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THE HALF-CASTE: A HALF-TOLD TALE

Dinah Mulock Craik's 1851 short story The Half-Caste tells us less about the title character, a young woman of mixed British and Indian descent, than about Cassia, the embedded narrator. The most revealing parts of Cassia's narrative are her silences, those places where she skirts around the unspeakable. In addition to Cassia's apparent sexual repression, this article considers the ways in which the gaps in the narrative serve to draw attention to the repression of colonial problems, particularly the discrepancies between colonialist attitudes and Craik's egalitarian ideals. The narrative gaps are only partial ones; secrets are half-told rather than untold, and this serves to heighten their significance. Cassia's silences reveal her desires all too clearly, and although, as this article argues, the story ultimately centers on Cassia herself as the quintessential Englishwoman, the importance of the colony to her very identity is apparent in the characterization in, and the form of, The Half-Caste.

Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Half-Caste* (1851) is, on the surface, a version of the Cinderella story: a young woman is rescued from an abusive situation, groomed and ultimately wed. Complicating the marriage plot is the voice of the narrator which, persistently repressed and ironic, undercuts the fairy-tale romance even as it unfolds. The narrator, governess to the titular half-caste, habitually ignores her own desires. This strategy of containing, compartmentalizing or ignoring the irresolvable is also deployed in the accounting—or lack thereof—for Zillah's Indian background. Zillah's parentage, and the problem of imperialism in general, is managed through avoidance. Zillah is born in India, but her progress is represented as contingent on the erasure or judicious revision of her colonial past,¹ but her Indianness is evoked to add fascination to her persona as she grows into a woman. India itself is relegated to the long-ago and far-away, and problems such as colonial greed and exploitation, and the toll empire takes on Anglo-Indian families, are referred to and then situated in the long-ago, faraway place that is outside of the limited concerns of the text. This distancing, like Cassia's repression, has the paradoxical effect of drawing attention to those places where it fails: positioned as it is at the crux of sweeping changes in colonial culture, *The Half-Caste* offers a rare juxtaposition of Orientalist and Anglicist styles and ideas that is remarkable for a text of its brevity.²

The story proceeds as follows: upon the death of her parents, a British East India merchant and an Indian princess, Zillah Le Poer is placed with her mercenary uncle in Yorkshire. To her rescue comes Cassia Pryor, who at the behest of a mutual friend, Mr Sutherland, has accepted the position of governess to Zillah. Lieutenant Augustus Le Poer, Zillah's cousin, tries to seduce Zillah for her inheritance. Cassia thwarts his evil designs, as well as the independent evil designs of his estranged father. The two ladies relocate to the home of Mr Sutherland, who eventually falls in love with Zillah and marries her. Cassia becomes governess to the Sutherlands' daughter.

Although, as we shall see, the colonial situation in the tale is beside the moral point, and is probably deployed to excite interest and draw in the reader before bludgeoning her with the Craikian values at the core of the story, *The Half-Caste* is peopled by colonial stereotypes. Cassia, the Anglicist governess, is reminiscent of those missionaries who took the improvement of natives to be their calling. Mr Sutherland is the romantic trader hero, a familiar if somewhat anachronistic figure.³ Zillah represents more than one colonial stereotype as she morphs from an abject servant into an object of desire. The Le Poers represent a variety of colonial problems such as the perceived greed, corruption and sexual rapacity of the nabobs, the toll colonialism took on families, and the Manichean racism that waxed with Britain's imperial century.

The Le Poers: an empire family

The Le Poers are composites of Craik's pet prejudices. While Craik does not specify their ancestry, Le Poer was a common Irish-Norman name, and it is in Ireland that Augustus Le Poer lurks and to Ireland that Mr Le Poer spirits his lucrative ward for her rest cure. The details of Craik's own vexed relationship with her Irish father and her prejudice against Irish people can be found in Karen Bourrier's article on Craik's letters.⁴ Craik also manages to work a touch of the Francophobia evident in her most famous work, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856),⁵ into the name "Le Poer". "Le Poer" means "the poor one", although for most real-world Le Poers the poverty was not actual but notional—a vow of poverty or the appearance of poverty. Ironically, the Le Poers in *The Half-Caste* are in fact poor, but maintain the appearance of wealth. More pertinent is their spiritual impoverishment—they are not humane with their dependents and aspire to wealth that they have neither earned nor inherited; this puts them at odds with the values of the text. All the Le Poer men—Zillah's father, his brother and his nephew Augustus—attempt, with varying degrees of success, to live off Indian women—first Zillah's mother and then Zillah.

Of course, though her uncle would deny it, Le Poer is Zillah's name too and, in her case, her full name juxtaposes the exotic legacy of her mother with the European legacy of her dodgy father. As in Orientalist texts, the moral and material nobility of the native throws the moral and material impoverishment of the European into relief.

Zillah's situation with the Le Poers is a plausible one: it was quite common for children born in the colonies to be shipped to England. This was one of the ways in which colonial families posed challenges to the nuclear ideal with which the Victorians are often associated. As Julia Clancy-Smith says: "The family romance of the British Empire was instead a vast extended network of broken families".⁶ *The Half-Caste* approaches the question of Zillah's parentage from various different angles, each corresponding to a distinct school of mid-Victorian thought on children of mixed British and Indian ancestry. Her story is in keeping with the political developments in India where, towards the end of the eighteenth century, Eurasians began to lose the privileges they had enjoyed under East India Company rule. Those who were light-skinned and rich enough to live in the West worked hard to pass as Britons. The implied author of *The Half-Caste* seems sympathetic to this desire to pass: the admirable Cassia and Mr Sutherland abet Zillah's assimilation, while the villainous Le Poers attempt to thwart her progress. When Cassia first meets Mr Le Poer, he informs her that Zillah's "modicum of intellect is not greater than generally belongs to her mother's race. She would make an excellent ayah, and that is all"—a verdict that Cassia takes delight in overturning (17).

The nabob: trader, lover, colonist

Where the Le Poers are depicted as parasites feeding off Zillah and her mother, and are thus legible within the tradition of trader villains in early nineteenth-century fiction, Mr Sutherland is somewhat spuriously classified as a hero. Specifically, he represents the trader hero, a common figure in the fiction of the previous century. By contrast, Zillah's father, whom she suspects of the theft of her mother's ring, represents the corrupt India merchant evoked by Anglicists to elicit public sympathy for the plight of Indians under East India Company rule, thereby casting the Anglicist push for greater intervention into Indian affairs in the light of a rescue mission. Mr Sutherland is, like the villainous Le Poers, a "nabob" (a word used by detractors to describe India merchants) in that he makes his fortune from India trade, suffers as much as the trader villains from the vagaries of mercantile fortune and, like Zillah's father, regains access to Indian wealth through marriage. However, he is not subjected to accusations of thievery.⁷ The distinction between the two traders rests on the notion of love—

Mr Sutherland's for Zillah and the narrator's for Mr Sutherland—which elevates Mr Sutherland over his mercenary colleagues.

Zillah is not Mr Sutherland's first love. He has in the past been engaged to an Indian woman with eyes "like great oceans of light" (34), and part of Zillah's attraction for him is that she reminds him of his time in India. Ronald Hyam has argued that the colonies represented a place beyond the inhibitions of the increasingly bourgeois cultures of Europe.⁸ As Frederic Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler point out: "In this repressive model of history, the colonies were sites of unfettered economic and sexual opportunity where masculine self-indulgence could be given free vent".⁹ Mr Sutherland's life in India fits this description; his time overseas is treated by Craik as beyond her purview. The colony serves as an outlet for him to which Craik perhaps feels she can in clear conscience turn a blind eye, as Cassia does when she glosses over Zillah's backstory: "The whole history of her [Zillah's] father and mother was one of those family tragedies, only too frequent, which, the actors in them being dead, are best forgotten" (52). Upon Mr Sutherland's return from India, his needs for companionship are met by Zillah, leaving Cassia's virtue, and her vicariousness, intact.¹⁰ The tendency identified by Hyam, and exemplified in Mr Sutherland, should be familiar to readers of Victorian fiction. Priti Joshi has identified a similar structure in Charles Dickens's mid-Victorian work. While *Bleak House* (1852–53) and *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) portray bureaucracy and domesticity as emasculating forces, Dickens's short fiction from the 1850s tends to be set in the colonies, where "his characters, in the face of adversity, rise to heroism". Joshi suggests that the stories

[...] attest to a desire for a simple, uncomplicated world, one in which recognizing and embracing his—and the emphasis was decidedly on a masculine figure—identity *as a Briton* leads the protagonist to act nobly and valiantly [...] the flip side of Dickens's critique of British institutions and bureaucracy was both an anxiety about the enervating influence of prosperity and domesticity and, as antidote, the craving of a landscape in which the hero is unfettered and free to express himself as British.¹¹

By the mid nineteenth century, popular associations of colonial India with spectacular conquest, untold riches and romance died with the rising of the Anglicist tide; for most Britons, according to Joshi, India began to be associated more with "the dead weight of administrative minutiae".¹² A character like Mr Sutherland brings the glamor back to the colonial project, with his romantic liberation of the colonized woman from the nightmare of being sexually unavailable to him.

Mr Sutherland's position as rescuer is narrated with Cassia's wonted irony, for he is in fact missing in action at all the crucial points in Zillah's life—for

most of the story Cassia is not even aware that he is Zillah's guardian and her own employer. Despite Cassia's professed adulation for Mr Sutherland and her modest dismissal of the part she plays in Zillah's life, however, the reader is made aware that it is the governess who intervenes at crucial moments to rescue her charge.

The half-caste: Zillah Le Poer

The Half-Caste is set at a crux in Anglo-Indian relations where Orientalist attitudes and policies are giving way to Anglicist thinking. In the eighteenth century, it was common for East India Company officials to cohabit and raise families with Indian women. The most vivid recent account of this is William Dalrymple's *White Mughals* (2002). Dalrymple chronicles the journey of Kitty Kirkpatrick, whose real-life story is remarkably similar to Zillah's fictional one—both girls are born to aristocratic women of Persian descent and British men, and both assimilate successfully into English society by virtue of their wealth and mutable appearance, even though Anglicist ideas begin to replace Orientalist ones in their lifetime. By the mid nineteenth century, marriages between Britons and Indians of the upper classes were no longer given official sanction, a state of affairs hinted at by Mr Le Poer when he insinuates that Zillah is illegitimate.

The implied author of *The Half-Caste* waffles, along with the embedded narrator, between the emergent discourse of British cultural superiority and the Orientalist attitudes that were by this time beginning to wane. Curiously enough, Zillah's story seems to reverse the historical (chronological) order of the two sets of attitudes: she moves from the material and civilizational impoverishment of Anglicist discourse to the sensual richness that Orientalists claimed to have found in the East. In the beginning, Zillah is called an "ugly little devil" by Mr Le Poer, an assessment with which Cassia privately agrees, adding that Zillah is "ultra-stupid" in appearance (19). Zillah is described as "full of the languor of her native clime", slovenly and therefore unwomanly (22)—so that she is in every way the antithesis of neat, genteel Cassia, who describes herself as "lady-like" (15). Zillah is also portrayed as the antithesis of Cassia in that she has no innate "consciousness of right or wrong" (23), and in her lack of reserve. When Zillah is angry she is represented as animalistic—literally foaming at the mouth (23)—whereas Cassia's repressed emotions and constant rationalizations are represented as quintessentially human.¹³

Cassia's management of Zillah is consonant with nineteenth-century Anglicist/utilitarian ideas of the improvement of colonized peoples through British, Christian education. In 1855, William Gladstone insisted that colonization was not so beneficial to the British as it was to the colonized

“because we feel convinced that our constitution is a blessing to us [. . .] that we are desirous of extending its influence, and that it should not be confined within the narrow borders of this little island” (11).¹⁴ In keeping with this Anglicist idea that to confer British culture upon natives was to improve them, Cassia instructs Zillah in the “gender-specific combination of cultural, behavioral, occupational, and class markers deemed characteristic of a privileged racial identity”.¹⁵ The opening line of the story—“We know who we are, but we know not who we may be” (9)—sets the tone for the characterization of Zillah, who rapidly evolves from an Indian servant into a British aristocrat. At the same time, we are shown how the Briton benefits materially and politically from her association with the colonial subject: in the beginning, Cassia hopes to support herself and her mother with the salary she earns for teaching Zillah, and in the end it is Zillah’s fortune on which she becomes dependent. In addition, Cassia begins to see herself as a powerful woman through Zillah—i.e. by contrast to the abject figure whom she claims as her responsibility. Cassia’s framing of the story of Zillah’s transformation as a story of improvement rests on the assumptions that improvement is warranted, that it is possible, that it is an act of altruism and that it consists of anglicization.

Focalized through the Anglicist governess, *The Half-Caste* takes the form of a Cinderella story (19). Cassia casts herself in the role of fairy godmother as she equips Zillah with the British, Christian and feminine values which Cassia herself epitomizes. In the process of educating Zillah, Cassia displays the classic colonial ignorance—or strategic ignoring—of a culture outside of her own as viable and valid. Cassia treats Zillah as a tabula rasa, then, as an imperial force that constructs itself as benevolent, explains to Zillah “how much she had been saved”, whereupon Zillah “seems grateful and penitent” (52). Zillah is repeatedly referred to as a child, when she is, in fact, in her late teens at the start of the story. The logic by which she is understood as a child is the colonial logic of the childlike nature of colonized peoples, who have much to learn from the colonists.

If *The Half-Caste* is a Cinderella story, then Mr Sutherland is the obvious candidate for the role of the prince. However, both Zillah and Cassia show more of the qualities of the fairy-tale prince than Mr Sutherland does. It is Cassia who valiantly comes to Zillah’s rescue, and it is Zillah who is of aristocratic extraction and Zillah’s wealth that will in the end sustain them all. Although she is educated in confinement, treated like a servant and has small extremities—the better to fail to escape with—it is she who rescues both Cassia and Mr Sutherland from the prospect of poverty and boredom with her princely fortune and style.

As Zillah grows, she metamorphoses from Anglicist project into Orientalist ideal:

Zillah lay on a sofa reading a love-story. Her crisped black hair was tossed about the crimson cushions, and her whole figure was that of rich Eastern

luxuriance. She had always rather a fantastic way of dress, and now she looked almost like a princess out of the *Arabian Nights*. (62)

It is at this point in the tale that Cassia looks at Zillah with new eyes and sees her as Mr Sutherland sees her—as an alluring woman, not as the abject creature she had been trying, for five years, to elevate. The relatively smooth courtship between Mr Sutherland and Zillah is again a product of an Orientalist imagination, premised as it is on an earlier model of class-based segregation, as opposed to the later race-based segregation according to which their union would be, if not impossible, at least unlikely enough to make it the overwhelming issue in this tale (34, 52).

In this manner, Craik incorporates both Orientalist and Anglicist ideas into her representations. Craik's deployment of Orientalist tropes serves to provide a far more complex picture of the colony than we find in the writing of many of her contemporaries. Her approach in *The Half-Caste* both reinforces and challenges the boundaries around Britishness. The resolutions in the tale—anglicization, where Britishness and Christianity are the panacea; the marriage plot, where the threat of Zillah as an insurgent or obstruction is managed not with the use of overt violence, but via marriage, the advent of her blond, blue-eyed daughter and the erasure of Zillah's ethnicity; deferral, where a Christian world view is not so much interested in the injustices of this world as in the justice to be served in the world to come; and ignorance/ignoring, where colonialism is located far away and in the past, so that there is no acknowledged engagement with it in the here and now of the tale—are all patently unsatisfactory. Still, if we ignore Craik's attempted resolutions and focus on the persistent problems in *The Half-Caste*, there is much to admire in the nuanced rendering of a truly complex subject. Zillah complicates the Manichean classification that pits the colonizing invaders/rescuers against the victimized or resistant colonized, dwelling as she does on what Craik represents as the permeable boundary between the two categories. Zillah also calls into question the rising language of the irreversible degeneracy of colonized peoples—her rapid transformation shows her classification to be a cultural construct. The varieties of colonial attitudes held by the other characters in relation to Zillah are treated as indicative of their moral fiber, from the least admirable Le Poers to the most admirable Cassia.

The Cassandra

Craik felt, as did John Ruskin, that the role of a woman involved not just the running of a home, but also “the moral uplifting of its occupants”,¹⁶ and, by extension, wanted her writing to “show the world not as it is but as it could

be".¹⁷ Why, then, present us with a protagonist like Zillah, who is not distinguished particularly by her moral compass, who is endowed with wealth and beauty in excess of what Craik's protagonists are usually allowed, who lounges about reading romance novels and who makes, in general, a terrible model for readers to emulate? The answer is, of course, that it is not Zillah who is being put forward as an exemplary figure, but Cassia. This is easy to miss for the twenty-first-century reader. Zillah is probably a far more likeable character to most of us: she is a flawed, volatile, evolving, multicultural individual, a type still to be found regularly in reinventions of the Cinderella story, whereas Cassia is a type that has waned in popularity, but is ubiquitous in Victorian fiction—the self-effacing, repressed, vicarious, genteel woman of wearproof moral fiber.

Like her Homeric namesake, Cassia (whose real name is Cassandra) is fated to go unheeded, even by herself, for it is apparent from her narrative that she understands much but reveals what she sees only indirectly, making for what Sally Mitchell calls a "pleasurable irony" in the text.¹⁸ This is a technique used by Craik in the characterization of Phineas Fletcher from *John Halifax* as well. Both Cassia and Phineas tell the stories of those excluded from the privileges that they themselves enjoy, and of how this exclusion is overcome. Zillah and John both rise—culturally, in Zillah's case, and socially, in John's—and their upward movement draws the eye of the reader away from the relatively stagnant presence of the narrator.

Circumstances thrust heroism upon Cassia despite herself, however: on the day she meets Zillah she says she feels like a heroine, as Zillah kisses her with weeping gratitude (19), and Zillah affords Cassia many more opportunities for heroism thereafter. It is Cassia who educates Zillah and nurses her back from the brink of death, and when Augustus Le Poer convinces Zillah to run away with him, it is Cassia who valiantly defends Zillah and protects her inheritance. Hence we have an interesting discrepancy between Cassia's narrative and Craik's story: in Cassia's text she is neither protagonist nor rescuer, but in Craik's text she is both.

Cassia's life, like the lives of other Craik characters (Phineas and Muriel from *John Halifax* and Olive Rothesay from *Olive* [1850], for example), is marked by the failure or deferment of the heterosexual marriage plot, allowing for some flexibility in gender roles and for the privileging of filial or fraternal devotion over the connubial relationship.¹⁹ Phineas, Olive and Cassia achieve financial security outside of the patriarchal romance plot. Phineas and Cassia manage to remain ambiguously positioned in relation to the central male figures in their stories. In Phineas's case, Ursula and, in Cassia's case, Zillah become the complements to John Halifax and Andrew Sutherland, respectively, leaving the embedded narrators with negative freedom—freedom from compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchal marriage—as well as positive freedom—freedom to be heroic in their own way. While it is certainly

possible to imagine, erroneously, that everything from silence to pain to subjection is a form of agency, and while it is necessary therefore to bear in mind how problematic Cassia's position is, as we continue to rethink gender and sexuality, her choices become easier, not harder, to appreciate—from a secular perspective, she actually offers an easier point of entry into Craik's fictional world than the paragons of domesticity Craik sometimes proffers. Craik's letters suggest that while Craik did not see her own singleness as a form of liberation, in many ways it was just that. Her strategic humility and modesty seem intended to render her powerful, practical personality acceptable by Victorian standards of femininity; her consciousness of the opportunities available to a single middle-class woman comes across in her characterization of Cassia, who is free to travel and to become a writer.²⁰

From a Christian perspective, the reproducing bodies in Craik's tales are less perfect than Cassia, or Muriel or Phineas from *John Halifax*, who are Christ-like in their virtue as well as in their selflessness. Cassia sacrifices herself repeatedly for the happiness of others. She gives up a longed-for visit to her mother to nurse Zillah through typhus fever, and claims to be happy that her charge is spared the sorrow of unrequited love that she herself knows (46). But discontent seeps into her voice, making her an unusually sarcastic narrator. Craik displays similar discontent in a letter to her brother of 17 June 1860: "Sometimes when I think of a few young people [. . .] it seems first a bit hard that one never [should] have been really happy in all one's life [. . .] & one isn't quite a stone even at 34". She encourages Ben, her brother, to start a family and to have a daughter "the image of Mama", presumably so that Craik could see the more positive part of her heritage passed on in a vicarious way—just like Cassia, who creatively claims the Sutherlands' child, and her namesake, as her "niece".²¹

As Cassia prepares, grooms and puts forward Zillah as a debutante, we are reminded of Craik's struggles with how to present her public self while still being true to the "ethics of reserve and integrity" that Bourrier identifies in her work.²² Like Cassia, Craik "tried to content herself with life as a literary spinster". She shunned publicity: she vehemently objected to her aunt's forwarding of her letters to the public, suggesting that the exposure was particularly harmful because she was a woman author. "All that the public has any right to know about me", she wrote on 4 December c.1859,

[. . .] they may find in a list of authors of the time [. . .]—viz—that I, Dinah Maria Mulock, was born at Stoke-upon-Trent in 1826 [. . .] my very quiet life, completely out of the literary world, ought to be a sufficient hint of how utterly I avoid & dislike personal publicity.²³

Cassia, like Craik, leads a very quiet life, the only excitement being generated through the lives of the theatrical characters she is surrounded by. Cassia's

description of Mr Le Poer, for instance, is like something out of a Dickens novel—her voice resembles Esther Summerson’s in *Bleak House* as she praises, with heavy irony, Mr Le Poer’s gentlemanly manners, which mask his parasitism. Zillah and Mr Sutherland are also very flamboyant characters. In fact, apart from Cassia, *The Half-Caste* is peopled by carefully costumed actors who are less multidimensional and less realistic than the “Everywoman” narrator who invites identification. When Cassia’s tone carefully steers clear of censure as she describes how Zillah is impertinent with Mr Sutherland, how her lilacs fill his room with strong rich scent (61), and how she persuades him to give a ball even though he is, according to Cassia, not sociable by nature, we are meant to feel a trifle indignant on Cassia’s behalf that a woman who understands Mr Sutherland so well should have her romantic hopes dashed by the woman who is an assault on his every sense.

Conclusion

In addition to the glimpses of the various colonial attitudes prevalent in Craik’s world, *The Half-Caste* provides us with more than one wonderful instance of a dysfunctional Victorian family and enriches our understanding of Craik’s work in general, and *John Halifax* in particular. *The Half-Caste* illuminates *John Halifax* by showing that a reading which focuses on Phineas is not a reading against the grain; Phineas is meant to be extremely significant, much as—and because—he tries to convince us otherwise. Phineas is so successfully repressed, and John so very heroic, that the reader’s attention is more firmly directed away from the narrator in *John Halifax* than in *The Half-Caste*. Revisiting *John Halifax* after reading *The Half-Caste*, however, one cannot help but pay more attention to Phineas.

Victorian ideas of family continue to influence the way families are imagined today, but there is no dearth of scholarship challenging our assumptions about both the realities and the representations of Victorian families. *The Half-Caste* drives another nail into the coffin of the idea that Victorian family life was at all a “model of parental authority, loving relationships, inner harmony, and secure values untroubled by pressures from the public world”, a sentimental vision that, as Claudia Nelson tells us in *Family Ties in Victorian England* (2007), the Victorians themselves constructed.²⁴ Marriage, family and profitable work are represented in Craik’s writing as routes to stability, but the survival and propagation of the race and the possibly doomed pursuit of ideal domesticity are not her only, or perhaps even her central, concerns. The romantic, affective, even passionate coupling of Mr Sutherland and Zillah is not being put forward by Craik as a replicable prototype—it is marked in its circumstantial uniqueness, unlike the more

achievable-seeming, but also deadly dull, union of John and Ursula Halifax in 1856. While Zillah may be the character at the center of the action of *The Half-Caste*, it is Cassia whom we find at the tale's moral core: in her valiant, though failed, attempts to center on others, not on the self, Cassia epitomizes the Christian ideals to which Craik aspired.

While, as a good Christian, Craik was not so much concerned with the affairs of this world as with the world to come, her own life taught her the necessity of some measure of worldly wisdom and the desirability of professional success. Professional success was, however, a double-edged sword to her—it sustained her and her family, but she was uncomfortable with publicity and with the way in which her close relatives tried to capitalize on her fame. We see her conflicting views on worldly versus spiritual progress in her writing—very prominently in *John Halifax*, but perhaps even more lucidly in *The Half-Caste*. In both works, ultra-virtuous characters like Phineas, Muriel and Cassia are dependent on the more worldly characters. They remain untarnished either by mercantile or sexual activity, and so serve as the moral compasses within the stories. Cassia and Zillah, thus, are codependent: Cassia depends on Zillah materially and Zillah depends on Cassia morally.

If one were to attempt a morphology of a Craik tale, therefore, one would probably find two overlapping sets of values and two sorts of characters at the heart of each tale—the one, successful in worldly terms, the vibrant and energetic center of the story, who starts a family and conforms to the producing/reproducing ideal of the Victorian age, and the other a sort of maiden aunt, the spiritual core of the story, who is always a bit off-center, viewing the central character from the sidelines. In fact, Craik's own life may be understood to be such an odd pairing—of the celebrity author and the private person, stoic in her suffering,²⁵ who is gifted at capturing Victorian ideals, even if they are not necessarily her ideals—and this is one source of the “pleasurable” ironic tension in her texts.

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Notes

- 1 For example, the details of the process by which several British parties consider themselves justified in claiming Zillah's Indian mother's wealth are

- relegated to a history “best forgotten.” See Dinah Mulock Craik, *The Half-Caste: An Old Governess’s Tale* (T. Whittaker, New York: 1897), 52. Subsequent references to this edition appear in text. My choice of edition is determined in part by the T. Whittaker version being freely available—and searchable—online, while the version included in Cora Kaplan’s edition of *Olive* (New York: Oxford UP: 1999) has long been out of print.
- 2 The term “Orientalist” here refers specifically to the embrace of upper-class Indian culture by East India Company officials in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In order to foster trade relations with Indian rulers, the company encouraged its servants to adapt to Indian lifestyles, to marry Indian women and to refrain from missionary activity. India traders eventually fell out of favor in England, as the Crown took more of an interest in ruling, not merely trading with, India. The trial of Warren Hastings (1788–95), where Hastings was charged with corruption by Edmund Burke, who made the case for the moral dimension of empire, was an iconic case where two sets of attitudes were pitted against each other. Attitudes had begun to shift away from Orientalism and towards Anglicism, or the belief that the English religion, language and culture were superior to that of India, and should therefore be propagated in the colony. See William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004); Amal Chatterjee, *Representations of India, 1740–1840: The Creation of India in the Colonial Imagination* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1998).
 - 3 The trader hero figure was more common in eighteenth-century colonial fiction; by the nineteenth century, India traders had fallen out of favor and the trader villain was more common. See Chatterjee, *Representations of India*.
 - 4 Karen Bourrier, “Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39.1 (2011): 203–22.
 - 5 Dinah Mulock Craik, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2005).
 - 6 Julia Clancy-Smith, “The Intimate, the Familial, and the Local in Transnational Histories of Gender,” *Journal of Women’s History* 18.2 (2006): 174–83 (178–79).
 - 7 In Mr Sutherland’s case, as in the case of Zillah’s father and of the populace in *John Halifax*, who nearly lose their wealth when the bank collapses (they are bailed out by John, who has hoarded rather than invested), speculative investment leads to ruin, although mercantile activity is not represented as ignoble either in *John Halifax* or in *The Half-Caste*.
 - 8 Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century 1815–1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
 - 9 Frederic Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997) 5.
 - 10 The colony, for Mr Sutherland, serves a function similar to that served by industry in *John Halifax*: it provides him with a repository, outside of vigilant domesticity, for his energy. One of Craik’s central concerns in *John Halifax* is the control and useful diversion of masculine sexuality. When Lord

- Luxmore diverts the stream that powers John's mill to Luxmore Hall, as the source for new fountains on the property, reminding us of Phineas's likening of John to the river—"The glory of his life was its unconsciousness—like our own silent Severn" (206)—Luxmore is trying to punish and disempower John through the confiscation of his seminal energy. For a brief time, attempts at order seem futile as the regulated source of energy that is to be used for work and the betterment of the community is sucked into the aristocratic sphere to be used for the selfish pleasure of a few, but, of course, John eventually triumphs.
- 11 Priti Joshi, "Mutiny Echoes: India, Britons, and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 62.1 (2007): 48–87 (54).
 - 12 Joshi 78.
 - 13 As Cooper and Stoler point out in *Tensions of Empire*, the colonial "measures of man" were "rationality, technology, progress and reason—carefully calibrated scales on which Africans and Asians rated low"; they constituted the "Other against whom the very idea of Europeanness was expressed" (5–6).
 - 14 William Gladstone, *Our Colonies* (London: J.W. Parker, 1855).
 - 15 Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004) 104. Amal Chatterjee also talks about the mutability of identities; he shows how representations of Indians in the first half of the nineteenth century depended on the extent to which they lent themselves to British purposes—allies of the British were often described as being possessed of European physical characteristics (light skin or a "majestic countenance") and British personality traits. The mutability of these characteristics was made clear by such cases as Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali, who were, by turns, cast as heroes and villains, depending on circumstances. See Chatterjee 174.
 - 16 Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007) 7.
 - 17 Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston: Twayne, 1983) 105.
 - 18 Mitchell 25.
 - 19 Bourrier 205, 210.
 - 20 Letters qtd. in Bourrier 212.
 - 21 Qtd. in Bourrier 212.
 - 22 Bourrier 219.
 - 23 Qtd. in Bourrier 217.
 - 24 Nelson xi.
 - 25 Bourrier 204–05.

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