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MADEIRA AND *JANE EYRE*'S COLONIAL INHERITANCE

By Alexandra Valint

THE DENOUEMENT OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *Jane Eyre* contains multiple happy rewards for its heroine: a fortune, strangers turned friends turned cousins, the self-elimination of Bertha, and a Rochester still alive, still in England, and now free to marry. The hefty twenty-thousand-pound legacy (of which Jane only keeps one-fourth) bequeathed to her by her late uncle John Eyre allows Jane to return to the maimed Rochester and gleefully proclaim, "I am an independent woman now" (Brontë 501; ch. 37). Citing such financial independence, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar briefly mention Jane's inheritance as the event that allows Jane to "follow her own will" and marry Rochester on terms of equality (367).[1] Similarly, Nancy Armstrong writes that "[m]ore so perhaps than her virtue or passion, it is an endowment from Jane's wealthy uncle that makes her happiness possible" (47). Other critics, such as Elaine Freedgood and Susan Meyer, focus on the origin of the fortune – Madeira – and suggest that such a colonially associated locale implicates Jane in the finances of colonialism and even of slavery. Unlike those critics, however, I will claim that Jane's complicated relationship to the inheritance distances her from the problematic taint of the money's colonial associations and marks her non-conformity with and resistance to the economic practices of the British Empire.

John Eyre earns his fortune, the book indicates, from being a wine merchant in Funchal, the capital of Madeira. Bessie tells Jane that her husband "believes [John Eyre] was a wine merchant" in Madeira, to which Jane replies, "Very likely . . . or perhaps clerk or agent to a wine merchant" (Brontë 110; ch. 10). Madeira, in fact, was famous for its wines; Charles Thomas-Stanford prefaces *Leaves from a Madeira Garden* (originally published in 1909) by acknowledging Madeira's celebrated status: "Madeira has indeed been long a household word in Great Britain" (vii). The Madeira wine trade flourished in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century (Lichine 303); therefore, John Eyre would have been a Funchal wine merchant during a particularly profitable period in the trade's history – he amasses twenty thousand pounds in less than ten years' time. By exploring the representation of Madeira and its wines in nineteenth-century travel literature, I argue that Madeira specifically embodies the dangers of excessive consumption, dangers that Jane must avoid by rejecting the full inheritance and curbing her drunken-like moments of rebellion. Jane must also reject St. John's imperial aspirations, aspirations that correlate with the unique characteristics of Madeira wine. Excessive consumption threatens to poison not only Jane but also the British Empire more generally, as the novel suggests that the foreign luxury products of which

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the English grew increasingly fond, like Madeira wine, contain the threat of rebellion that "ferments" among the disenfranchised people whose oppression sustains the empire.

I. The Inheritance

WHAT MOST COMPLICATES THE INHERITANCE is the money's specific origin in the slave-tainted economy of Madeira. Madeira, the largest island of the Madeira islands, is a small, volcanically produced land mass situated off the coast of Portugal and Morocco, south of the Azores and north of the Canary Islands. Discovered and initially populated by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, Madeira became largely ruled by British interests and merchants even though it officially remained a province of Portugal.[2] Madeira's seemingly providential location between Europe and the New World transformed the once uninhabited island into the perfect gateway to the Caribbean and into a trading hotspot. Ships from Europe and the Americas imported much-needed foodstuffs and textiles to the island and picked up pipes of Madeira wine for their continuing voyages: "Madeira had little to offer except wines, wines, and more wines. By the end of the seventeenth century, madeira wine accounted for over 90 percent of the value of all exports" (Duncan 72). Britain's expansion in the West Indies heavily contributed to the rise of the Madeira wine trade; thirsty America clamored for more and so did the British plantations (46). As Freedgood, Meyer, and Parama Roy observe, Madeira sits in "the triangular route of the British slave traders," and "John Eyre's wealth is implicated in the slave trade" (Meyer 179). John Eyre's own position and wealth are also intimately allied with the Mason family wealth, which presumably comes from a slave-run sugar plantation in Jamaica. The solicitor Briggs explains that Mr. Eyre "has been the Funchal correspondent of [Mr. Mason's] house for some years" (Brontë 339; ch. 26). Jane's wealth not only "has a colonial source" (179), as Meyer asserts, but also results from plantation slavery in the British colonies. While Meyer argues that Jane's acceptance of such tainted wealth "mark[s] Jane's economic and literary complicity in colonialism" (180), I point to Jane's attitude towards the inheritance and her employment of the legacy to complicate such a reading.

Jane's passivity towards the fortune emphasizes that Jane is not a greedy cog in the imperialist machine. While reading the novel, it's easy for readers to forget about the possibility of Jane's inheritance because Jane herself routinely forgets the prospect. When Bessie unexpectedly visits Jane on the eve of her departure from Lowood, she informs Jane that Mr. Eyre came to Gateshead with the specific intent of speaking to Jane. When he learned that Jane was absent, Bessie characterized his response as "so much disappointed" (Brontë 109; ch. 10). Mr. Eyre's decided interest in Jane, his impending voyage to Madeira, and his position within the wine industry are all established in the first one-fifth of the novel, but Jane does nothing to pursue this relationship or to investigate her uncle's interest in her.

When the dying and delirious Mrs. Reed reveals the secreted letter from John Eyre that states his intent to adopt Jane and leave her his fortune, Jane's narrative response is minimalist and emotionally neutral: "It was dated three years back" (275; ch. 21). The only question Jane poses to her aunt is "Why did I never hear of this?" (275; ch. 21). Jane shares none of her internal reflections with her aunt or the reader after hearing this staggering, life-altering news; rather, she continually tells Mrs. Reed to forget about the letter: "think no more of all this, let it pass away from your mind" (275; ch. 21). Mrs. Reed rejects her advice but Jane accepts it; her recommendation actually functions as self-instruction. The letter "pass[es]

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away from [her] mind" until after her engagement to Rochester, when his imperious attempts to clothe her in satin and diamonds remind her of its economic potential: "if I had but a prospect of one day bringing Mr Rochester an accession of fortune, I could better endure to be kept by him now" (309-10; ch. 24). Generally reserved towards the possible fortune, Jane only writes her uncle at Madeira when the economic disparity between her and Rochester becomes a crisis: Rochester has attempted to make Jane into his "English Céline Varens" (311; ch. 24).

Jane's passivity continues when, as Sharon Marcus astutely notes, "St. John recognizes her as the rightful heir of a fortune before Jane herself does" (206). Jane's accidental real-name signature on her portrait of Rosamond leads St. John to equate the Jane Elliot he knows with the missing Jane Eyre who has received Mr. Eyre's legacy. Jane passively acquires her fortune when St. John visits her humble cottage on a snowy night and decides to usurp Jane's role as narrator: "I find the matter will be better managed by my assuming the narrator's part, and converting you into a listener" (Brontë 438; ch. 33). He quickly summarizes Jane's life for her as the life of a nameless woman, and the ironic narration ends when his knowledge of Jane's circumstances outruns her own knowledge: her uncle has died and she is rich. Only in a moment of "abstraction" does Jane sign her true name to the painting, inadvertently asserting her identity (Marcus 206). In addition, rather than pursuing the fortune or claiming it herself, she has it pursued and claimed her for by St. John, making her a passive recipient in the acquisition of her fortune. Although Jane often takes vigorous control of her life and situation, she takes an impassive and even careless stance towards her uncle and his money.

Jane initially treats the prospect of the full inheritance as a weighty, grave affair because accepting it all would implicate her in the money's crimes and equate her with other imperial figures in the novel. When St. John informs Jane that she an heiress, the text simply reads, "Silence succeeded" (Brontë 440; ch. 33). Jane hangs back: silent, disbelieving, careful, and stunned. She muses, "*this* is solid, an affair of the actual world, nothing ideal about it: all its associations are solid and sober . . . one begins to consider responsibilities, and to ponder business; on a base of steady satisfaction rise certain grave cares, and we contain ourselves, and brood over our bliss with a solemn brow" (441; ch. 33). Far from being "perfectly content to accept a fortune originating in the West Indies" (Roy 723), Jane stages the birth of her economic independence as a funeral of sorts. The sibilant sadness and sternness in the "solid and sober" connotations of the fortune weigh down her "rise" in wealth. She feels restraint and containment. The inheritance is a death that one broods over. This death, a literal one in the sense of her uncle's passing, animates "grave cares," a phrase which figures Jane's inheritance as a responsibility for tending to a graveyard.

Furthermore, throughout this section, Brontë's language and imagery emphasize Jane's reticence and nascent awareness of the implications of her fortune. St. John studies her perplexing reaction to his news; he remarks, "I thought Medusa had looked at you, and that you were turning to stone" (Brontë 441; ch. 33). The fortune mutates into Medusa, that famous gorgon of myth whose glance turned heroes to stone. Importantly, Brontë describes Bertha in terms of Medusa.[3] Bertha's "dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane"; her animal-like physical prowess; and her indeterminate "beast or human" status link her to the mythical woman-beast (338; ch. 26). Rochester deems Bertha a "monster" (356; ch. 27) and implicitly likens her "red balls" (339; ch. 26) to the red West Indian moon throwing its "last bloody glance over a world," a comparison that endows her eyes with killing ability (355; ch. 27). Bertha's rage, her once entrancing yet now dangerous appearance, and the castration threat

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she poses to the novel's men all link her to the Medusa of myth and literary convention. When Bertha visits Jane's room several nights before the wedding, the encounter parallels the Medusa myth. Jane espies Bertha's frightening features, her "thick and dark hair," "savage face," and "red eyes" in the "dark oblong glass" of her bedroom (326-27; ch. 25). When Bertha abandons the protective medium of the mirror and glares at Jane eye-to-eye, Jane loses consciousness, a symbolic turn to stone. St. John follows up his Medusa comment with another startling observation of Jane's reaction to his news: "Well . . . if you had committed a murder, and I had told you your crime was discovered, you could scarcely look more aghast" (441; ch. 33). His comment eerily echoes an oft-quoted query from the novel regarding the imprisoned Bertha: "What crime was this, that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner?" (243; ch. 20). Carol Margaret Davison suggests that Thornfield, the "exemplary Gothic manor house" (140-41), hides the crimes of colonialism and slavery (143-44). By constructing Jane as a murderer, St. John's remark associates Jane with the sadistic John Reed and the imperious Mrs. Reed. Jane accuses the former of being "like a murderer" in his treatment of her (Brontë 13; ch. 1), and the latter symbolically murders Jane by telling John Eyre that his niece died during the typhus outbreak at Lowood. Brontë's evocative language and Jane's somber reaction imply that Brontë, by invoking Bertha and the "crime" of slavery, intended Jane to be at least intuitively aware of the inheritance's ties to slavery, colonialism, and oppression.[4]

Jane continually treats the twenty thousand pounds as stiflingly heavy and as an obnoxiously large feast. She refers to the "ponderous gift of gold . . . sobering from its weight" that will "torment and oppress" and "weigh on" her (444, 446, 445; ch. 33). She imagines herself as "an individual of but average gastronomical powers sitting down to feast alone at a table spread with provisions for a hundred" (442; ch. 33) and later as alliteratively "gorged with gold" (447; ch. 33). Such anticipated gluttony links her with John Reed, who "gorged himself habitually at table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks" (12; ch. 1). Jane fears she would mirror John Reed's excessive appetite and corpulent body if she accepted the entire inheritance. Since John Reed's gastronomic voraciousness signals his greedy and tyrannical behavior more broadly, Jane must prevent herself from becoming as figuratively hungry as John Reed. Sitting at an overloaded dining table "alone" horrifies and sickens Jane. She can only enjoy the "delicious pleasure" (446; ch. 33) of the money when it has been "cut . . . into four shares" (465; ch. 34). A smaller portion of the inheritance can finally taste "delicious."

Jane's decision to divide the money according to her own sense of "justice" signals her philosophic and economic break from British law. She only chucks the mantle of solemnity and strange silence when she discovers the Rivers are her cousins and immediately resolves on splitting up the inheritance and allocating five thousand pounds to Diana, Mary, St. John, and herself. She offers such an egalitarian dispersal at the throne of "justice," a word she continually invokes to defend her peculiar decision. Jane asserts that the full twenty thousand "could never be mine in justice, though it might in law" (446; ch. 33). St. John, conversely, reminds Jane that her envisioned distribution of wealth ignores justice and her rights under British law: "After all, justice permits you to keep it" and "the entire fortune is your right" (446; ch. 33). As John Stuart Mill explains in *Utilitarianism* (1861), "the primitive element" historically and etymologically "in the formation of the notion of justice, was conformity to law" (182). While St. John and Mill conjoin justice and the law, Jane separates them in order to define and follow her own sense of justice.

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Although St. John calls Jane's ideas "abstract justice," Jane's notion of justice borrows from many specific traditions (Brontë 465; ch. 34).[5] Meyer notes that Jane's exclamation to St. John – "Famous equality and fraternisation! Close union! Intimate attachment!" (Brontë 447; ch. 33) – provides Jane with the "language of the French revolution – 'Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité!'" (Meyer 177). While employing the egalitarian rhetoric of the French revolution, Jane also relies on notions of distributive justice. Jane doesn't donate the money to charity or equally to all of St. John's parishioners – she distributes the money on a meritocratic basis. She reallocates the fortune to her "kindred: those with whom I have full fellow-feeling" (Brontë 447; ch. 33). Although the Rivers trio turn out to be Jane's actual relations, Jane claims kinship with them based on their affinity (sharing "full fellow-feeling") rather than on their formal familial links.[6] When Jane first stumbles upon the lighted window of Moor House, she longingly watches Diana and Mary study German and notices that they are "ladies in every point" despite their "humble kitchen" (381, 382; ch. 28). Jane intuits that these vivacious and intelligent women are, like her, ladies in character stifled by limiting circumstances. Jane clashes with St. John, but even Rosamond detects the similarities between the two and tells Jane she is "like Mr Rivers . . . good, clever, composed, and firm, like him" (425; ch. 32). Jane's distribution of the fortune to her cousins relies on their ambition and enjoyment of intellectual pursuits, on their individual merit according to Jane's values.

Jane's brand of justice highlights that the ordinary systems of inheritance (bequeathing all or most of the family's wealth to one person) and primogeniture (bequeathing the wealth to the eldest male in particular) are not only unjust but also amount to crimes. Customs of inheritance and primogeniture ruin many characters in the novel, most particularly Rochester, but also the Rivers siblings, Jane's mother, and even Blanche and Mary Ingram.[7] Rochester's "avaricious, grasping" father and older brother arrange for Rochester to marry Bertha (knowing she'll go insane) so he'll be provided by her thirty thousand pound dowry because Rochester's father refuses to bequeath his estate to both sons: "it was his resolution to keep the property together; he could not bear the idea of dividing his estate and leaving me a fair portion: all, he resolved, should go to my brother, Rowland . . . I must be provided for by a wealthy marriage" (351; ch. 27). Terry Eagleton's sympathetic reading of Rochester notes that Rochester has, like Jane, "suffered at the hands of social convention" (20). Jane's action of specifically dividing her estate and giving others a "fair portion" directly counters the cruel practices of inheritance performed by Mr. Rochester's father and Jane Eyre's grandfather, who cuts off Jane's mother "without a shilling" because of her "disobedience" in marrying a poor clergyman (Brontë 31; ch. 3). Similarly, John Eyre "bequeathed every penny" to Jane and "nothing" to the Rivers siblings (411, 410; ch. 30). Just as spite drives Jane's grandfather's financial choices, John Eyre leaves his fortune to Jane because of "a quarrel, never forgiven" between himself and Mr. Rivers (443; ch. 33). As Diana clarifies, "It was by [John Eyre's] advice that my father risked most of his property in the speculation that ruined him. Mutual recrimination passed between them: they parted in anger, and were never reconciled" (411; ch. 30). Furthermore, Jane's insistence on "justice" marks a direct opposition to the "Unjust! – unjust!" behavior of John Reed (19; ch. 2). As the eldest son, he's raised to treat the entire house as his possession. When he finds Jane reading in the seclusion of the window seat, he exclaims, "You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says. . . . Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; all the house belongs to me" (13; ch. 1). Jane must differentiate herself from those that hoard their money (like Eliza Reed), spitefully withhold it, or ruin others' lives by an inability to divide it.

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Much critical discussion of *Jane Eyre* centers on Jane's rejection of "suttee" and argues which characters are or are not performing the Indian practice of widow-sacrifice.[8] Gayatri Spivak claims, "*Jane Eyre* can be read as the orchestration and staging of the self-immolation of Bertha Mason as 'good wife'" (259). On the other hand, Deirdre David explains that some British viewed suttee as the barbaric and superstitious means of preventing the widow from receiving part of her husband's estate and of assuring that the eldest son would receive the father's estate whole and undivided (92-93). In that light, Mr. Rochester's willingness to play the role of good son and sacrifice himself in the "fiery" and hellish Jamaican night so the eldest son can receive the entirety of the father's estate resembles a British conception of suttee (Brontë 354; ch. 27). If the British viewed suttee as barbaric, then *Jane Eyre* shows that barbaric customs of inheritance are the norm in England. Jane feels she would be complicit with these destructive and unjust practices if she accepted all of the money. While Rochester's father "could not bear the idea of dividing his estate," Jane cannot bear the idea of not dividing her estate, a decision that indirectly critiques the nation's routine and engrained procedures (351; ch. 27).

Some critics worry that Jane betrays this critique by eagerly joining the upper class at the end of the novel. Nancy Pell phrases the apprehension well; the final scenes point "to the problem of [Jane and Rochester's] reabsorption into the system of inheritance and primogeniture that has made their earlier lives so difficult" (418). Jane, however, does not simply passively reabsorb into that structure. Rather than accepting the role of heiress and entering the "place it would enable [her] to take in society" (Brontë 447; ch. 33), Jane "sacrifice[s]" her "just rights" (447; ch. 33) in a move that is "contrary to all custom" (446; ch. 33). She embraces a medium-sized "competency" over an overwhelming fortune (448; ch. 33). Jane does not unquestioningly recreate the system that has oppressed her and others; her redistribution of wealth may benefit a narrow group of people and excludes "the working class and those from whom the figure of 'slavery' has been appropriated in the first place" (Meyer 177),[9] but the philosophy behind her choices marks a stringent break with British conceptions of justice and rights.[10] When Jane reunites with Rochester at Ferndean, she announces to Rochester, "My uncle in Madeira is dead, and he left me five thousand pounds" (Brontë 501; ch. 37). Jane lies. Her uncle left her twenty thousand pounds. Jane's statement actively revises history, making her uncle's will a fairer one and obliterating the fact that she technically received a much larger amount.

II. Drunkenness

JANE ENVISIONS THE THREAT of the full twenty thousand pounds as the danger of excess, of financial gluttony. The plot repeatedly enacts the perilous consequences of excessive consumption, including alcoholism. Her uncle's wealth, after all, benefits from the sale of wine from Madeira, an island known as the "land of the grape" and "a perfect vineyard" (Wilde 61, 62). Many of the novel's characters suffer from excessive drinking, and Jane's moments of impassioned rebellion against oppressive figures are linguistically marked as intoxicated bouts. Although these revolts are impressive and likely necessary, the metaphoric drunkenness they evoke reminds Jane and the reader that such moments are potentially poisonous. Just as Jane must distance herself from the undivided inheritance, Jane must recognize the risk of indulging in behavioral excess as well.

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Several of *Jane Eyre*'s characters suffer from conditions coded as alcoholism, and the results of their drunkenness are severe and even fatal. Charlotte witnessed the devastating consequences of alcoholism as her brother Branwell physically and emotionally deteriorated in their Haworth home. By the time Charlotte was writing *Jane Eyre* in 1846 and 1847, Branwell had already been fired from his position as tutor with the Robinson family. His self-pitying pining after Mrs. Robinson, his excessive drinking, and his mounting debts infuriated Charlotte. In various letters from 1846 to her friend Ellen Nussey, Charlotte recalls encountering Branwell "stupefied" after a visit to the public-house (Smith 455) and complains that "he will do nothing – except drink, and make us all wretched" (478). Thomas John Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine*, a popular resource that Beth Torgerson mentions was owned by the Brontës,[11] indicates that alcoholics grow "bloated in their countenance; their complexion becomes bilious and sallow; their breath fetid; their eyes inflamed; their nose red and swollen" (175). In the novel, John Reed develops into a "dissipated" youth (Brontë 108; ch. 10) who gambles away the family's money and hangs with the "worst" crowd (255; ch. 21). His lifestyle "ruin[s]" his heath, and once he has died, his mother fearfully imagines him with a "swollen . . . face" (255, 268; ch. 21). Although no one directly implicates alcohol in John's downfall, John's general dissipation and bloated features indicate the ravages of alcohol. Jane often catches Grace Poole, Bertha's attic keeper, with a "pot of porter" (130; ch. 12), and Rochester alludes to Grace's dependence on alcohol as a "fault of her own, of which it appears nothing can cure her" (357; ch. 27). Rochester suggests that Grace's "harassing profession" increases Grace's reliance on alcohol, but ironically her alcohol-induced "temporary lapses" incapacitate her and allow Bertha to escape her room and wreak havoc in Thornfield (357; ch. 27).

Alcoholism connects Bertha and her avatar Grace, and Grace's patient functions as the novel's alcoholic *par excellence*. Rochester identifies Bertha's mother as "a madwoman and a drunkard!" and Bertha as a "dutiful child" who "copied her parent in both points" (337; ch. 26). The novel provides a genetic explanation for Bertha's disposition, and medical texts such as Robert Macnish's *The Anatomy of Drunkenness* (originally published in 1827) also claim that "Drunkenness appears to be in some measure hereditary" (16). Furthermore, the novel's descriptions of Bertha's body and manner invoke the symptoms of alcoholism listed in *Modern Domestic Medicine*. Her body is "bloated" (Brontë 338; ch. 26), her eyes are "bloodshot" (327; ch. 25), and her behavior is "intemperate" (353; ch. 27). Although, broadly defined, "intemperate" means "Without temperance or moderation" in "persons, their actions, or habits," it also specifically indicates "addicted to drinking" ("intemperate"). Macnish repeatedly uses "intemperance" as a synonym for alcoholism. Even Bertha's reputed bad breath might stem from her drinking. Rochester recalls his horror at being in Bertha's vicinity because "something of her breath (faugh!) mixed with the air I breathed" (Brontë 354; ch. 27), and Graham lists "fetid" breath as a sign of alcoholism (175). Rochester claims that Bertha's "excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity" (Brontë 353; ch. 27), and critics often interpret those "excesses" to be solely sexual;[12] however, those "excesses" could include drinking, as immoderate drinking was commonly thought to incite madness. Macnish reasons that the "terrible infliction" of madness "often proceeds from drunkenness" because the "mind and body act reciprocally upon one another" (124). As evidence for this claim, Macnish writes, "[d]runkenness, according to the reports of Bethlehem Hospital, and other similar institutions for the insane, is one of the most common causes of lunacy" (125). In *A Treatise on Insanity* (originally published in 1835), James Cowles Prichard assigns

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"immoderate use of intoxicating liquors" as "one of the most frequent" "physical causes of madness" (154). Prichard relies on the same piece of evidence Macnish does by noting that "in a great proportion" of English public lunatic asylum inmates, "dram-drinking is the exciting cause" of their confinement (155). In recalling the last time he saw the physically wasted Branwell, Branwell's friend Francis Grundy connected alcoholism and madness by noting that Branwell's "sunken eyes" were "now glaring with the light of madness" (qtd. in Hanson 265–66). And lastly, Jane's uncle and benefactor, John Eyre, dies in Madeira of the "disease" of "decline" (Brontë 339; ch. 26); although the novel does not provide any clearer diagnosis, "decline" could signify that John is dying of alcoholism. In Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), Miss Havisham's brother Arthur dies in a sweaty, raving episode of *delirium tremens*, and Magwitch labels Arthur's alcoholism as "a Decline" (348; ch. 42). Although recent disability studies work on *Jane Eyre* has examined Rochester's blindness or Bertha's madness "as a thing in itself" (Davis x), critics have still not recognized the pervasiveness and destructiveness of alcoholism in the novel.

When young Jane resists John Reed's tyranny, her rebellion takes the form of a drunken state. When John rushes at her, she madly claws at him in retaliation and turns into a "picture of passion" (Brontë 14; ch. 1). Her blood goes "warm," she succumbs to a "rapid rush" of feelings, and her defiant mood "brac[ed] me with its bitter vigour" (18; ch. 2). Her condition sounds like an invigorating drink itself, supporting her with its bitter strength (characters in the novel repeatedly drink alcohol in moments of crisis or weakness). Jane's state resonates with Macnish's description of alcohol's effects; alcoholic substances, he writes, "operate partly by stimulating the frame. They cause the heart to throb more vigorously, and the blood to circulate freer, while, at the same time, they exert a peculiar action upon the nervous system" (85-86). Her physical aggression also resonates with Macnish's description of drunkenness: "A person, after excessive indulgence in liquor, may be seized with delirium, and run into a state of violent outrage and madness" (124). Jane's eerie sensation of being "beside myself; or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say" (Brontë 15; ch. 2) recalls Joseph Addison's comment that "Wine throws a man out of himself, and infuses qualities into the mind which she is a stranger to in her sober moments" (qtd. in Macnish 32). Jane's responses also match the various definitions of "intoxicate" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "to madden or deprive of the ordinary use of the senses or reason" and "to render unsteady or delirious in mind or feelings; to excite or exhilarate beyond self-control" ("intoxicate").

This descriptive theme establishes itself most strongly when Jane angrily confronts Mrs. Reed after the aunt has told the visiting Brocklehurst of Jane's supposed vices. In struggling for liberty and in speaking honest, harsh words to her aunt, Jane approaches an intoxicated state: "a passion of resentment fomented now within me," and she "thrilled with ungovernable excitement" (Brontë 43, 44; ch. 4). Foment is similar in meaning to ferment; the definition that fits Jane's usage best is, "To cherish, cultivate, foster; to stimulate, encourage, instigate (a sentiment, belief, pursuit, course of conduct, etc.)" ("foment"). Again, Jane's retributive antipathy resembles an increasingly inebriated state: her emotions clamor within her, she loses self-control, she feels exhilarated in her triumph, and her pulse accelerates. Macnish incorporates drunken eloquence as a symptom of intoxication: "The thoughts which emanate from [the brain's] prolific tabernacle, are more fervid and original than ever – they rush out with augmented copiousness, and sparkle over the understanding like the aurora borealis" (91). Mrs. Reed appears terrified yet impressed by Jane's mature words, treating Jane as "an opponent of adult age" (Brontë 44; ch. 4) and later recalling that Jane spoke with "a man's

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voice" (275; ch. 21). Jane's rebellion, however, is not only a positive fight for freedom but also an in*toxic*ating and dangerous degeneration. She cries out in a "savage, high voice" and experiences her victory over Mrs. Reed as a "fierce pleasure" in her "furious feelings" (45; ch. 4). Her conduct simultaneously frees her soul and sinks her into the "madness" and "remorse" of "uncontrolled play" (45; ch. 4). Jane blatantly connects her uprising to a drink of "aromatic wine," a category that includes Madeira: "Something of vengeance I had tasted for the first time. As aromatic wine it seemed, on swallowing, warm and racy; its after-flavour, metallic and corroding, gave me a sensation as if I had been poisoned" (45-46; ch. 4). Mrs. Reed uses similar language when she later recounts this clash: "you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind" (275; ch. 21). Mrs. Reed feels poisoned by the "venom" that erupts from Jane, as if the child's words were a snake bite; indeed, Mrs. Reed compares child Jane to an "animal" (275; ch. 21). Jane similarly feels "poisoned" by her triumph. Such a negative and uncivilized consequence of intoxication correlates with a darker definition of "intoxicate," which was still in use in the nineteenth century according to the *OED*: "to corrupt morally or spiritually." The verb originates from the Latin word *intoxicare* which translates as "to smear with poison" ("intoxicate"). Jane's intoxicated insurrection, therefore, is dangerous both to herself and to her target.

When Jane must forcefully resist Rochester's and St. John's attempts to entrap her, she reverts to her drunken state. When Jane decides to flee Thornfield after the botched wedding, she enters a "mad" and "insane" state "with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs" (Brontë 365; ch. 27). Jane's allusions to lunacy align with Macnish's description of intemperance as "a state of partial insanity" (18). Jane's burst of rebellion against St. John's bewitching demands occurs when she mysteriously hears the voice of Rochester. She is overtaken by "excitement" and her "heart beat fast and thick: I heard its throb . . . an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities . . . it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor . . . the flesh quivered on my bones" (Brontë 483; ch. 35). The excitement, quivering body, awakened senses, and accelerated pulse recall Jane's previous scenes of intoxicated rebellion. Unlike her youthful revolts, however, Jane's adult rebellions lack physical and verbal assaults. Jane suppresses her most forceful, vindictive words and shares them only with the reader. In so doing, Jane seems to escape the poisoning effects of her prior rebellions.

III. Consumption and Madeira

ANALYZING THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MADEIRA in the early nineteenth century – what it was famous for and how it was commonly described – is crucial to understanding the implications of Brontë's choice of Madeira as the origin of the inheritance. Although Madeira may now seem an obscure location and type of wine, the nineteenth-century British were quite familiar with both the place and the vintage. W. S. Pitt Springett's *Recollections of Madeira* (1843), which consists of a series of beautiful illustrations of the island, apologizes in its preface for adding to the glut of Madeira-related material: "I have to remember how the 'literary world' has been already deluged with 'Panoramas,' strange Histories, and stranger 'Guides,' – all detailing, to the minutest particular, everything that is known or guessed at relative to Madeira" (n. pag.). In *Rambles in Madeira* (1827), Reverend Alfred Lyall also alludes to his readers' extensive knowledge of the island's renowned wines, "undoubtedly among the finest in the world": "It would be very useless to enter into much

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detail about an article so familiar to us" (155). As both comments suggest, many travelogues feature or focus on a stay on the Portuguese island, and various tourist guides explain the island's accommodations, culture, wine, and sites. Madeira's notoriety as a resting place for consumptives, its ability to absorb foreign traits and plants, and its production of famed and unique wines all construct Madeira as a place that evokes the dangers of excessive consumption. Another reason Jane must initially distance herself from and later aggressively restyle the inheritance, therefore, is because she must define herself as a moderate, not excessive, consumer.

Madeira, in short, is a consumption center – exporting consumable wine and burying invalids, mostly consumptives. *Jane Eyre*'s few descriptions of Madeira characterize it as an "island thousands of miles off, where they make wine" and as a place of illness (Brontë 109; ch. 10). Sallow and recently bitten Mr. Mason stays at Madeira "to recruit his health" at the same time John Eyre (who Mason coincidently works with) is dying in Madeira of the "disease" of "decline" (339; ch. 26). The novel's representation of Madeira aligns with those found in nineteenth-century travelogues. Writing in 1841, Joseph and Henry Bullar quip that "wine and consumption" are Madeira's twinned associations (16). Madeira's year-round mild climate was widely considered to be safe and restorative to invalids, particularly those suffering from consumption; however, because of the influx of the seriously ill, Madeira travelogues are littered with references to wasting bodies and cemeteries. In *A Visit to Portugal and Madeira* (1854), Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley expresses her disappointment in the "melancholy" capital of Funchal: "It is seldom that you can stir far from home without encountering some mournful object, often apparently on the brink of the grave, borne along at a slow pace in the hammock or the palanquin, with the hectic cheek and emaciated frame belonging to that fearful disease, consumption" (244–45). *A Guide to Madeira* (1801) champions Madeira's curative potential while simultaneously admitting that sometimes "an emaciated carcafe has been furrendered to the waves during the voyage, or arrived only early enough to be decently interred" (17). In her journals, Fanny Anne Burney (great-niece of novelist Fanny Burney) recalls her travels to Madeira to accompany an ailing relative. Burney's running tally of invalid deaths portrays Madeira more as a graveyard for the sickly English than as an Eden of restoration. For example, on November 15, 1838 she notes, "To-day the seventh consumptive invalid, since our arrival in Funchal, was buried in the Strangers' Cemetery" (212). Springett's book includes a drawing of this cemetery entitled "Stranger's Grave." A plaque in the drawing identifies that Mary Lee, aged 17, lies in the grave. The caption notes that the illustration honors only one of the "countless victims of consumption who lie mouldering beneath the garish parterre of geraniums and roses" (14). The caption itself highlights the gruesome contrast between floral beauty and growth and the vast decay that lies "beneath" the "garish" surface. In fact, profits from the wine trade funded the creation of Madeira's Christian graveyard. As Henry Vizetelly recounts in *Facts about Port and Madeira* (1880), "By levying a tax upon every pipe of wine shipped by themselves [several British houses] they raised the necessary funds to make a cemetery in which British subjects might be decently interred" (193). The profits of wine consumption, therefore, enable the founding of a graveyard for consumptives. In *Leaves from a Madeira Garden* (1910), Charles Thomas-Stanford further connects wine and sickness: "Madeira has indeed been long a household word in Great Britain. Its generous wine has played an important part in producing the hereditary goutiness of the nation" (vii). Madeira wine produces disease, and conversely, the profits from the sale of wine help bury the invalids that die in Madeira.

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Jane Eyre calls attention to this ironic loop by suggesting that John Eyre dies from alcoholism in Madeira after earning money selling Madeira wine.

Madeira travelogues also construct Madeira as a place that consumes and naturalizes foreign manners and species. Some British visitors bemoan that Madeira – a Portuguese colony with a strong British presence – has started to resemble Britain. Lyall complains that the "large circle of our countrymen" staying in Madeira "preserve all their old ways and habits":

> a stranger is at first rather disappointed in finding so little of novelty in the social habits and forms of the place. We breakfast, lunch, dine, and drink tea, precisely in the same manner, and at the same hours, that we did in England. I have not yet seen a dish that could be called foreign; and every article of dress, or furniture, or utensil of domestic economy, is, without exception, of English manufacture. (20-21)

Madeira is flooded with reminders of England: "With the exception of mere meat and wine, almost every article of ordinary use and consumption is brought from England, and cannot commonly be cheaper than we get them at home" (154). Lyall expected to experience the "novelty" of a "foreign" location; instead, Madeira resembles "home." Because the "trade of the island is almost wholly with England, and in the hands of English merchants," Lyall continues, "it is difficult not to fancy oneself in an English sea-port; so seldom do you see the flag of any other nation, or even a Portuguese vessel" (160). The overwhelming materiality of the English presence – in flag, food, and furniture – frustrates the imagination; Lyall cannot even pretend that he is residing outside of England while actually residing outside of England. *A Guide to Madeira* echoes Lyall's complaint by adding that the native inhabitants, not just the visitors, "have acquired fomewhat not only of the englifh drefs, but of the englifh manners" (28). Several travel writers disparagingly comment on Madeira's lack of native plant species and on Madeira's knack for naturalizing foreign species. In *Recollections of Madeira*, Springett writes, "The idea is prevalent in England and elsewhere, that the flowers peculiar to every quarter of the globe are all to be found naturalized in Madeira . . . it is lamentable to remark the comparatively small number of exotic trees and shrubs we meet with in the wilds of Madeira" (6). Lyall expresses similar disappointment:

> The native Flora of Madeira did not strike me as rich. . . . But if not fertile of original productions, the soil and clime are eminently favourable to the naturalization of exotics of all countries. The *quintas* of the English merchants, in particular, are full of these beautiful foreigners, who seem to make themselves at home in the gardens of our countrymen, as readily and perfectly as strangers of another kind do in their houses. (147)

Just as the English transform Madeira into home, the English plants "make themselves at home" in Madeira gardens. In a similar vein, Thomas-Stanford details his importation of British flowers and his attempts to create and maintain a British garden in Madeira in *Leaves from a Madeira Garden*.

IV. Madeira Wine

MADEIRA WINE IS UNLIKE ANY other wine in the world. The rich, volcanic soil and tropical climate of Madeira provided the perfect place to grow grapes; as Duncan affirms, the "wine

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was itself a miracle" (52). Not only is Madeira amazingly heat-resistant but it also gets better when exposed to heat for long periods of time. Madeira continues to mature, seemingly forever. Duncan lists the admirable qualities of the wine, noting that Madeira is

> robust and nearly indestructible. Madeiras do not spoil in hot weather; heat actually ripens and improves them, and a passage in the hold of a sailing ship, through burning tropical waters, results in a better wine. Madeiras do not mind being moved about, transported by ship or cart, and no amount of rough handling will damage them; quite the contrary, the more madeira is banged about, the better it tastes. (38)

For good reason, North America and the West Indies selected Madeira as their tropical alcoholic beverage of choice (Johnson 400). European wine connoisseurs specifically requested that their Madeira travel through the West Indies or even to India and back before it filled their wine glasses – ready to stun with its sea-aged glory (Johnson 400; Duncan 38). Duncan explains that such wine aficionados demanded their Madeiras be well-seasoned travelers despite the cost of the wine after "undergoing four passages through the tropics on a voyage of over 26,000 miles" (38). It cost significantly more money to transport the pipes of wine to England through the West Indies, East Indies, or Brazil than to send them directly to England from Madeira (Duncan 38). Vizetelly recalls tasting wine from casks "marked 'Roda' to indicate that they had voyaged either to the East or West Indies and home again" (194). Vizetelly found those wines "remarkably powerful, and with that indefinable flavor which Madeira acquires after being subjected to the combined heat and motion of a voyage to the tropics in a ship's hold" (194-195). Alternatively, wine companies housed the wine in "the estufa or heating magazine" to more cheaply and quickly subject the wine to a high degree of heat (Vizetelly 183).

Madeira's ambitious world voyages and resilient makeup correlate with components of British imperialist discourse such as the naturalness of the British Empire's expansion and the inevitability of its superiority. Thomas Carlyle voices his conviction in the divine guiding hand of imperial expansion: "For England too . . . has a History that is Divine; an Eternal Providence presiding over every step of it, now in sunshine and soft tones, now in thunder and storm . . . guiding England forward to *its* goal and work, which too has been highly considerable in the world!" (610). And Anthony Trollope's comment that "[t]he first word which an Englishman learns in any language is that which signifies a determination to proceed" makes instinctual and laudatory the English restlessness for travel, exploration, and progress (244). In *A Winter in Madeira* (1853), John Dix sees evidence of the "enterprise, shrewdness, and persevering industry of the Anglo-Saxon race" in the fact that the "finest places" in Madeira "belong to English merchants" (91). "The English," Dix continues, are "not only busy at home, but perpetually carrying their enterprise aboard, and triumphing, wherever they go, over all competition" (91). Amidst such principles, the Englishman's costly demand to send his Madeira wine to the ends of the earth and back reveals the Englishman's faith – or perhaps desperate hope – in the positive benefits of travel, especially through the English-dominated torrid zone. In demanding such extensive journeys for their wine, the Englishmen relished the demonstrated prowess of British shipping and commercial ventures while also reveling in the geographical and mappable extent of the British Empire; the returning wine would not only glorify the palate but also glorify the British Empire's domination of land and sea.

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Madeira's heat-resistance, freedom from the decaying influence of air exposure (a process called oxidization) (Duncan 38), and globe-trotting characteristics uncannily recall St. John Rivers's reigning traits. St. John hates standing still; he prefers to be moving and visiting parishioners in his spread-out parish, especially in bad weather. He admires what he perceives as Jane's physical fortitude and resistance to inclement weather and various climates: "Her constitution is both sound and elastic; – better calculated to endure variations of climate than many more robust" (Brontë 458; ch. 34). In his assessment of Jane, he projects and values the very qualities he considers himself to possess. Jane keenly notices, "on all occasions fortitude pleased him" (458; ch. 34). St. John restlessly "burnt for the more active life of the world" (416; ch. 31). Fittingly, Jane constantly imagines him as peripatetically traveling the globe. She imagines wondering about him "[w]hen you are at Madagascar, or at the Cape, or in India" (429; ch. 32). When his disinterested response to her redecoration of Moor House upsets her, she reflects:

> This parlour is not his sphere . . . the Himalayan ridge, or Caffre bush, even the plague-cursed Guinea Coast swamp, would suit him better. Well may he eschew the calm of domestic life; it is not his element: there his faculties stagnate – they cannot develop or appear to advantage. It is in scenes of strife and danger – where courage is proved, and energy exercised, and fortitude tasked – that he will speak and move . . . (453-54; ch. 34)

Jane constructs St. John as an entity which will stagnate, dissolve, and rot if immobile and rooted to home and hearth, but engaging in the sort of travel similar to Madeira wine will elicit his finer qualities. Such travel will improve and "develop" St. John and rely upon his "energy" and "fortitude." St. John even arranges to travel to India in an "East Indiaman" merchant ship (463; ch. 34) – the same kind of ship that would have transported pipes of wine. Wortley reports that a "voyage to the East or West Indies and back is . . . usually reckoned the most excellent method of improving wine, and bringing it to a highly perfect state" (315), and St. John imagines that his qualities will mature and strengthen in the heat and peril of India rather than "wither" and go to "waste" (Brontë 429; ch. 32). Jane, on the other hand, decidedly would go "bad" in India. Diana asserts that Jane "would not live three months there" and would "be grilled alive in Calcutta" (478, 479; ch. 35).

This connection between St. John and Madeira wine, however, only emphasizes how much St. John falls short in his imperial aspirations. I agree with Freedgood's assessment of Madeira wine as "a poster child for Atlantic trade, perhaps the only 'commodity' that actually benefited from the rigors of its journey" (50), but I argue that the book subtly mocks rather than endorses that ideal by emphasizing how little St. John accomplishes before he dies. When St. John envisions his work abroad he uses inflated, abstract, and even contradictory language; he dreams of "carrying knowledge into the realms of ignorance – of substituting peace for war, freedom for bondage, religion for superstition, the hope of heaven for the fear of hell" (Brontë 431; ch. 32). He intends to bring peace, yet his mission is continually described as aggressive and violent. Jane refers to his mission as a "wild field of mission warfare" (424; ch. 32). When he tries to "enlist" Jane into his army, Jane realizes that he only "prizes me as a soldier would a good weapon" (468, 467; ch. 34). When St. John fulfills his destiny in India and writes occasional letters to Jane, Jane reports to the reader that "he labours for his race; he clears their painful way to improvement; he hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it" (521; ch. 38). Not only are his supposed

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accomplishments incredibly vague – for Jane employs the same conceptual rhetoric that St. John does in describing his mission – but Jane also pictures St. John as a destroyer who "clears" the path and "hews down" prejudice but creates nothing in the deforested wake. Jane's headway with the rural girls at the Morton school, on the other hand, is solid and concrete. Jane develops their "germs of native excellence" and narrates her students' rapid progress in assuming a more proper manner, self-assurance, and wider knowledge (413; ch. 31). She differentiates between the capabilities and propensities of her students and teaches them appropriate skills and subjects. Her more detailed, material, and successful carrying of "knowledge into the realms of ignorance" shows that, in her mind, England needs such efforts – in England itself – and that such work is more successful in England than in a colony thousands of miles away from England. Jane's progress is sure while St. John's is hazy. Madeira wine perfects itself during its travels, while St. John's efforts prove unclear and ambiguous.

Even though St. John eagerly moves to India, his expedition is tinged with graveness. When St. John first announces to Jane that he will soon "leave Europe for the East," he stares at the "setting sun" (417; ch. 31). Jane's statement – on the final page of the novel – that St. John's "glorious sun hastens to its setting" (521; ch. 38), sounds like an ironic, dying iteration of the patriotic motto: "the sun never sets on the British empire."[13] Jane resists three requests to leave England and travel abroad: John Eyre's letter asks Jane to "come to me at Madeira" (274; ch. 21); Rochester begs, "come, Jane, come!" with him to France (366; ch. 27); St. John sternly demands "come with me to India" (464; ch. 34). Not only does Jane stay in England, she specifically distributes her fortune to the Rivers with the hope that they will all return to and remain in England. Jane instructs Diana and Mary to come back to England and leave their positions "as governesses in a large, fashionable, south-of-England city" (405; ch. 30), and Jane hopes that St. John's share of the money will keep him "in England, induce [him] to marry Miss Oliver, and settle down like an ordinary mortal" (445; ch. 33). St. John aims to prove that he is not an "ordinary mortal" but akin to the "superior" Madeira wine "with perfect immunity from injury by time or exposure" (Lyall 155); however, he dies earlier than his siblings and cousin, deflating the myth of his superiority.

V. Colonial Goods and the Threat of Rebellion

THE PRODUCTION OF MADEIRA for Europe and plantation owners in America and the West Indies and the maintenance of a trade beneficial to England's economy and empire also produced a group of oppressed (and often enslaved) people whose oppression made such luxury products and such trade possible and profitable. The two times the wine-making term "ferment" appears in *Jane Eyre* it actually refers to the development of rebellions rather than of alcohol; the very word, therefore, connects the creation of luxury products (like Madeira wine) and rebellion. When Rochester tells Jane of his life in Jamaica, he comes to the point in his narration when he nearly shoots himself. The pre-hurricane weather is rumbling and full of anticipation. With locked-up Bertha shrieking in the background, the red moon throws its "last bloody glance over a world quivering with the ferment of tempest" (Brontë 355; ch. 27). The weather prepares to riot, but the "quivering" "tempest" Rochester alludes to could also be the threat of slave rebellions in the West Indies. Jane uses the word "ferment" when giving her impassioned rant on the turrets of Thornfield Hall: "Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how

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many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth" (129; ch. 12). Jane assumes that at least "millions" are in "revolt against their lot" but implies that the number must be higher. She directly acknowledges "political rebellions" (again, a potential reference to the West Indies) but also recognizes the existence of less visible "silent revolt[s]." In referring to these possible mute rebels, Jane speaks broadly and inclusively. Her epithet for human – "masses of life" – suggests capacity and vivacity; her use of "people" as a verb instead of a noun stresses human agency; and her reference to "earth" globalizes the insurgency. Bertha's thrilling laugh punctuates Jane's manifesto just as Bertha's screams interrupt Rochester's thoughts in Jamaica. The dramatic sounds intermittently coming from Bertha signify Bertha's dual status: she's the disenfranchised victim whose desire to escape her masters connects with the slave insurrections in the West Indies, and she's also the indulgent consumer who willingly implicated herself in the colonial economy. Rochester tells Jane that "no servant would bear the continued outbreaks of [Bertha's] violent and unreasonable temper, or the vexations of her absurd, contradictory, exacting orders" (353; ch. 27). Although genetically predisposed to go mad, Bertha precipitated the disease because of her own "excesses" and "giant propensities" (353; ch. 27). Bertha embodies the fine line between satiation and rebellion, between being a dangerous consumer and being a victim of others' consumption.

The anxiety *Jane Eyre* manifests over dangerous consumption was being felt throughout England. England's expanding empire helped create a nation of hungry consumers who clamored more and more for luxurious and exotic items. As Charlotte Sussman explores, by the end of the eighteenth century, some consumers grew anxious over their bourgeoning sense of the rights and responsibilities that came along with consumption. Certain consumers came to perceive "colonial commodities as a threat to English social life" (Sussman 19). As James Walvin explains,

> the British empire had come into being to satisfy a nation of customers . . . it was an indisputable fact that the British people's material comforts, their luxuriant pleasures (and even life's basic necessities) had been conjured forth and were guaranteed by the instruments of empire and by the aggressive conduct of global trade and commerce. (xiii)

The sweetness of sugar, for example, relied on continual aggression and violence towards lands and people (Walvin 194–95). The sugar boycotts of the 1790s were one of several British abstention campaigns against colonial products. As Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace shows, the woman involved in such campaigns made dual points: "she breaks the economic chain that makes her the intended receiver of the product of everyone else's labor. She boycotts not only a product but also a cultural construction of herself as an unconscionable consumer, as an unscrupulous appetite" (41).[14]

In the world of the novel, overindulgence is negative and dangerous, but abstinence is similarly so. Jane differentiates herself from Céline Varens, who gleefully accepts Rochester's jewels and gifts, and from Georgiana Reed, whose desire for society, wealth, and fashion marks her as parasitic. Jane, however, doesn't resemble a sugar boycotter either. Jane scorns her wan and stringent cousin Eliza whose "ascetic" lifestyle aims to "place safe barriers between herself and a frivolous world" (Brontë 263, 271; ch. 21). Eliza's body seems drained of life, and Jane describes her as "very thin," "pallid," and "colourless" (263; ch. 21). Her thinness and paleness echo the ironic emptiness to her strictly scheduled days. She also

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hoards her money, finally using it to leave the country and join a convent in France, which Jane imagines her being "walled up alive in" (279; ch. 22). In a similar vein, Adele's weight loss at school disturbs Jane because such dwindling recalls the impoverished circumstances Jane encountered at Lowood. Jane even worries over St. John who "wast[es] away" with the effort of denying his love for Rosamond (431; ch. 32). That struggle also causes him to "get a little thin" (431; ch. 32).

On the other hand, as Krista Lysack notes, Jane does show anxiety over consumption and shopping, particularly when she smarts under Rochester's ostentatious gift-giving attempts right after their engagement: "Jane's cautious negotiation of the commercial sphere is emblematic of the vexed condition of the woman shopper who goes to market only to risk becoming an object of exchange herself" (2). Jane, however, does wear silk dresses, use Indian ink, and sip tea (and presumably, therefore, ingests sugar) – she is not abstinent from all objects that either came from the colonies or elsewhere other than England. Materially and financially, every character in the novel is in some way implicated with the "fruits of empire" (to borrow Walvin's phrase). The novel is infused with exotic (and often colonial) commodities such as cigars, snuff, silk, ebony, Moroccan leather, Indian ink, Indian fabrics, Turkish carpets, and mahogany wood.[15] Freedgood aims to show that items like mahogany furniture are not "innocent" (51). She argues that Jane's purchase of mahogany furnishings (some mahogany came from Madeira) for her post-inheritance redecoration of Moor House "symbolizes, naturalizes, domesticates, and internalizes the violent histories of deforestation, slavery, and the ecologically and socially devastating cultivation of cash crops in Madeira and Jamaica" (35). Freedgood interprets Jane's redecoration with "old mahogany and crimson upholstery" as a recreation of the red room at Gateshead (Brontë 452; ch. 34); the room becomes "a souvenir of the sadism she endured" in that very room when she was a child (32). Freedgood, however, neglects to mention that it is only a "spare parlour and bedroom" that receive the makeover treatment, and the "ordinary sitting-room and bed-rooms" Jane leaves "much as they were" (Brontë 452; ch. 34). The red room is recreated, but in unused and peripheral spaces, and Jane emphasizes how much remains the same in the parts of the house that are used daily. Jane redecorates, but does so with moderation, with a predetermined budget, and with the aim of creating a "modest" home (452; ch. 34). Jane's moderation positions her between the excesses – of deprivation and consumption – of Eliza and Georgiana. Certainly, as Freedgood shows, many material items in the Victorian period were traded within oppressive systems and produced by grievous practices. And I argue that *Jane Eyre* shows awareness of this problematic economy by presenting how overindulgence in its profits endangers the consumer and incites rebelliousness in those oppressed by the same economy. Although *Jane Eyre* can't imagine a way to exit this problematic global economy (though a thoroughly demolished Thornfield and retreat to humble Ferndean suggest an exit attempt), it presents self-conscious moderate consumption within that economy as the safest and most ethical way of existing within it – far from being a conservative gesture, *Jane Eyre* presents moderation as a deeply radical one.

In conclusion, Madeira threatens madness (the word "mad" existing within "Madeira" itself) in the temptation of financial overconsumption, and Jane's mad revolts are coded as drunken scenes, evoking how the island's very name is synonymous with alcohol. Madeira represents the risks of excessive consumption, particularly the poisoning effect of rebellion. In her travelogue, Lady Wortley presages rebellion in Madeira itself: "notwithstanding the money circulated in the island by the English visitors, and the numerous charities and good

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deeds of the English residents, the native population, especially among the higher orders, would be delighted to sweep their fair island clear of them, and to have it once more all to themselves" (252). From the native inhabitants' point of view, "it is truly unpleasant to them to have their island overrun with foreigners." Her comments reveal the brewing dissatisfaction caused by rather than ameliorated by Britain's imperial (though technically informal) presence in Madeira. The people of Madeira, Wortley warns, are justifiably mad.

University of Southern Mississippi

NOTES

1. Other critics, however, view Jane's felicitous acquisition of fortune as a *deus ex machin*a. Adams views these rewards as "fortuitous interventions" (157), while Roy refers to the inheritance as one of many "somersaults of a plot" (715) found at the end of the novel.
2. England briefly militarily possessed Madeira from 1807-1808. See introductory notes to Burney's *A Great-Niece's Journals*, page xxxix. Also see Duncan's chapter on "The Merchants of Funchal" for more discussion of British merchants in Madeira. See Freedgood for discussion of the deforestation of Madeira (40).
3. See Auerbach 8-9, 64-66, and 93-96 for more discussion of Medusa and other monster women in Victorian literature.
4. My reading, by focusing on a "mirror" scene between Jane and Bertha, also invokes Gilbert and Gubar's reading of Bertha as Jane's "secret self" and "truest and darkest double" (348, 360).
5. Fittingly, Jane's dispersal of the fortune also seems inspired by a sense of poetic justice. Jane is specifically reading Walter Scott's epic poem *Marmion* when St. John arrives with his news. This poem ends with normative poetic justice: the good, persevering characters receive honor and marriage, while the male villain dies and the evil nun is walled up in a convent. The Rivers, after all, have proved to be Jane's saviors and benefactors, and she acknowledges their integrity by allocating them portions of her inheritance.
6. Eagleton also discusses Jane's reimagining of kinship: "Jane, then, disowns what second-hand kin she has, caring never to see the Reeds again . . . she creates the relationships which matter, those of spiritual rather than blood affinity" (26).
7. Mrs. Fairfax explains why the beautiful and accomplished Blanche is not yet married: "I fancy neither she nor her sister have very large fortunes. Old Lord Ingram's estates were chiefly entailed and the eldest son came in for everything almost" (Brontë 185; ch. 16).
8. Also see Perera 87-93.
9. In fact, Jane doesn't totally exclude the working class from the redistribution of her wealth, as she gives gifts to her students and promises to guest teach them weekly: "I now closed Morton school, taking care that the parting should not be barren on my side. . . . I promised them that never a week should pass in future that I did not visit them, and give them an hour's teaching in their school" (Brontë 449; ch. 34).
10. Neither does Jane follow the alternative economic model of Eliza Reed, who from a young age shows a "turn for traffic, and a marked propensity for saving" (Brontë 36; ch. 4). Eliza shows ruthlessness in "driving hard bargains" with the servants and avarice in charging her mother a "usurious rate of interest" to protect Eliza's money (36; ch. 4). Ironically, Eliza's "traffic[king]" ability represents her more as a greedy prostitute than as a selfless nun.
11. According to Torgerson, "Thomas John Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine*, published in 1826, a . . . popular medical text, was owned by the Brontës. In addition to being the source for Patrick

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Brontë's information on treatment for his son's symptoms of *delirium tremens*, Graham's text was also consulted for other familial health concerns, as Patrick Brontë's marginal annotations show" (9).

12. For example, Berman interprets Rochester's comment that Bertha was "intemperate and unchaste" (Brontë 353; ch. 27) as indicating Bertha's "[i]mmoderate sexual appetite" (Berman 274).
13. See Tracy for a convincing anti-imperialist reading of *Jane Eyre*. Tracy suggests that Brontë intends the British Empire (including St. John's mission in India) to align with certain biblical allusions and paradigms; therefore, the anti-imperial stance of the Book of Revelations can be found in *Jane Eyre* as well.
14. In 1852, a few years after *Jane Eyre* was published, a vicious fungus attacked Madeira's vines, crippling the wine trade and, as Madeira wine was the country's main export, Madeira's economy. Vizetelly explains that the oïdium "all but exterminated" the vines (173). Thomas-Stanford repeatedly mentions the "languishing state of the wine trade" (151). Though writing before 1852, Dix explicitly blames both Madeira and international consumers of wine for Madeira's already vulnerable economic situation. Madeira's lack of diversification and its dependence on other countries for healthy wine sales, Dix reasons, made Madeira particularly vulnerable to economic regression. Both Dix and Thomas-Stanford imply that the production of one luxury product has ravaged the economy of Madeira.
15. Also see Walvin 193-98 for discussion of the British desire for exotic products and of the way British people integrated these foreign products into British "taste."

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