6. May Morris, *William Morris. Artist Writer Socialist. Volume the Second* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), 165.
7. Morris, *William Morris*, 413.
8. On the Exhibitions, see Seth Koven, "The Whitechapel Picture Exhibitions and the Politics of Seeing," in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 22–48; and Diana Maltz, "In ample halls adorned with mysterious things aesthetic: Toynbee Hall as Aesthetic Haven," in *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870–1900. Beauty for the People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 67–97.
9. Henrietta Barnett, "Pictures for the People," in *Practicable Socialism: Essays on Social Reform*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894), 175.

Boy

MATTHEW KAISER

> Though she called me 'boy' so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age.
>
> —Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*[1]

BEYE; boye; boie; boi. It is unclear why the voiced bilabial stop known as the "b" sound, when harnessed to the business end of the diphthong "oi," should appeal to the medieval ear as a means of communicating diminutive or low status in male persons. What *is* clear, however, is that, by the early thirteenth century, the slang term "boye," introduced to England by Dutch sailors and Frisian merchants, and watered liberally by tavern badinage, had taken root in English. By the time Edward I expelled the Jews in 1290 and conquered Wales, the monosyllable had experienced a lexical growth spurt, acquiring three related but distinct meanings: male child; knave; and male servant or slave. "Boy" as "knave" (the dubious, illegitimate or base man) barely survived the fourteenth century, petering out in the fifteenth, but "boy" as "male child" (the proto-man, the not-yet man, the unformed or half-grown man)

throve, as did "boy" as "slave" or "servant" (the partial, lowly or quasi-man), becoming a common term for a menial, subaltern or underling. Carried by imperial winds to Africa, Polynesia, China, India, and North America, "boy" served as a byword in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for "male slave," as well as a ready-made epithet and condescending term of endearment for a male person of color.

Boy is man's *other* Other, if not his *male* Other exactly, for boyishness is occasionally attributed to female persons, then man's unfeminine-yet-unmanly Other. The boy is the seedbed of the man, the uncultivated yet fecund soil from which masculinity is said to spring; at the same time, however, the boy is a conceptual quicksand threatening to swallow man whole, return him to a primordial and degraded state. Paranoid man must repress, distance, exorcise, kill the boy within. "I have done with men and women," Miss Havisham nihilistically declares, a twinkle in her eye.[2] She wants a boy. Why a *boy*? With the jagged edge of her broken heart, she will unleash the death drive dormant in bourgeois man. She will imprison a random male in eternal boyhood, in lack. For many Victorians, including Dickens, the boy is the horizon of modern selfhood, where the sun rises and sets. The boy carries in his heart the trauma of civilization.

The identity crisis at the core of *Great Expectations* (1861), the psychic wound around which Pip spins his delusional narrative of upward mobility, can be traced to his misreading—or willful mishearing—of the word "boy." Mrs. Joe (Pumplechook in tow) announces that Miss Havisham wants "a boy to go and play" in her house.[3] Pip hears in "boy" the reassuring whisper of "male child," where his sister hears only the coin-clink of "servant." "Play" is partly to blame for Pip's confusion. After all, who *works* at play? Who is paid to be a little boy? In his "labouring-boy" shoes, his face flush with shame and hope, Pip indulges his employer's "sick fancy" and plays "beggar my neighbour" with icy Estella, daring to think he might be auditioning for role of adopted son, unaware that he is being enslaved: made a whipping boy for Miss Havisham's little ward.[4] To make matters worse, Pip later learns that he is himself the ward of a knave, that he is a boy's boy. "Dear boy," Magwitch sighs, and Pip cringes.[5] The boy is the ghost at every man's banquet. Thus, Trabb's boy relentlessly shadows Pip, leaving mortified manhood, fraudulent respectability, in his wake.

If, as Franco Moretti contends, the bildungsroman is "the 'symbolic form' of modernity," and *youth*, "modernity's 'essence,' the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past," then

we might conceive of boyhood as the atavistic, autotelic state that precedes the symbolic awakening of modern consciousness.[6] In the boy, modernity catches a disquieting glimpse of its own tenuousness. Like Joe the Fat Boy in *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), or Tennyson's lotus-eaters, the boy embodies civilizational narcolepsy, a retreat from the false consciousness of progress, from the way of the world. The second a boy takes his future in hand, he becomes a little man, a restless youth, impatient, productive: *profane*. Think of *Wuthering Heights* (1847): a love story between a gipsy boy and a whip-wielding tomboy, between two future-destroying "boys," who resist the forces of youth until youth overwhelms them, severing their sacred bond, exiling them to manhood and womanhood. Is it any wonder so many Victorian writers turn to anthropology to make sense of the "dread irrationality" of boys?[7] "Surely they dwell," Robert Louis Stevenson muses, "in a mythological epoch, and are not the contemporaries of their parents."[8]

The Victorians sacrificed boys on the altar of civilization. While it is true that the middle classes loved their sons, coddled and doted upon them, spent millions to entertain, educate and cultivate them, lavished them with toys and books, with a tantalizing culture of boyhood, they did so with one goal in mind: to kill the boy, to teach him how to become a man, to escort him as expeditiously as possible from his abject—and provisional—state. Insofar as the boy managed to survive this genocide, he became a scapegoat. Even today, we purge the boy from our hearts. Old boys' club. Bad boy. Boys will be boys. When men misbehave, or when their masculinity becomes "toxic," more often than not that toxicity is attributed to the boy within, a man's violence blamed paradoxically on his failure to hunt down and kill that little creature. Oh, boy. If one plaintive syllable could somehow communicate the tragic history of modernity, surely that syllable is "boy."

Notes

1. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (New York: Everyman's Library, 1992), 51.
2. Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 53.
3. Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 47.
4. Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 54–55.
5. Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 328.
6. Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987), 5.

7. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers*, in *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vol. 2, ed. Edmund Gosse (London: Cassell, 1906), 289–443, 423.
8. Stevenson, *Virginibus*, 423.

Britain

KIRSTIE BLAIR

IN the opening of this brief polemic, I must acknowledge conscious bias: as of 5 a.m. on the morning after the Brexit referendum, I am a card-carrying member of the Scottish National Party. This was not anticipated. Brought up in Belfast as an Ulster-Scots Unionist with a determination to be "British" rather than "Irish," and educated in the most English of institutions, I am now in the awkward position of being grateful for the Irish state's continuing political claim on Northern Ireland, which renders me an EU citizen. Once, I was clear that I was British. Now, I am not so sure. Once, I considered myself a scholar of Victorian Britain. Now, I am increasingly aware that up until 2013 I was exclusively a scholar of Victorian England, and, in the present moment, my research is strongly aligned with "Scottish studies," a field which has had surprisingly little dialogue with "Victorian studies."

In recent years, the field of Victorian literature and culture has seen crucial, transformative work on global Victorian studies, world Victorianism, transnational, transatlantic, transcultural, and cosmopolitan Victorian studies. This has involved substantial questioning of nationalisms and national boundaries. What I want to suggest, however, is that in placing British literature within a more "global" concept of Victorian literature and culture, the complexities of national, regional and local identities *within* "Victorian Britain" have sometimes been subsumed or ignored. How many works of scholarship on British-based writers or texts are published each year in which the phrases "Victorian culture" and "Victorian literature" actually mean *English* culture and literature? Are we in danger of reproducing a clustering of resources not simply towards England, but towards London and the south of England, which has been increasingly recognized and critiqued in twenty-first