift has obscured the significance of settlement projects to the novel's satire, and this has much to do with the fact that historical and literary scholars today are still often baffled by the Victorians' very divergent conceptualisation of different kinds of empire. Walker similarly concentrates on emigration discourses at the imperial centre, critically analysing the evocation of mid-Victorian self-help ideologies in the context of emigration. When this rhetoric was applied to single women to generate the image of a "self-made maid," it revealed how such an indiscriminate extension across male and female emigrant groups could turn out to be a fraught venture. Walker traces the struggles of Maria Rye's Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FMCES) to promote this ideal, juxtaposing its publication of model letters by grateful emigrants with unpublished letters in the society's archives that tell a very different story and thereby draw the supposed authenticity of FMCES literature into question.

Lilja Mareike Sautter's "Femininity and Community at Home and Away: Shipboard Diaries by Single Women Emigrants to New Zealand" continues this focus on gendered articulations of British colonial emigration. Sautter analyses how notions of femininity and community travelled from Britain to New Zealand by conducting a close reading of two shipboard diaries by a matron and a young woman under the care of a matron, who both travelled from Scotland to New Zealand in the late 1870s. The role of the matron in particular stands revealed as inherently ambiguous, laying bare how segregation and regulation were intended to transport Victorian ideals of femininity. Sautter's focus on what happens onboard ship shifts our attention from writing produced about emigration destinations "back home" to settler literature. The second article on New Zealand, Hugh Roberts's "Chance, Providence, and Imperial Ennui in Alfred Domett's *Ranolf and Amohia: A South-Sea Day-Dream*" centres on a close reading of Domett's philosophical epic *Ranolf and Amohia*, published in 1872. In directing new attention to a text that has seldom been critically analysed in its own right, beyond identifications with Domett's political pronouncements, Roberts seeks to move beyond familiar gestures in contemporary postcolonial criticism. If "getting Domett right,"

as Roberts puts it, poses a tricky interpretive problem, it also raises the larger question of how we understand the relationship between a literary text and the context in which it is produced. A deterministic, purely contextual reading, Roberts warns, risks sacrificing the literary. This is always a salutary reminder, but perhaps especially so in the context of a reassessment that brings together separate analyses of different texts precisely through their contextual affinities such as geographical contingency. As much as their comparison may yield in itself, we must not lose sight of their differences and this includes the significance of literary form: how a text might and indeed must transcend its context.

With Philip Steer's "Romances of Uneven Development: Spatiality, Trade, and Form in Robert Louis Stevenson's Pacific Novels," we venture further geographically, while retaining this significant literary slant. In reconsidering Stevenson's two novel-length Pacific works *The Wrecker* (1892) and *The Ebb-Tide* (1894), Steer employs neoformalist accounts of the romance in order to trace how spatiality, economics, and form work together to create a marked departure from what had been the dominant models for representing imperial space and themes. The following two essays concentrate on travel writing, conducting close readings of two of Isabella Bird Bishop's lesser known travel books. In "Civilizing Hawaii: Isabella Bird Bishop in the Sandwich Islands," Precious McKenzie Stearns reassesses the significance of Bird's 1875 travel memoir *The Hawaiian Archipelago. Six months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands*; in "Missing Link Found, 1880: The Rhetoric of Colonial Progress in Isabella Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*," Joohyun Jade Park concentrates on Bird's book on Japan, with which the hitherto populist travel writer attempted to claim recognition as a scientific traveller. Paired together, both articles already make an invaluable contribution to the reassessment of this iconic Victorian woman traveller, while on a different level, Bird's search for "the real Hawaiian" forms a great point of comparison to her focus on the indigenous Ainu in Japan. Park simultaneously alerts us to the conspicuous absence of Japanese-Ainu colonial history and argues that this gap in scholarship can be traced to a still prevalent overreliance on Saidian models of colonial relationships that leave out "variations" of Orientalism, such as Japanese Orientalism.

The next cluster of essays similarly reassesses Victorian engagements with "the Orient" that are generally sidestepped in studies that purport to employ a critical analysis of Orientalism. Stephen Keck's "Involuntary Sightseeing: Soldiers as Travel Writers and the Construction of Colonial Burma" and Benjamin Fischer's "Civilized Depravity: Evangelical Representations of Early-Nineteenth-Century China and the Redefinition of 'True Civilization,'" explore the ideological frameworks and productions of different discourses – military and missionary – on Burma (Myanmar) and China respectively. Keck reads military officers' accounts of the Anglo-Burmese wars against the grain, casting new light on a seldom discussed aspect of British imperial history, while Fischer dissects the stereotyping of "the Chinese" in Evangelical mission narratives, while drawing attention to missionaries' ambiguous positioning within imperial policies. Missionaries, Fischer maintains, saw themselves as, in a spiritual sense, participants in transnationality and therefore separate from their own nation's imperialist agenda. Hence, while they often benefited from imperialist policies, their frequently vociferous criticism also reveals the conflict and contestation that was inherent to British imperialist expansion from the start.

The final essay, Anna Peak's "The 'Chinese Language' in the *Saturday Review*: A Case Study in Sinophobia's Scholarly Roots," provides a different angle on the Victorians' interest in Chinese culture and language. In the last decades of the nineteenth century,

sinology became established as a field of scholarship, which was soon popularised in the form of regular articles targeted at an audience of laymen in periodicals such as the *Saturday Review*. As well-intentioned scholars and interested amateurs often found themselves baffled by the complexity of China's written and spoken language systems, however, their comments on this frustration inadvertently fuelled British prejudice against the Chinese. Sinophobia, as Peak provocatively posits, originated to an important degree in the work of the first scholars of sinology. With this focus on knowledge that is generated at home and creates its own attendant misconceptions, the present issue thereby also moves back full circle to the impact that Victorian involvements overseas had on the imperial centre. This is of course not to contain, once more, the discussion of the myriad and versatile reactions to the cultures of the Pacific Rim, but on the contrary, it is intended to serve as a pointed conclusion that simultaneously showcases the complexity of responses. More significantly still, to consider how scholarship may unintentionally create as well as perpetuate prejudices forms a salutary reminder – as we attempt to guard against the influence of any nationalist or imperialist jingoism in our own research – that no conceptual framework can perhaps ever be completely free from the preconceptions, expectations, and shifting norms of the age in which it is produced.

Nanyang Technological University

NOTES

1. For a thorough conceptualisation of semi-colonialism see Osterhammel (“Semi-Colonialism”).
2. I have chosen two well-known Victorian novels by Dickens and Trollope for illustrative purposes because they have featured repeatedly and extensively in recent discussions of imperial undercurrents in popular fiction. There have been valuable discussions of the significance of the opium trade in *Little Dorrit* (see Tambling; Thomas, Xu); the representation of Australia in *John Caldigate* has most recently been addressed by Myers (*Antipodal* ch. 2) and Wagner (“Settling Back”).
3. Bell stresses that the “importance of the ‘empire of settlement’ for the late Victorians has been underplayed in the imperial history boom of the last decades.” Instead, “[r]ecent historiography, and in particular the ‘new imperial history,’ has been dominated by explorations of the ideologies, representations, and practices of British rule in Africa and India, as well as the considerable, even constitutive, impact that these had on Britain” (*Greater Britain* 23).
4. In various definitions of the time, the settler empire “could mean the ‘English-speaking,’ or Anglo-Saxon, countries of the world, encompassing not only the settlement empire, but also the United States.” Bell suggests that the term was employed in three main ways:

Firstly, it could denote the totality of the British empire, the vast ensemble of disparate territories coloring the map of the world red. Secondly, it could refer to the settlement colonies, which by the 1870s were growing very rapidly in population, economic power, and strategic importance. And thirdly, it could mean the “English-speaking,” or Anglo-Saxon, countries of the world, encompassing not only the settlement empire, but also the United States. This conceptual multivalency reflected conflicting views over the future direction of the empire, and it exposed some of the fault lines running through the political thought of the period. Although all three modulations circulated widely, the most frequent usage was in reference to the settler colonies. (*Greater Britain* 7)

5. On “what are sometimes described as ‘the colonies of settlement’” see also Cohen: “These were New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Rhodesia and South Africa in the British case; Brazil, Mozambique and Angola in the Portuguese case; Indonesia for the Dutch; and Algeria and Tunisia in the case of the French. What links these societies together is that in each territory the European migrants were numerous enough or powerful enough to assert, or try to assert, independence from the motherland and hegemony over the indigenous populations” (*Migration* 42).
6. Compare Moruzi and Smith, *Colonial Girlhood*; Wagner, *Victorian Settler Narratives and Domestic Fiction*.

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