

Pretenses of Innocence

Crime, Detection, and Care in Victorian Realism and Sensation Fiction

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved September 2023 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2023

ABSTRACT

Criminal detection emerged as a significant literary element in mid-Victorian Realist and Sensation novels. These fictional detectives, much like their 20th-century successors, promised clarity and resolution as they solved crimes, caught criminals, helped victims, and explored complex narrative and social connections as they did so. However, while these fictional detectives may solve crimes and mysteries, they rarely provide the narrative resolution of later fictional detectives.

This dissertation examines how Victorian Realist and Sensation fiction subverts the expectations of the detective plot: those the detective pursues as criminals may be the real victims when the real villains – those in privileged and protected positions – persist without official consequence. Rather than provide narrative resolution, the detectives instead contribute to literary demonstrations of how corrupt characters in positions of social responsibility or privilege exploit their positions in social institutions, such as the law, the family, philanthropy, etc., that contribute to the victimization and criminalization of other characters. The literature responds to these conditions with the formation of care communities, or smaller social organizations where individuals can attend to these needs of one another. Rather than strike out at these corrupt social institutions' pretenses of innocence, care communities provide havens for the abused and opportunities at recuperation, repentance, and forgiveness. Demonstrations of the ability or inability of detection, care, and social corruption to resolve social problems provide nuanced representations of what it means to help or harm and the social consequences of each.

This study focuses on 3 novels with investigative plots. First, Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-3) as an example of Realist fiction that critiques how legal and

philanthropic endeavors can be exploitative and contribute to crime and the social problems they are designed to prevent. Second, Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) as an example of Sensation fiction and how mismanaged domestic spaces can lead to crime and wrongdoing in other social spaces. Third, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868) as an example of Sensation fiction turning into detective fiction that considers how ingrained social and cultural values and practices initiate and perpetuate crime and wrongdoing.

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1: INTRODUCTION – PRETENSES OF INNOCENCE

1: In Pursuit of Justice: Crime and Detection Before and After Realism and Sensation

Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Eugene Aram* and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* were published 70 years apart, in 1832 and 1902, respectively. Each novel centers around a criminal investigation, despite both being written in different genres and published before and after Queen Victoria's reign, different eras of a period of significant social and cultural change. *Eugene Aram*, a Newgate novel, is a fictionalized account of a real murderer, of how the titular Aram falls in love with a girl whose brother, through a diligent and focused investigation, discovers Aram killed an associate years ago. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is the most well-known of the four Sherlock Holmes novels, even if Holmes is absent through much of it. It is about Holmes and Watson's investigation into the titular hound and the death of Sir Charles Baskerville, culminating in Holmes identifying Stapleton as having used the legend of the hound to commit murder to claim Baskerville's title and accompanying fortune. Whereas Aram is arrested, tried, and executed, Stapleton is presumed drowned in the moors in his flight from Holmes and Lestrade. Despite their differences, these are both novels that focus on their investigations into criminal undertakings and are interested in holding criminals responsible for their crimes. Being separated by two-thirds of a century and written in different literary and cultural climates (with *Eugene Aram* being published both before the formation of the first British detective force and the formalization of detective fiction as a genre), both tell investigative stories about identifying and bringing the responsible party to justice. By the end of the novels, there is little doubt about who is right and who

is wrong, who is good and who is bad, the wicked are punished, and there are strong demonstrations in both about the capacity of both lay citizens and legal officials to ensure that justice is accomplished.

Holding guilty parties responsible for their crimes would be a staple of literature interested in crime and its detection in the early 19th-Century and late Victorian period, even if justice is sometimes achieved through more poetic methods. Whether it is the Newgate novels and even some Gothic literature of the earlier period or later novels interested in crime, detection, or the lives of the lower classes, whatever villainous or criminal element appears is likely going to be held responsible for their crimes and injustices. Eugene Aram and Jack Sheppard are hanged; Robert Wringham of James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* is tormented for his deal with the devil; Montoni of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is left ruined. Decades later, the 1892 novel *A Child of the Jago*, though not a novel of investigation, is interested in the lives and conditions of the working classes and the criminals among them, particularly how these criminal classes inevitably face justice. This is demonstrated as the criminal lives of father and son Josh and Dicky Perrot catch up to them with their respective deaths – one by execution for the murder of another criminal and informant, and another in a street brawl. At the same time, authors such as Doyle with Sherlock Holmes and L.T. Meade with works such as *The Sorceress of the Strand* were telling stories of astute detectives who could pierce the intricacies of the crimes they encounter and see the guilty parties held accountable. *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887, and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* 40 years later; and Meade published mysteries prolifically, sometimes with co-authors, from the 1890s to the 1910s. There are, of course, exceptions and

variations. For example, William Godwin's 1794 novel *Things as they Are; or, the Adventures of Caleb Williams* is about how a murderer is paranoid that the titular Caleb will expose him and so uses his fortune and privilege to harass and torment him. Nevertheless, the general trend in both the early and late 19th-century is that, to quote from Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, "crime brings its own fatality with it" (16). Criminals are pursued, captured, and held accountable for their crimes. The literature serves as a means to explore both the lives and reasons for crime, whether it is in some way morally justifiable (as Aram tries to make his situation out to be) or as a display of how criminals delight and revel in their degeneracy, violence, and other criminal escapades, such as is presented in *Jack Sheppard* and *A Child of the Jago*, two more books separated by almost seven decades, as well as many of the mysteries and detective stories of the 1880's and later.

While this trend of holding guilty parties responsible marked literature interested in crime in the early and later Victorian period and beyond, this is not the case in the mid-Victorian period. Rather than novels about how detectives find guilty parties or how degenerate criminals meet their inevitable fates, Victorian Realist and Sensation novels explore how those who do harm and enact injustices maintain their pretenses of innocence behind the legitimizing facades of social institutions, with the detectives pursuing criminals who turned to crime because of the injustices handed down from those in positions of responsibility. While many of the important elements herein – criminal detection, abuse and negligence, institutional exploitation, etc., - have significant roles in other periods, Realist and Sensation fiction of the 1850s and 1860s provide ample ground for literature invested in social worlds open to the conditions for the types of corruption

in question. Both genres gained popularity and emerged in the wake of emerging literary trends which themselves had links to changing legal conditions. For Realist fiction, this occurred as multiplot novels increased in popularity and the detective found a place as a character who could contribute to multiple plots and even be the central character of their own plots. The London detective branch itself had been formed in 1842, and while it would take a decade before a detective would appear in fiction, this may be because the British public were not sure what to make of this new policing figure. As for Sensation fiction, it famously emerged after the opening of the Divorce Courts in 1858 and the publication of Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* as a genre that exposed and explored the proverbial skeletons in peoples' closets as family secrets were put on display in the divorce courts that became fodder for sensation novelists. While Realism certainly managed without fictional detectives, investigative characters found a special place in the exposure or protection of scandals and secrets in Sensation Fiction.

2: Emerging Detection: Realism, Sensation, and the Displacement of Responsibility

Though forms of fictional investigations appear prior to the Realist novel – and of course, not all realist novels feature investigations – the aspects that contribute to Realism share much with detective fiction. Bivona and Henkle describe the Realist novel as being dense, long, and “experientially rich...detailed narrative,” as having “an accretive effect that defines the reader as a certain kind of person by constantly evoking his or her ethical and experiential responses to real life events (43). Realistic experiences, rich details, and prolonged narratives, all with the aim of eliciting ethical responses provide a baseline for both fictional detectives and representations of investigations and ethical concern over

social injustices, especially when legal mechanisms appear but are of no use to those who need them most. Of course, there is the expectation that investigations and mysteries will have some rational representation within the context of the story world. In a story where there are no ghosts, to suddenly introduce one to explain a mystery, even before Sherlock Holmes, would be jarring. The detective therefore fits comfortably in the Realist novel and can be a useful means of showing how various social spaces interact and the impacts that can unfold across a society. However, the detective is rarely invested in the emotional side of things. We can sympathize with those wronged by their social superioris and express outrage when those who suffer are labeled criminals and are denied justice against their abusers, but this is not the detective's function, whether as mimetic participant or literary character. The prolonged and multifaceted Realist narratives, filled with intertwining plots, lend themselves to this sympathy because we can perceive and understand these characters from a variety of perspectives. Each plot the fictional detective engages with gives them another opportunity to show a different aspect of their lives, contributing to their own realism. This in turn makes the characters who are caricatures even more off-putting or compelling as they are represented more fully as those who help, harm, or need help themselves.

The Sensation Novel of the 1860's, by contrast and according to Bivona and Henkle, "actually accelerated the stimulation of the reader, reducing the possibilities for a complex integration of the sensational material" (43). The divorce courts that gave rise to Sensation fiction contributed to this as what might otherwise be considered a privileged family secret was put on public display to be disseminated in newspapers, magazines, and fictionalized in print and on stage. Arguably, where Realism relies on a gradual accretion

of information, Sensation fiction relies on sharp and sudden contrasts: the obedient wife proves to be an adulteress; the providing husband an abuser; the demure maid a seductress; the genteel suitor an embezzler; etc. People may present pleasing façades, but these are merely pretenses of innocence, designed to hide a darker truth that obscures suffering and harm. And of course, the revelations are shocking. This, of course, lends itself to detection and investigation, whether by an amateur, a professional, a detective, or a lawyer: even with the socially acceptable façade, there are clues and uncertainties, the detritus of another life, the seemingly meager trifles that suggest that there are skeletons in the closets.

It is little wonder that Detective Fiction – as a genre in its own right – had its inception during this period.¹ For example, it is not uncommon for detective stories to feature the gradual accumulation of information through clues, details, and that inevitable word of the genre *trifles*, only for the reader to still be uncertain and need the detective to pull back the mask and explain how a seemingly innocent character is, in fact, a dangerous, degenerate, selfish murderer. Each genre may have its own distinct elements, but these interests in trifles, scandals, and revelations coupled with the insidious possibility that the spaces and institutions intended to help become the greatest sources of harm, create a shared space for the fictional detective to occupy. This also explains the novels selected for this dissertation: *Bleak House* as an example of Victorian Realism; *East Lynne* for Sensation Fiction, and *The Moonstone* for sensation fiction turning into

¹ Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories are certainly important forerunners to the genre, and while many of the same forms and patterns appeared with Dupin that would popularize the genre, they remained distinct until Poe gained popularity in Britain in the latter 19th-century.

detective fiction.² *The Moonstone* is also the origin of this dissertation's title: when Franklin Blake confronts Rachel Verinder about the missing nightgown and the diamond, she retaliates about the mystery of his motivations, asking about "the secret of your pretence [*sic*] of innocence" and whether "there is a motive of shame at the bottom of all the falsehood" (346). Rachel considers Blake to be the thief even if she will not report or openly accuse him, believing that he maintains this façade of genteel respectability, his pretense of innocence. In this dissertation, I will argue that the introduction of plots formalized criminal detection into multi-plot novels in mid-Victorian literature facilitates discourses that explore the displacement of criminality and criminal responsibility from corrupt social institutions and onto deprived and disenfranchised individuals.

By displacement of criminality and criminal responsibility, I intend to refer to two interrelated situations that appear in mid-Victorian literature but not in its predecessors and successors, at least not to the same extent or in the same way. The first is where individuals are not held responsible for the injustices they directly or indirectly inflict upon others because of the positions of responsibility, power, or authority they hold as they superficially fulfill the obligations of these positions. In other words, in fulfilling the responsibilities tied to their social institutions, they fulfill the letter of the law, but not its spirit, and instead inflict harm upon those to whom they are responsible. The second is how those who suffer and are disenfranchised are denied retribution or redress against their oppressors and so turn to crime, more out of frustration and desperation than malice

² Regarding the inclusion of *The Moonstone* when the focus is on Realism and Sensation with detection, I would like to quote R.F. Stewart: "But *The Moonstone*, it will be objected, is a detective story. Yes, but it was a sensation novel first" (70).

or degeneracy. They are then held responsible for their crimes by the law and its detectives while those who forced them into criminality are not. Examples include lawyers who exploit their clients in the name of collecting fees and arguing cases; family members who abuse and neglect parents, children, spouses, and in-laws; and philanthropists who overlook those in their immediate vicinity who stand in need while gratifying their own self-importance. The superficial duties are performed, the letter of the law as well as social and institutionalized expectations are fulfilled, and they enjoy the benefits and privileges of the authority afforded them by their social standing and positions. The worst villains are thereby spared the taint of criminality which falls to those whom they were intended to care for. The stories of these novels thereby become examples and explorations of how the victims of social injustices and domestic tyrannies become criminals and how the villains are overlooked because they stay within the limits of the law and their social institutions. The criminals are those who suffer while the villains are left alone by the detectives and other legal representatives - and sometimes the legal representatives are themselves the villains.

Contrary to the literature before and after this period, the detective's primary role is not to find those who are responsible and bring them to justice. Instead, it is to reinforce and emphasize the social and legal conditions that facilitate these displacements, that enable those in positions of authority and responsibility to continue misusing their power, and to perpetuate the displacements and criminality of those who suffer under them. The multi-plot novels of the period provide opportunities to enter and explore the lives of characters who are facing criminality because of the oppressive actions of others in socially privileged and advantageous positions, juxtaposed with

associates, villains, and the detectives themselves. Of course, whatever criminal acts the detective pursues are dealt with, but in doing so they overlook or are unable to address the circumstances and injustices that led to them. This likewise stymies opportunities for retribution from the victimized characters. For example, Mademoiselle Hortense of *Bleak House* suffers under Mr. Tulkinghorn's deceptions and manipulations: he promises to find her a position in exchange for helping him extort the employer, Lady Dedlock, she hates, but when he reneges on his promise, he threatens to have her arrested. In retaliation, Hortense kills Tulkinghorn. From a literary perspective, justice is served as the villain who has harassed many and indirectly caused the deaths of two (eventually three) has been killed and his threats eliminated. However, just as Hortense lacks any power to hold Tulkinghorn to his promises, she likewise lacks the authority to be his judge and executioner. No matter how narratively pleasing Tulkinghorn's death may be, it is a murder. And so, the novel's detective, Inspector Bucket, seeks out Tulkinghorn's murderer, which creates further complications for Lady Dedlock and other characters, with Hortense (herself thoroughly vilified in her hatred of Lady Dedlock) eventually caught and arrested.

This approach to criminality inverts the consensus at the time and that was presented in much literature in the early and later 19th-century that crime begins in the lower classes, while the middle and upper classes, through education and reform, could curb, eliminate, or contain crime. By contrast, Realist and Sensational fiction suggests that hypocrisy in the middle and upper classes facilitates and contributes to crime, and that this criminality is perpetuated by social institutions, where what might otherwise be considered theft, extortion, abuse, murder, among other crimes and wrongdoing, are

legitimized through the operations of the social institutions. For example, in Dickens' *Bleak House*, Gridley has been in prison many times for assaulting and threatening lawyers, judges, and the Lord Chancellor of Chancery Court. There is little doubt that he is a criminal, nor does he attempt to deny it. However, the novel emphasizes how Gridley is the victim of a corrupt and exploitative system which denies him recourse or retribution against its corrupt practices. The extortionists run the show, but don't call it extortion: they are lawyers representing clients and collecting their fees. Those who are not so privileged and protected, who need the services and benefits provided by the social institutions, are deprived rather than supported. This ensures significant disparity in power and resources as one group exploits and manipulates another. The victims are thereby left with few options as they have no official or legitimate means of recourse, and so, in their desperation, turn to crime. It is also important to remember that Realist, Sensational, and even Victorian literature broadly does not suggest that *all* crime stems from hypocrisy and displacement that begins in the middle and upper classes. The type of criminal classes represented in *Jack Sheppard* and *A Child of the Jago*, depicting criminal society as reveling and delighting in its debauched degeneracy, criminality, and violence, represents a class and social dynamic that does not receive the same attention. The goal, I am suggesting, is not to affix blame on the middle and upper classes for all crime, but rather to highlight both their hypocrisy and their protected conditions.

This is also not to say that Victorian literature, whether early, mid, or late, condemns police and detectives. Instead, it is to argue that Victorian literature and culture viewed the detective as an ambiguous figure. Crime and investigation play significant roles in Victorian popular culture, to explore issues of justice, social belonging, and

ethics. However, scholarship has largely subsumed the investigative aspects of Victorian Literature under other scholarly interests, specifically related to surveillance, privacy, and secrecy. Detection and crime are secondary. While detection certainly deals with these themes, it is a limited view of what crime and detection contribute to literature, especially considering larger, complex multi-plot novels. This study aims to show that crime and detection, as literary subjects, have the potential to emphasize tensions about social responsibility, corruption, and exploitation. Therefore, I would suggest that specifically looking at crime and detection in literature is important because of how it explores conflicts that can arise across value systems when the various beliefs, values, and practices of different stable (if precarious) social systems are violated in ways that move beyond a single sphere. On the one hand, detectives provide a social benefit: they resolve crimes and catch criminals and thereby give weight and power to the law. However, for them to do this, they must have access to powers and privileges denied to ordinary citizens, powers and privileges which could themselves be used as weapons against the same ordinary citizens. This was part of the argument that Sir Robert Peel came up against when proposing the formation of a police force, with comparisons being made to the French system and anxieties of the creation of a domestic espionage network and “appeared to personify the deepest threat to freeborn Englishmen” (Shpayer-Makov 27).

Interestingly, the detective’s privileges and access to otherwise restricted information and powers situates the detectives alongside the social institutions in question by giving them access to the means through which they may harass, oppress, or otherwise abuse those in need of their services. However, examples in Victorian literature where this is the case are few and far between. As far as Victorian Literature is

concerned, the foremost of these investigative tools, and of greatest interest to literary scholars, is access to surveillance and the ability to enter and move between social spaces, especially considering class and gender politics of the time and the working-class origins of the police and detectives. This ambiguity lends itself to the two forms of displaced responsibility in the literature as the detective works to benefit one at the expense of the other. The detective therefore is a conservative figure - one who, though predominantly well intentioned, nevertheless reinforces social norms and expectations, even if these are themselves oppressive and hypocritical. They serve to reinforce the legitimization that drives and protects those who work within these social institutions. Of course, they cannot reach beyond the boundaries of their position to enact significant change – they can solve individual crimes, but they cannot solve the problem of crime itself.

I would further like to emphasize that this issue of displaced responsibility emerges or at least is at its most apparent when the novel features a detective and an investigative plot. Consider the criminality represented by Uriah Heep of *David Copperfield*, a novel with no detective or investigative plot. Dickens is not shy about Heep's manipulative maliciousness, the people he harms, and the fraud he commits. However, the fact that Uriah's actions are considered criminal and he is arrested and held accountable points to his criminality in a very legal sense: he maintains a genial, "umble," professional facade to hide his criminal actions so that when uncovered, he can be held criminally accountable for his crimes. However, while he worsens the lives of others, he does not force them into crime. Betsy Trotwood is among those who suffer from his fraud, but while she is deprived, she is never in a situation so desperate that she

must steal or housebreak. Mr. Micawber is likewise deprived and forced into a desperate situation, but never turns to crime - on the contrary - he uses his situation as justification for turning Uriah over to the authorities and the charges made against him are done as retaliation by Heep in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to displace his responsibility. Likewise, while David Copperfield has unpleasant interactions with Uriah Heep, Copperfield is not directly oppressed by him. They are simply more adventures alongside David's interactions with the Pegotty family, his eccentric aunt, his romance with Dora, Steerforth's downfall, and other friendships. Heep's fraud, though significant, does not drive the novel. Nor is the entire legal system condemned, with Mr. Wickfield and Traddles being amiable members of the same profession. Most of all is that Heep violates the standards and expectations of his social institution so that he may be brought to justice. Contrast this with the aforementioned Mr. Tulkinghorn of Dickens' next novel, *Bleak House*. While Tulkinghorn may not be an active oppressor in Esther's life, his influence extends beyond his immediate sphere, produces what can be treated as crime in others, and does so from his protected, privileged status as a solicitor of Lincoln's Inn Field at the Court of Chancery. He even frames his extortion of Lady Dedlock as a professional obligation to protect her husband and his client from potential scandal. Similarly, when Gridley threatens Tulkinghorn, he does so out of desperation and because he has no other form of redress, much like Hortense. But it is a desperation created by Chancery's own corruption and exploitative practices, but because Tulkinghorn individually and Chancery collectively fulfill their superficial responsibilities, they commit no crime. Unlike Uriah Heep, the law cannot hold Tulkinghorn accountable because he has acted within his scope as a solicitor, and

exposure would jeopardize Lady Dedlock. Placed within the framework of this dissertation, it is to say that those in social institutions use their privilege and protected positions to legitimize their crimes, to satisfy their own interests, and to ignore the plights of those whom they could and ought to be benefiting.

The literature thereby establishes a potentially hopeless situation: Social institutions protect malefactors from accountability; official forces are powerless to intervene, despite their best efforts or intentions; and the oppressed are left to suffer under these oppressors. Indeed, the relationship between Tulkinghorn and Bucket exemplifies this, as Tulkinghorn exploits his position and oppresses others, and Bucket, however amiable and genial he may be at times, perpetuates Tulkinghorn's oppressions as he seeks out criminals and maintains the law. Bucket's perpetuation of injustices is a symptom, while Tulkinghorn and Chancery are the diseases. However, while a hopeless situation would describe the later work of Thomas Hardy (i.e., *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*), it does not describe the literature of the period in question. Rather than mutter "because we are too menny" (Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* 336) and succumb, mid-Victorian literature provides alternative social organizations that resemble what Talia Schaffer describes as care communities as alternative social organizations that can provide havens for the oppressed.

3: Methodology: To Help or Harm

My methodology for this dissertation is to explore how mid-Victorian Realist, and Sensation literature subverts their own fictional detectives and investigative plots by reframing the relationships of those involved in the investigations to encourage the

reframing of other character interactions and relationships. For this approach, this dissertation centers on three interrelated questions: Who does the character's action help or harm? What were the motivations or intentions behind the action? And is the action somehow sanctioned or approved? The detective plots serve as a touchstone as they promote the idea that those who harm others do so intentionally, are therefore accountable, and that some form of intervention will remove and/or punish them. Detective plots, even before the genre was formalized in the late-Victorian period, provided a promise of moral and legal clarity and restitution – all of which the literature actively subverts, whether or not a detective is present.

The presence or lack of a detective is a useful framework to work within as their presence gives shape and significance to the questions of sanction or approval, and it is on this basis that the literature begins its subversions by looking at how harm is or is not sanctioned and what an alternative might resemble. The result is three distinct but interrelated approaches, which inform the structure of each chapter:

- First is to focus on the fictional investigations themselves. Doing so considers how the investigative plot establishes character relationships and a moral and ethical baseline, all to be subverted, beginning with their own investigation as the literature shows how those pursued by the detective may be victims, and those the detective helps may be villains.
- The second focuses on examples of characters who use socially sanctioned methods to harm others, usually under the façade of good-intention, institutional operation, or professional obligation. This creates situations where victims are denied recourse – they have abusers and villains who worsen their lives, but despite their being victims,

have no means of redress or holding their abusers accountable. The victims then turn to crime, whether to survive or for retribution, and become the target of the detective despite being victims.

- Third considers how the novels model the establishment of care communities as alternative forms of social organization to the corruptible ones occupied and exploited by the villains. These care communities contrast with and compensate for both the insufficiency of the detective and the other forms of social corruption or abuse.

This means that my approach to the detective plot is semiotic in nature, which is a common approach to detective fiction: the detective plot has an instructional function as it assigns significance to seemingly mundane clues and evidence so the criminal may be identified. The detective plot therefore assigns roles to relevant parties – the detective, the victim, the criminal, suspects, witnesses, etc., with the semiotics based around the significance of clues, trifles, and seemingly trivial minutiae: what seems insignificant may in fact be loaded with meaning. This is exemplified in Sherlock Holmes stories, such as “The Red Headed League” and *The Hound of the Baskerville* which juxtapose Watson’s superficial observations, respectively, of Jabez Wilson himself and a walking stick with Holmes’ conclusions about their owners’ lives, histories, habits, associations, and professions. We therefore expect the detective to show how to read significance where it is not otherwise apparent.³ As Holmes says to Watson, “you see, but you do not observe” (Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” 189).

³ Rick Altman’s *A Theory of Narrative* provides interesting insight into this approach when he distinguishes between “Facts” and “Artifacts” for objects in narratives that either stand for themselves or indicate something greater than itself (162). Altman’s approach is

My approach, however, while semiotic, is more interested in the characters, their actions, relationships, and decisions, than in the material detritus left in the wake of crimes. Just as the detective gathers their evidence and draws meaning from it, they do so to identify the criminal: some wrongdoer who has broken the law and needs to be tried, punished, and perhaps reformed. The evidence of their wrongdoing places them in the character category of criminal. However, when the detective plot is one among many, as it sometimes is in Victorian Realist and Sensation fiction, the instructional mode is not on the accumulation of trifles to solve crimes but to reframe these character roles so we can see criminals as victims, victims as villains, etc. Rather than be concerned with the clues in a mystery, these plots train the reader to look for and understand characters in terms of how they impact others – do they help or harm? – and asks the reader to look beyond and consider not just instances of help or harm elsewhere in the novel, but to see the injustice that emerges when many of those who cause harm are allowed to continue doing so.

The basic framework for the analysis comes from Cawelti's observation about the formal character relationship in detective stories, found in his 1976 work *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*. According to Cawelti, detective stories are composed of four distinct character roles: the detective, the criminal, the victim, and those incapable of solving the crime (147). The simplicity of this pattern lends itself to a moral simplicity: the criminal represents immoral and illegal activity that is harmful and therefore needs to be stopped or corrected; the detective represents interests in social wellbeing and the benefits of apprehending the criminal (even if they must bend or even break the law to do

especially noteworthy because he does not limit this this literary distinction to detective fiction.

so) and the moral clarity of identifying and apprehending the guilty party; and the victim represents a disrupted status quo that needs restitution or reformation, which can best be accomplished through the detective's intervention. Though variations exist, the pattern is stable and reliable enough to have been a mainstay in popular media for almost a century and a half. Though this pattern would not become a defining feature of a genre until the late Victorian period, it nevertheless appears in other works of the Victorian period and elsewhere.⁴

The subversion I'm interested in occurs through the introduction of a fifth character category that would be redundant in Cawelti's pattern: the Villain. For Cawelti, there would be no need to differentiate because the antagonizing role of Villain would be filled by the criminal: situations wherein the two are not the same character would be the exception. However, where there is a fictional Victorian Detective (at least before Sherlock Holmes), there is a strong likelihood the villain is not a criminal. Considered semiotically, the "Villain" and the "Criminal" are different signs but share many of the same signifiers: both may worsen the lives of others for selfish motives, but Villains do so without committing crimes. Both criminals and villains therefore create victims, but the villain works outside the detective's reach and other forms of official intervention and are frequently empowered by social and institutional standards and expectations. This then leads to the second area of analysis in the dissertation: situations wherein someone abuses their authority or responsibility toward selfish ends and at the expense of others,

⁴ Depending on how liberal one wants to be with this pattern, it could even be applied as far as back *Beowulf*. The titular Beowulf is the detective who must investigate the murders committed by Grendel and Grendel's Mother.

who are themselves denied any recourse because their abusers act within their legal, social, and institutional spheres.

The villain's abuses of others cascade into a further complication for this expanded formula and its subversions. Not only are we dealing with detectives, criminals, villains, and victims, alongside everyone else, but frequently the criminals are themselves the villains' victims. In other words, there is a significant overlap between the categories of criminals and victims, who are doubly victimized: first by the villains' cruelty and second by the detectives' investigations into their subsequent criminality. This fosters analyses of the literature that center on how characters are variously victimized and criminalized in ways which preclude opportunities of redress or retribution because their abusers act within the expectations and responsibilities of their positions and responsibilities. The villains may be the root cause of crime and criminality, but they are not legally responsible. Therefore, though detectives may not necessarily appear in these adjacent plots, aspects of detective fiction in general and the way the investigative plots play out shape our reading and accentuate the injustices that occur in the novels. This points to the fact that, despite their best intentions and the benefits they may provide, detection itself is ultimately an insufficient solution. The detective's insufficiency and the presence of a villain likewise points to yet another character: heroes who take it upon themselves to find beneficial solutions and provide support where it is merited but denied. However, given the nature of the plots and the pretenses of innocence practiced by the villains, it makes it difficult for these heroes to strike out against the corrupt villains. They therefore need to find a different means of establishing good and helping others.

The complex positions of villains, victims, heroes, and criminals lends itself to my inclusion of Talia Schaffer's *Communities of Care: The Social Ethics of Victorian Fiction*, wherein Schaffer analyzes representations of care communities in Victorian literature. These are more fluid, flexible social groups wherein those who offer care one day may be the cared for the next. My interest in care communities is in how the literature contrasts them with the limited options of the detective and the perpetuation of harm and injustice by those in privileged positions. Care communities are therefore an alternative social organization, and it is on these that the literature finds resolution the detective may gesture towards but not provide, through potential havens for those who suffered without redress. It is also for this reason that each chapter concludes with a discussion of care communities: they accomplish what detectives do not and provide corrective measures in response to the villains, their failures, and disasters. Care communities accomplish this by replacing selfish motives with taking an interest in the well-being of those in the immediate vicinity and the occasional prioritizing of another's wellbeing over one's own. Of particular interest is in how care communities, as defined by Schaffer, have flexible roles, where those who give care one day will receive it the next. In other words, finding examples of helping in works otherwise preoccupied with examples of harm. While both Cawelti and Schaffer's works are separated by almost half a century and are interested in different forms and periods of literature, their principles dovetail in their analyses of character interaction, responsibility, and consequences. My juxtaposition of them helps tell the story of how criminal detection operates in and informs the social critiques of Victorian literature.

For a brief example, consider Elizabeth Gaskell's 1848 novel *Mary Barton*. First, though the novel has no investigative plot, it hinges on the trial into the murder of Harry Carson, of which Mary's lover Jem is accused, though the murderer is her father, John Barton. The trial occupies a fast-paced portion late in the novel, while much of the novel is interested in the story behind the crime – of Harry's courting of Mary; her rejection of Jem and regret for doing so; of Harry's and his father, John Carson's, ill treatment of their factory workers; the poor conditions these same workers live in alongside John Barton's inability to find work, which leads to the decision to for one of their number to kill Harry Carson. The novel does not condone the murder, but neither does it exonerate the Carsons. Second is the novel's consideration of the Carsons' corruption and misuse of their employees and how Harry Carson can take advantage of Mary herself and her lack of recourse when she rejects his advances and his reluctance to accept her rejection of him. Both the first and second aspects therefore are interested in showing how those who cause harm are not held responsible for doing so as their privileged positions allow them to act with impunity, both as professionals and as a suitor. The first considers how the novel subverts its own investigations by presenting the murdered Harry Carson as a lascivious villain, and second through broader considerations of character interaction and representations of harmful but legal actions. Third would be the return of John Barton, the reconciliation he has with John Carson, and the latter's personal reformation, as well as the marriage of Mary to Jem Wilson and their leaving England for America, thereby supplying a resolution a trial and investigation cannot provide.

Part of my contention is that while many of these aspects – criminal investigations, care communities, social and institutional corruption, the perpetuation of

suffering among those without recourse or redress, etc. – existed prior to the mid-Victorian period, but that the long, multiplot, Realist and Sensationalist novels of the 1850's and 1860's saw these come together in more complex and thorough ways. While *Mary Barton* exemplifies this, later novels would provide greater context, more complex character associations and plots, both more sympathetic and condemnatory depictions across class lines, thereby providing more points of contrast with the investigation and representations of harm and help and their broader impacts. These provide many different “modes of valuation” or methods by which different situations, actions, individuals, relationships, etc., can be ascribed value and by whom. For example, while we sympathize with the plight of Mary and John Barton and the death of Harry Carson has its benefits, murder cannot be condoned. As the novels grow longer, more complex, and feature more plots and especially across more class, gender, and other social spaces, conflicting valuations create greater complications. Gaskell's own *North and South*, published in 1854, six years later, demonstrates this with its sympathetic perspectives of both the factory workers and factory owners, presented from an outsider's perspective who themselves must learn and grow.⁵

Of course, there is also much more to helping and hurting than marriage, murder, and relocation, just as there are many different forms of social or legal sanction and disapproval. Focusing on major events such as murders and marriages can mean overlooking both the microaggressions and their minute opposites in the forms of simple acts of compassion and validation. For this reason, much of the analyses in this

⁵ *North and South* also has the beginnings of an investigation, but it is stopped before it can even begin by Mr. Thornton.

dissertation, especially when discussing situations outside of the fictional investigations, considers smaller, almost imperceptible moments of help or harm as instances that contribute to larger acts of violence, aggression, neglect, exploitation, and injustice. The rich detail of Realist fiction and the salacious curiosity fostered by Sensationalism can make much of such trifles, especially when numerous examples intersect or form parallels. For example, the death of a child because her father was unable to work and the father's killing of the factory owner who denied him work are both situations that may be considered murder, and yet it differs when the child's father, though despondent, prefers to harass others and drink away his sorrows and let his frustrations out on his wife, perhaps leading to her death as well. In each case, the term "murder" could be applied, but only in the second of the three (barring the hypothetical death of the abused wife) would a detective or court intervene. After all, the factory owner did not murder the infant or the wife; father and husband did not provide. But he could not provide because the factory owner did not allow him to work.

It is with this interest in minutiae and trifles that I have sought various examples from each novel and not just limited them to those who are immediately impacted by the investigations, and even considered them in significant detail. Doing so allows me to thoroughly consider the nuanced ways in which characters help or harm, in both large and small ways, turning the responsibilities and powers into cudgels or sweet nothings, frequently in the name of an institutionalized but misguided good. For example, a significant part of the chapter in *Bleak House* (just under 7,000 words) juxtaposes two characters who never interact and have nothing to do with the novel's investigation: Gridley and Harold Skimpole. Nevertheless, the comparison of these two reveals how the

novel represents social institutions as corrupt and corruptible, designed to help others but bastardized so that they may help themselves at others' expense. In doing so, I likewise hope to provide reminders that these and other examples do not just provide examples of corrupt individuals and the institutions that enable them, but also the ways in which the abused are denied recourse.

This approach grew out of an interest in crime and detection in the Victorian novel and the different forms it took, as well as difficulty in the scholarship about how to categorize and understand the role and function of fictional detectives in the years before Sherlock Holmes. What stood out to me was how, even in novels where the focus was not on investigation or a detective character, plots that resemble or resonate with something more in line with the work of Doyle, Christie, or Hammett, would appear. For example, in James Hogg's 1824 *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, when the two mothers who had lost sons to Robert Wringham pursue and capture him, it is almost as if the novel stepped out of 1824 and into 1894 or even 1934. Though this is a short selection in Hogg's novel, it nevertheless points to the impact an investigative plot can have on a larger narrative and on the narrative singularity and peculiarity of detective subplots. The mid-Victorians found a different use for the fictional detective to establish an entirely different narrative paradigm than what formed later. This paradigm is a defining consequence of the appearance of detectives and investigations in Victorian literature and are central to defining the moral and ethical boundaries of the literature against the legal or socially sanctioned. The investigative plot establishes this by providing a framework wherein characters either help or harm others: the detective helps the victim who was harmed by the criminal. The detective, however, is limited by their

position, responsibilities, and obligations. They are responsible for solving crimes, but not for social reform. They pursue criminals, but do not consider why the criminal turned to crime in the first place.

In taking this approach and making these analyses, I aim to contribute to literary studies by providing an analytical method rooted in character interaction and relationship that can be defined in simple terms, such as whether a character helps or harms and whether their actions are or are not sanctioned or permissible, thereby providing analyses similar to work such as Schaffer's *Communities of Care*, as well as studies of narrative and character relationship such as Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many* (2003). Though this approach may have its origin in detective plots, a major part of my analysis is in how the genre's characteristics predate it and extend to other relationships and situations, whether fictive or real, Victorian or otherwise. I therefore likewise see this study as contributing to studies of literary history and genre. In terms of history, I aim to provide insight into how mid-Victorian literature represented a world of increasingly complex social relationships and interactions and how, in a period marked by social and legal changes regarding class, gender, and race, people could assess, understand, or even ignore the consequences of theirs and others' actions. This likewise contributes to the history of crime and detective fiction by finding a way to better explain the narrative and literary roles of fictional detectives in the years before the formalization of the genre.

4: Carefully Suspicious: Detecting Reparative Reading and Care Communities

In her 2021 book, *Care Communities: The Social Ethics of Victorian Fiction*, Talia Schaffer explores the ways Victorian literature represents different forms and

relationships of care, i.e., displays of individuals putting their own interests aside on behalf of others, in particular those who would be willing to return the favor in kind. Schaffer describes her work as having been “formed amid a body of criticism that seeks to produce an ethical, positive, creatively affirming form of reading,” and cites Eve Sedgwick’s 2002 essay “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re so Paranoid, you probably think this essay is about you” as the start of a trend of similar studies (3). Schaffer states her work “is not going to be pleading for us all to care more about each other, nor will it be praising Victorian characters for truly caring” but instead encourages readers to “think of care as a practice — a difficult, often unpleasant, almost always underpaid, sometimes ineffective practice, but nonetheless an activity that defined the lives of nineteenth-century subjects, particularly female subjects” (1). Schaffer argues for using the ethics of care “as the basis of a theory of reading” (2) specifically focused on characters and their relationships and behaviors, particularly those who go to others in need. I would argue that the formation of care communities in Victorian literature is a frequent, if subtle and indirect, response to the work of the detective (this formation is also certainly not exclusive to literature with detectives). The frequent incongruity between the criminals pursued by detectives and the villains who facilitate criminality points to institutional, systematic, and cultural failures that have been normalized and so are outside of the detective’s reach or view. The solution presented in the literature has less to do with uncovering mysteries, capturing criminals, or bringing villains to justice (though these frequently happen). The solution is to present a social organization that is free from, or at least not easily given to, corruption and these frequently take the shape of or resemble communities of care.

The formations of the communities take various forms in the literature, but consistently represent alternative forms of social organization to those of the social institutions and the detective. A major aspect of this is in the fluidity and flexibility of relationships. Detectives, lawyers, and clients remain in their respective stations - the detective does not argue the lawyer's case. However, in a care community, the carer and cared for may change responsibilities depending on their circumstances. This lessens the possibility of exploitation and corruption, and so this pseudo-familial, quasi-domestic community thereby contrasts with the more rigidly defined structured social institutions and the positions within them. This contrast is most apparent in how these care communities aim to correct or remedy the problems that arise from corruption in social organization, with the communities frequently being havens for those who have otherwise been victimized. It is important to note, however, that while these communities provide alternative social organizations and may oppose the corrupt social institutions in form and philosophy, rarely do they actively or openly oppose or challenge the social institutions in question. Considering this perspective of crime and detection and its relationship to potentially unjust or corrupt social institutions and the failures of those within them, further study could be applied to other forms of crime and injustice as it appears in literature, both Victorian and otherwise, especially in the light of more recent social concerns related to, for example, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo movement, censorship in public education and libraries, etc. While I do not make explicit comparisons to these and other movements and social interests in the study, their relationships to systematic racism, sexism, and a propensity to excuse or forget harmful behavior from those in positions of power, it is important that we find new ways to assess

and evaluate the roles of social care and responsibility in its various forms - whether they be through policing power, social institutions, or community interaction. In other words, it may be appropriate to say that Victorian literature's interest in the impact detectives have on literature is in showing how people can either improve or worsen the lives of others, with the detective frequently being in an uneasy middle ground, sometimes improving, sometimes worsening, and sometimes both at the same time.

A major aspect of both Schaffer's and Sedgwick's work is itself to look for an alternative to suspicious or paranoid reading. Victorian literature may find a curious companion in the detective because both it and the detective have a foot on both: to care and to suspect. The literature may certainly depict the practice of care and formation of communities, but they also depict worlds where care is lacking and paranoia or suspicion may be justified. In Sedgwick's essay, she not only advocates for a reparative form of reading but discusses it in contrast to readings based on suspicion and paranoia.

Sedgwick considers how "The desire for a reparative impulse...is additive and accretive. Its fear, a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture; it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self" (28) and "What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of culture — even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them" (35). In other words, literature does not simply engender suspicious, paranoid readings, but explores forms of remediation and support – ways to nurture those wronged by the systems the literature critiques. While Sedgwick's builds her approach from psychoanalytical work from Freud, Melanie Klein, and Silvan

Tomkins, scholars who have taken up the notion of reparative reading like Rita Felski (specifically in *The Limits of Critique*) and Talia Schaffer have brought sociology, specifically Bruno Latour's *Reassembling the Social* and Actor Network Theory. Even studies of detective fiction as a genre, such as John G. Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, present quasi-sociological approaches: Cawelti organizes character relationships in literary formulas, effectively describing a common and readily repeatable Actor Network, but also by considering the social role of literature as a source of pleasure and enjoyment. Felski's *Uses of Literature* — specifically describing recognition, enchantment, knowledge, and shock — may even be read as a spiritual successor to Cawelti, as a work looking for what may be considered lay or pedestrian approaches to literature, outside the sort of suspicious, paranoid readings Sedgwick discusses.

What we see in the mid-Victorian novel with the detective plot is an intermingling of a reparative approach alongside the paranoid one. The novels themselves largely rely on and encourage paranoid readings, fostered by the proliferation of crimes, mysteries, scandals, dangers, and anxieties. The callousness of social institutions and those enshrined and entrapped in them only adds to this paranoia: of course we should be wary of men like Tulkinghorn because his success is contingent on the exploitation of others; Grimstone of *Aurora Floyd*, despite being a police detective, is more interested in the reward that comes with solving case; etc.. However, the novels rarely end with their paranoia-instilling villains. *Bleak House* doesn't end with the dismal and pessimistic scene of Richard Carstone dying, his mouth filling with blood, but instead ends in a scene of familial and communal unity, one his widow and son participate in, with Esther Summerson at its center. Discussing Esther Summerson, Schaffer states that Dickens'

heroine “activates the tools that characterize a care community: fluid discourse, mutual respect, and voluntary participation” (13). Each of these “tools” are inversions of the type of exploitative systems that cause criminalization and normalize institutional victimization and villainy. They are marked by unidirectional movement of resources, power, and relationships as opposed to fluidity and the exchange of roles and positions, creating situations where the cared for and carer never switch positions else the exploiters would lose their privileged position. Last of all, voluntary participation is subverted because the systems that victimize and criminalize succeed through coercion, deception, and force. Care communities are therefore the antithesis to the social organizations that legitimize injurious practices, reinforced by the detective’s investigation. Care communities act as nurturing and rehabilitating replacements to the criminalizing and victimizing practices outside of them, whether it is the formation of new communities (as in *Bleak House*), by introducing a different set of values to redefine them (as in *East Lynne*), or the reformation of a broken community (as in *The Moonstone*). These novels may not perfectly align with the type of communities Schaffer discusses, but they nevertheless work to replace the bad with better, helpful, supportive practices.

At this point, I find it important to address a concern of Sedgwick’s, and one that Schaffer repeats regarding the difficulty of reparative reading practices. Namely, that reparative reading practices are difficult to make without making them sappy. I share much of the concern that a sappy reading runs the risk of lacking in academic and scholarly merit, a superficial style of reading, the type that, for example, only sees the romance in and little difference between Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre*. Nevertheless, I believe there is some merit in considering what might otherwise be considered “sappy.”

A major argument on behalf of literature deals with its pedagogical, experiential value: that people can better appreciate and recognize the individuality of others as well as how our actions impact others as literature helps us understand the lives and perspectives of others. Indeed, questions of relationships, interactions, and consequences is central to Victorian literature, whether it is in the development of a care community, a police investigation, or in the exploitation of one's position. I also believe it also bears saying that if we find something to be "sappy," then we must be suspicious of our own cultural biases, to reassess why we consider them to be so. Indeed, Schaffer describes reparative reading and care as "turn[ing] what is broken into an opportunity for repairing and reaching out, and it positions us, perhaps, as the restorers of literary, formal, and cultural knowledge that is disintegrating" and "if we want to do reparative reading, then, we need to embrace a carefully attuned relation with each particular text in which we can value what is broken" (5). Valuing what is broken and attuning reading are significant parts of crime and detection in mid-Victorian literature. The detective and their investigation offer resolutions to crimes and solutions to problems while others stand apparent in the broader context of the novel. To paraphrase Schaffer's application of Heidegger's theory of "tool-being" wherein we are only aware of objects when they break, the detective is an emissary of an operating but ultimately broken social system or institution, and though the detective may not see the cracks in their lenses, others do (the reader included).

In addition to the concern over sappiness and a lack of scholarly merit, there is the concern that in making a reparative reading, that it will fold over onto itself and become or engender paranoid readings as we consider the possible shortcomings of the proposed reparative communities and relationships. The Victorian domestic ideal of the Angel in

the House exemplifies this, especially through Esther Summerson of *Bleak House*. As the novel's representative of Victorian domestic ideology, Esther is juxtaposed against failing and injurious social institutions, both the philanthropy of Paddingle and Jellyby and the childish irresponsibility of Harold Skimpole. Her kindness and charity are welcome reprieves from and answers to these social shortcomings. However, Esther is too much of a good thing as Dickens uses her to establish an individually, culturally, and socially unhealthy paradigm of womanhood. This, however, does not (or should not) negate the fact that she exemplifies good to those around her and the formation of a care community in contrast to that of Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. It is as if the novel wishes to say, "We cannot fix, close, or abandon Chancery, so let's build a new paradigm." While there is a hint of revolution in such a suggestion, coming from Dickens it is inevitably about rigid gender and social roles even if it concedes some to the fluidity of care and extra-familial relationships and responsibilities. The result is that, even where we find communities of care, there is cause to be suspicious, else these communities persist in maintaining, perpetuating, or reconfiguring oppressive methods and practices. It is no good to replace the Patriarchy of Chancery with a Matriarchy of the Home, or the Matriarchy of Philanthropy with the Matriarchy of the Angel. I imagine a follow-up novel to *Bleak House*, written in the vein of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where Esther, decades later, is worn to almost nothing by caring for her and Woodcourt's children and those around her, having lived her life so much for others that she is depleted and devoid of the solace of self-fulfillment, or that she has become a domestic tyrant, in line with Justice Hare and Cornelia Carlyle of Wood's *East Lynne*.

At the risk of sounding idealistic or to even invoking the sappiness Sedgewick

laments, this study points towards a middle ground between the suspicious and reparative and suggests the literature in questions does the same. We should not give up our wary suspicions of social institutions, oppressive practices, or corrupt individuals and we should be mindful of possible solutions that seem too good to be true. But neither should we overlook or only seek to denigrate reparative and restorative efforts and goals. Our suspicion of Dickens' social and domestic ideals can (and should) leave us wary of the Domestic Angel, but we can nevertheless find beneficent practices in his heroines. As I discuss in the chapter on *Bleak House*, it is easy to condemn Pardiggle's treatment of the brickmaker and his family, and it is likewise easy to find an unattainable goal of womanhood in Esther, but ought we to condemn Esther for offering charity and kindness to those in need, or Dickens for looking for alternatives to the decrepit state of Chancery and misguided, self-aggrandizing philanthropy? The alternatives may not be as wonderful as their authors may suggest and a degree of suspicion is certainly warranted, but we must not be so suspicious as to, to adopt a domestic cliché, throw out the baby with the bathwater. We should recognize that even if the baby may not be as clean as we may like or the work may suggest, there is still something to be said for seeking solutions and nurturing practices, even if it can be a little sappy.

In the end, for the mid-Victorian novel, the detective plot shows how we are hurt, as both adjective (the state of being hurt or injured) and verb (who inflicts harm upon us). While there is certainly cause to be suspicious of narratively convenient closures, formations, and relationships (such as when the Domestic Angel flaps her gilded wings) there is also cause to look for strategies and encouragements about the positive, beneficial, ameliorating, and even healing and restorative aspects of human interactions

and relationships and how, in spite of the harm done, that there is still room for hope and healing. For all their problematic representation of surveillance and reinforcement of social and legal status quos, the detective, whether in the 19th- or 20th-century literature, likewise represents the possibility of improvement and resolution. We may need to scrutinize these positive representations and recognize when and where there are unrealistic and damaging examples -- temporary palliatives touted as panaceas -- but this doesn't mean there aren't lessons to be learned from them. Pardiggle certainly represents a willful ignorance to be avoided as much as Esther Summerson represents a dangerously encapsulating and limiting idea, but given the opportunity, is it better to pontificate or assist, to preach or aid? As Schaffer states, "care is an action, not a feeling" (5).

5: Literature Review

Studying crime and detection in the literature of the Victorian and long 19th century is a tricky matter. The examples are frequent and prolific, but there is an inconsistency in the depiction of the detective and the crimes they investigate, and the social criticisms conducted in the literature and in other written forms, such as social criticism and journalism, done by Dickens himself (his outings with Inspector Field) and from social critics like Henry Mayhew and James Greenwood. Because the novels situated crime and investigation in larger social concerns and in connection with social institutions, there are many different threads where crime, responsibility, detection, and social institutions intersect. Social commentators ranging from novelists like Charles Dickens, Margaret Oliphant, and Harriet Martineau, to journalists like Henry Mayhew and Greenwood worked to expose these disparities and their damage to individuals and

society. Works such as Mayhew's *London Labour and London Poor* and Greenwood's *Unsentimental Journeys through Modern Babylon*, as well as literature such as Arthur Morrison's *A Child of the Jago* and George Gissing's *The Nether World* depict the living conditions of the poor, as well as their demeanor and habits, which in turn show sharp contrasts against other classes, especially their middle-class readership (Bivona and Henkle 4). Present across these commentaries is an awareness among the Victorians of connections not just between the physical and mental condition of an individual, but how this extended to classes generally and, most importantly, raised questions about responsibility and culpability regarding the conditions of the poor and what could be done to improve their conditions. From *Bleak House*, Jo of Tom's All Alone's, his illness, and his pleas of "I know nothink" show the effects of neglect and poverty.

Similarly, we have Greenwood's description of downtrodden men,

If the majority of the men you meet wear their heads deep in their capes; if they wear their jackets buttoned high and both their hands in the pockets thereof; if their eyes are downcast, as though good luck had somehow escaped from them into the gutter, and they were there looking for it...you may know that wherever you meet the poor man in and about London he is 'hard up,' (81)

suggests links not just across society but between the material and immaterial. Regardless of the text or situation, whether published in 1860 or 2010, there is a keen, if not overtly addressed, interest in questions related to responsibility and awareness of how those of those social conditions, in particular the poorer and "criminal" classes lived.

Studies of crime and detective fiction, Victorian or otherwise, had a significant moment in the 1970's and 1980's, wherein emerged works such as John G Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* (1976), R.F. Stewart's *And Always a Detective* (1980),

Ian Ousby's *Bloodhounds of Heaven* (1976), and Anthea Trodd's *Domestic Crime in the Victorian Novel* (1988), as well as D.A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (1988). These works take a keen interest in genre, crime, and detection, with Stewart, Ousby, and Trodd looking at the Victorians and the work of Dickens and Collins in particular. It is apparent crime and detection played a significant role and in various forms throughout the period, whether certain genre conventions were followed (Is Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* a crime novel? Is Eliot's *Middlemarch* a detective story?). Genre conventions or not, crime and detection had the literary ability to foreground predominant issues of the period. As a genre, crime and detective fiction is largely considered a product of the late Victorian period, with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes being called a pioneer by at least Raymond Chandler (even if Chandler does so while claiming Doyle made mistakes that "completely invalidated some of his stories") ("The Simple Art of Murder" 5). As Doyle was finally retiring Holmes in the 1920's, the next generation of detective fiction was filling popular, pulp magazines.⁶ Two of Stephen Knight's works on crime fiction, *Crime Fiction since 1800* and *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, consider predecessors to the 20th-century literature, but ultimately prioritizes 20th-century works. This is typical of others, such as Richard Bradford's *Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*, which, like

⁶ It is peculiar to think that the last Sherlock Holmes collection by Doyle, *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, was published in 1927 and contains stories published throughout the 1920s, and that between 1923 and 1927, Dashiell Hammett had published more than 30 Continental Op stories (his first novel, *Red Harvest*, would be published in 1929), and that Agatha Christie had published 9 mystery novels, beginning with *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920, four of them featuring Hercule Poirot, and had not yet introduced Miss Marple (who would appear in 1930). And not to mention Doyle's late Victorian contemporaries such as L.T. Meade, and Fergus Hume, both of whom began in the late 19th-century and published into the 1920s.

Knight, recognizes 19th-century predecessors before moving on to and spending much of his introduction on 20th-century developments. John G. Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* tends to treat 19th-century literature with a hint of disdain, perhaps because he is arguing on behalf of popular, formulaic literature shunned from the canon, and his interest is in the pleasure of familiar forms and genres. Reference is generally limited to works like *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone* for their detectives, even if Cawelti rejects *Bleak House* as a detective story because many other narrative concerns take precedence over investigation (136). Cawelti, Knight, and others offer similar references to other generic forerunners, such as the Gothic tradition with its air of mystery, the Newgate novel and its glorification of crime, and Sensation fiction's interest in turning crime into a domestic matter.

In other words, crime and detection may have held an important place in Victorian literature, but the genre was not formalized until Doyle continued in the same vein Poe laid out with Dupin. Part of this stems from how any number of 19th-century novels across a range of the genres and styles could be shoehorned under the umbrella of "Victorian Detective Fiction," without doing much to differentiate what is and is not a Victorian Detective novel.⁷ The result would be unwieldy and arguing for its formation is not a stance I intend on taking here. To use Sensation Fiction as an example, the exemplary novels by Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, and Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* rely on crime (murder, sexual impropriety, and property crime) and mysteries

⁷ I have no interest in forcefully extrapolating a genre from the 1850's and 1860's as some long-forgotten sibling or byproduct of Realist and Sensation Fiction and parent to Sherlock Holmes, nor would I encourage others to do so.

are resolved through the intervention of a detective figure. Nevertheless, the two novels differ in terms of style, structure, and in the guilty and offending parties. They are unified more as “Sensation Fiction” by their being scandalous novels with intertwined plots of sexual transgression and murder in contemporary domestic and community environments than by any narrative similarities. This differs from the Gothic and its use of remote, foreign spaces like the titular castles of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Similarly, *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone* are introduced into discussions of the genre not because of their investigative elements but because they feature some of the first fictional police detectives, Inspector Bucket and Sergeant Cuff. Though too heterogeneous to be a genre in its own right, the Victorian period was fascinated with crime, mystery, and detection. Even if there is no crime, it seems inevitable that a 19th-century novel will feature someone, somewhere, conducting an investigation or party to a mystery or revealing some hidden information, whether it is Darcy seeking out Wickham in London in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, the exposure of Bulstrode’s embezzlement and ambiguous murder of Raffles in Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, or the illicit relationship between Jude and his cousin Sue in Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, there almost always seems to be something “criminal” propelling the plot.

In the wake of almost a century and a half of “Detective Fiction” in print, film, and television, it is little surprise that researchers would be interested when detectives appear and gain the narrative space to engage in their investigations. It is as if when looking at Bucket and Cuff, we want to find Sherlock Holmes, Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, Hercule Poirot, or any number of other fictional detectives. And while there are certainly recognizable elements, they exist in stories and operate in ways that differ

significantly from what their predecessors do and so the fictional detectives and the novels they appear in simply cannot be studied in the same way. Though Raymond Chandler mentions *East Lynne* in his 1943 novel *The Lady in the Lake*, the two cannot be read in the same manner. To do such a reading is, I would suggest, reductive and retroactive. It is retroactive because it means looking for something specific before it existed, even if certain traits and elements had already appeared and were developing. It is reductive because it runs the risk of oversimplifying complex and culturally and socially significant literary representations. We cannot read Bucket and Sherlock Holmes as having equal narrative functions because *Bleak House* operates differently than *A Study in Scarlet*, and yet, it seems as though when someone seeks to study Sherlock Holmes' literary predecessors, this is what they try to do. I hope that in this study I have managed to overlook some of these expectations and engage with the literature more on its own terms, as a complex literary form distinct from but closely related to that of more generic Detective Fiction.

Of course, there is also some interest in topics removed from crime and detection: studies and observations about the literature that deals with topics and issues tangential or related to detectives, criminals, and investigation. Much like how the detective lingers in the periphery of the Victorian novel, waiting for their chance to seize the narrative, so do they and issues they relate to linger in the periphery of scholarship of Victorian literature and culture. For example, a topic of particular interest to Victorianists is the disparities and double standards that existed (and continue to exist) across class, gender, and race. Indeed, these are topics that remain significant arenas of conflict in crime and detective fiction. A study interested in how such topics in Victorian literature need not look at

criminals and detectives, but there is a good possibility they will not be far off. The presence of crime and detection in Victorian literature is not surprising considering the 1829 formation of a police force and the 1842 formation of a detective branch, the official detective's semi-official forbearer, the Bow Street Runners, dating back to 1749, and the continued appearance of policemen in the press and the publication of narratives by police officers, as discussed by Haia Shpayer-Makov in *The Ascent of the Detective*.

For example, Bivona and Henkle's *The Imagination and Class* (2006) considers how social critics like Greenwood and Mayhew represented the London slums to stir middle class imagination and sympathy, while still giving some sense of adventure by leading more respectable classes through the slums, recreating their own excursions in disguise or with policemen for those engaging from the comfort of their parlor armchairs: police and detectives become the guides and stewards of, to borrow the title of Gissing's novel, this nether world. The foundational example of the disparity in gender relations is Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and its consideration of how 19th-century literature by women focused on themes of confinement and restriction and that these stifled tones represent the lives these women lived, drawing sharp contrasts against the freedom of men and the confinement of women. Similarly, Chase and Levenson's *The Spectacle of Intimacy* (2000) considers how "the home centrality of the [mid-Victorian] period was in every aspect shadowed by contradiction, resistance, refusal, and bewilderment" (6) in their study of the rapidly changing views of public and domestic life from 1835-65 and how as one created its contrary other, tensions emerged between the exposure and display of domesticity (7, 8).

Changing views of life also impact identity formation and how people perceive

themselves in relationship to others, which is part of Leila Silvana May's *Secrecy and Disclosure in Victorian Fiction* (2016), which addresses how Victorians balanced honesty with secrecy and how this contributed to identity formation. Similarly, the essays in Pionke and Millstein's anthology *Victorian Secrecy: Economies of Knowledge and Concealment* (2010) deal more explicitly with the Victorian value placed on honesty and the forms of lies, secrets, and deceptions that made up the period, whether these were secrets about the home, business, or empire. Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* (1988) considers how Victorian literature dealt with changing and conflicting views on empire, and similarly, works like Arata's *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siecle* (1996) and its consideration of loss and degeneration, intertwined with empire. Though Arata may not address crime and detection, he predominantly features predecessors of the formalized genre, specifically Jekyll and Hyde, Dracula, and Sherlock Holmes, showing a common pattern in Victorian Scholarship: narratives of crime and detection become powerful narratives for discussing the social conditions and influences that shape peoples' lives. In these studies, criminal investigation is usually of a secondary or tertiary importance in many studies of Victorian literature. In addition to Arata's inclusion of crime narratives in his study of degeneration, May's study of secrecy devotes one chapter to *Lady Audley's Secret* and another to Sherlock Holmes but does little with the legal or investigatory elements of the stories, nor does the book's index list "Crime" or "Detection." Similarly, when Brantlinger discusses Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it is as a spiritualist, and says nothing about Doyle or Sherlock Holmes when discussing the Imperial Gothic and anxieties of the colonized immigration to Britain, despite many Holmes stories, the first two novels in particular, featuring heavily in this vein.

This is not to say crime and detection have been neglected by 19th-century scholars. These scholars have done much to show the multitudinous ways crime and detection were used by Victorian authors, and almost always do so to explore issues related crime and detection, such as privacy and surveillance. These studies include works such as Joyce's *Capital Offenses: The Geography of Class and Crime in Victorian London* (2003), which explores how authors struggled to represent London and the connections between social classes; Pittard's *Purity and Contamination: Late Victorian Detective Fiction* (2011), which compares how concepts of purity, health, and disease emerged alongside and in detective fiction. Nevertheless, crime and detection are, as stated above, typically subordinated to other scholarly interests; and Lawrence Frank's *Victorian Detective Fiction and the nature of evidence* (2003) which considers how scientific developments in the Victorian period impacted forensic and scientific interpretations of detection in literature. These, however, are just a few examples where crime and detection are foregrounded in the scholarship. For example, gender is a significant aspect of crime and detective fiction, and not limited to the romantic subplots of Agatha Christie, or the *femme fatales* and tough guys of the Hard-boiled tradition. Scholarship on gender and its relation to crime and detection deals with appropriate behavior, the criminality and repercussions of deviation, and the obligation to conform. Add in the potential scandal of crimes in the heavily gender-coded Victorian domestic sphere, and Victorian novels (Sensation novels in particular) could simultaneously explore or critique gender relations while offering a salacious view at the lives of others. For example, Marlene Tromp's *The Private Rod* (2000) argues that that is a reciprocal relationship between changing marriage laws and fiction. Questions of the legal status of

women were likewise explored by Tim Dolin in *Mistress of the Home* (1997) and how the rights of women regarding property appeared in Victorian literature. On the criminal side of things, Virginia B. Morris' *Double Jeopardy: Women who kill in Victorian Fiction* (1990) looks at how violence by female murderers was increasingly seen as justified in Victorian literature, and the dilemma authors encounters in such narratives with the potential "latent advocacy of violence and law breaking" and looking at how attitudes toward female criminals changed during the Victorian period (5). In a similar vein, Bridget Walsh's *Domestic Murder in Nineteenth-Century England* (2014) considers the intersection of fiction, the stage, and news reports of murder in the 19th-century, how these representations established expectations of behavior, in both men and women, privacy and the home, and how these perceptions changed over time. These last two studies both focus on changing perceptions and greater sympathy for female criminals over time, which reflects both the changing gender roles of the period and efforts to define and identify them. Such considerations were not limited to women. Joseph Kestner's *Sherlock's Men* (1997) considers detective fiction, specifically Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, as models of gendered and masculine behavior, responding to changing gender roles and the roles women filled in the 19th-century and the "crisis of masculinity" of the 1880's and 1890's (7). Kestner likewise considered issues of gender and crime in *Sherlock's Sisters* (2003), an exploration of female Victorian detectives. Similarly, Joseph McLaughlin's *Writing the Urban Jungle* (2000), though not about crime and detective fiction, has undertones that link heroism in works like *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* (among other novels not about crime and detection) to masculinity.

McLaughlin's book, however, is more concerned with empire (and how urban fiction presents its own kind of parallel adventure to more traditional "adventure" fiction, such as Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*), and detective fiction, with its elements of policing and social control, likewise have a stake in literature dealing with the categorization and regulation of colonized populations. Yumna Siddiqi's *Anxieties of Empire and the Fiction of Intrigue* (2007) looks at how detection and policing efforts were important in British colonies and in adventure literature set in colonies. Siddiqi contends these fictions of intrigue provided a way to address and explore anxieties based in empire and how detective and spy narratives were methods to allay these anxieties. The detective therefore becomes a contributor to the formation of national identity, a proposition also explored by Caroline Reitz in *Detecting the Nation* (2004). Reitz considers how the detective became a representative of empire and how the British public's perception of both police detectives and empire shifted over the 19th-century from suspicion to acceptance, and how the detective character did this through an embodiment of both liberty and "at times aggressive authority needed to maintain social order in a complex new imperial world" (xiv). Though their historical moments may vary (Siddiqi beginning with Victorian Literature and ending with recent authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Michael Ondaatje while Reitz begins with Godwin and Mill and ends with Doyle and Kipling) both consider the changes and developments of empire, genre, and detection in fiction over time.

Of course, crime and detection require some consideration of the law and social regulation. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (1988) does not deal with police and detectives specifically, but by pulling heavily from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and*

Punish (1975), argues police and policing in literature is about modeling socially acceptable behavior. While Miller's work is important in considering the different ways police and detectives feature in the Victorian novel, his interest is more about how societies and communities police and regulate themselves. Of course, much has been said against Miller's book and the approach he takes therein, among them Lauren Goodlad's *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State* (2003), which argues that Foucault's approach in *Discipline and Punish* represents an approach more compatible with French history and society and that Foucault's later concept of Governmentality is a better fit with English social history. Turning specifically to detectives and crime, Rosemary Jann's *Detecting Social Order* (1994) considers how the first collection of Sherlock Holmes stories represented social issues through literature, arguing Doyle used the stories to explore and critique the sometimes contradictory social values of the time, even if Holmes and Doyle ultimately validates these Victorian values. Of particular note, but appropriate considering her focus on Holmes, Jann opens her work with a consideration on how Holmes was the last Victorian hero, which establishes the situation of the detective in relationship to others and their place in the budding genre of Detective Fiction. Lastly Lisa Rodensky's *The Crime in Mind* (2003) considers the reciprocal nature between literature, law, and identifying responsibility and causes of crime, focusing specifically on Dickens, Eliot, and the lawyer James Fitzjames Stephen. Rodensky addresses how the novels' third person perspective at various times agreed with or was contrary to legal standards at the time. At the core of Rodensky's work is one comparable to mine and one detective fiction tried to address: the tension between judging the actions of an individual when their mind does not allow access, raising issues

not only of crime, but also of responsibility and intention.

Considering the dynamics of crime and detection within Victorian literature, they become a way to explore the problems and issues based in significant social and cultural differences and the conflicts that emerge, and geography and spatial relations, such as the location and identity of different neighborhoods, became important. Issues of space and geography become important, especially considering the tour-like journalism of Dickens and other social commentaries and as discussed by the aforementioned *Imagination of Class* by Bivona and Henkle and *Capital Offenses* by Joyce. Other works such as Seth Koven's *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (2004) have considered the role of geography and space in Victorian literature and culture, or Allen MacDuffie's *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (2014) have considered the geographic and environmental implications of crime and justice. Crime and detection takes an interesting role in such studies, as, much like many others, it is not the central focus, but the nature of crime to pierce different social spheres also means it pierces different spatial and geographic ones as well, which places the detective in an ambiguously mobile position wherein they must move between spaces to perform their investigative work.

Haia Shpayer-Makov, in her *Ascent of the Detective* (2011), considers how the Victorian fascination with detectives ranged from public suspicion (would the detectives be a sort of secret police?) to praiseworthy, to view their valuable social role in the prevention of crime, and questioning their reliability and resources when faced with scandals and failure. The Victorian relationship with crime and detectives was as contested as was its relationship with most any social or cultural issue emerging during

the period: faced by the disparity that emerged from different levels of practice and theory, different communities' needs, relationships, and conditions, especially in ways different from earlier novels and novelists. Indeed, the appearance of the detective signals a different social organization and ideologies about social, civic, and even personal responsibility and power and the nature of how the status quo is maintained. However, the public's own anxieties about police, detectives, and their relationships with surveillance, the working classes, and insufficient funds and resources, etc., does not offer as strong a resolution as these scholars suggest. As Shpayer-Makov suggests, rather than a panoptic view, the literature suggests an absence of detectives when they are needed most, and "what detective fiction offers is a kind of middle way—an equilibrium between reliance on the individual and the state" (268). I propose this middle way comes from the detective's careful treading of numerous communities and value systems, in tracing their interdependencies, and looking for discrepancies, but where the detective may be satisfied with the arrest of the criminal, the mid-Victorian Novel is left facing more than discrepancies in behavior: the revelation and arrest of the criminal is the resolution of only a superficial problem. The detective therefore is not so much concerned with drawing circumventing boundaries as they are drawing interdependent connections, relying on certain markers to help them reach their conclusions. If anything, the detectives themselves, as represented in mid-Victorian Literature, are as circumvented as anyone else, expected and obliged to maintain certain forms of conduct according to the law and their professional obligations.

In this light, detective fiction became a way to explore the strained relationships of a self-conflicted society, relying on old markers of social standing, namely, the

aforementioned property, body, and mind. By treating these markers as containing meaning and value, the literature instigates a sort of faith in the ability to discern and understand the elements that contribute to crime, which in turn, revealed deeper connections and often more pervasive problems even if the detective could not investigate them. While street and property crime would remain predominant in the period, the possibility of nefarious, well connected, seemingly well-to do figures, those like Charles Augustus Milverton, Sir Francis Levinson, Madame Sara, Percival Glyde, Professor Moriarty and Mr. Tulkinghorn became extensions of figures like Jonathan Wilde, emboldened and enabled by their positions and reputation, or Mr. Falkland, able to send Gines about to harass and impede the titular protagonist.⁸ In this regard, the detective is needed to separate the good from the bad, the righteous from the wicked. However, in letting the detective pursue their course, there is the possibility they may expose something scandalous about an otherwise good person: not pulling aside the veil of righteousness to make the wickedness underneath apparent, but in discovering there might be something else, something more complicated lingering underneath. Crime and detection became was to explore how social spaces become contested and conflicted: it establishes visceral stage about how those who could resolve social problems do more to sustain and perpetuate social disparities and hypocrisies by placing them in tangible, material worlds, making them real and legible.

⁸ These characters are from, respectively and beginning with Milverton, Doyle's "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton," Wood's *East Lynne*, L.T. Meade's *The Sorceress of the Strand*, Collins' *The Woman in White*, Doyle's "The Final Problem," and Dickens' *Bleak House*.

6: Chapter Outline

As discussed previously, crime and detection are prevalent in Victorian literature and take many different forms and roles in the literature, especially depending on when in the Victorian period one is focused on. As suggested above, the focus of this study is on mid-Victorian literature, specifically Realist and Sensation literature the 1850s and 1860s. This period is marked by the emergence of the Sensation novel, a predecessor to detective fiction, but the approach to displaced responsibility I am interested in is not exclusive to Sensation fiction and part of my interest is to show how the literature's use of crime and detection are not limited to a specific genre. However, in an effort to maintain some consistency in terms of methodology and argument, I decided to focus on three predominant and popular novels at the time: The three novels in question are Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-3), Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1862), and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868).

The principal criteria in selecting the novels for this study was to look for multi-novels that featured investigative subplots conducted by professionals, i.e., novels where the investigation of a crime is one plot among others. By selecting multi-plot novels, I was able to focus on works that provided multiple perspectives and relationships related to the crime and its investigation, as opposed to only focusing on the life of the criminal or the deductions of the investigation. The broader perspective gives more opportunities for the literature to demonstrate how those identified as criminals are themselves the victims and how the detective's investigation overlooks other injustices. A novel that focuses primarily on the investigation would have greater difficulty representing these social injustices because they do not provide different perspectives and experiences that

can recontextualize inter-class treatment and criminal investigations. By contrast, multi-plot novels, especially those with criminal investigations, provide insights into different perspectives on criminality, investigation, and responsibility. Because of these juxtaposed perspectives, significant comparisons can be made between characters and their situations that have gone largely unexplored by scholars and critics. This selection therefore rules out some sensation novels such as *Aurora Floyd*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and *Desperate Remedies*, and the canon of Sherlock Holmes and the work of Doyle's contemporaries because the investigations in these are directly related to the main plots. This criterion of multi-plot novels likewise rules out works that explore almost exclusively criminal and lower-class life, such as *A Child of the Jago*, and *The Nether World* because criminal investigation does not play a significant narrative role and is something that happens in the background. Nevertheless, I would suggest that such a reading is compatible with such novels. For example, Lady Audley is abandoned by her husband, George Talboys, and claims to have inherited insanity from her mother, which leads to her being committed in France rather than being arrested in England. In a multi-plot novel, where she was given as much attention as Robert Audley's investigation, her status as a victim without redress against unjust social and cultural expectations could have been emphasized more.

Of these three, only the first and third have professional detectives, Inspector Bucket and Sergeant Cuff (as well as Inspector Seegrave). *East Lynne* has none, a point lamented by R.F. Stewart: "one can easily imagine work for a detective in...*East Lynne*, but nothing materializes" (183). Nevertheless, *East Lynne* does have Archibald Carlyle, a professional and respected lawyer who does investigate on behalf of his client and in

pursuit of the actual murderer, and so the novel still has someone professionally connected with the law conducting a criminal investigation. Each of these novels likewise feature multiple plots that relate to or are impacted by institutionalized forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation and those who suffer and turn to crime and other socially unacceptable behavior as a result. This selection also provides different perspectives and emphases, as the three novels, respectively, encourage reading that focuses on how detectives influence modes of reading and how to evaluate characters in terms of victims, criminals, and villains. An additional observation with this selection is that the investigative plot becomes more central to each of the novels as a whole. The argument could be made that this selection also demonstrates the gradual evolution of detective fiction, with one genre turning into or giving way to another. This, however, is not an argument I intend to pursue in this dissertation, and such an argument would require much more than three novels across a 16-year span.

In drafting each chapter and approaching this subject matter, I have taken the following three steps. First, I considered the function of the investigative plot on its own, how it operates and defines justice, who it holds responsible for what, and who it does not hold responsible despite their connection to the crime and criminal. By doing so, I intend to show the significant role that criminal detection plays in these novels, the impact they have on the plot, characters, ideology, even if the investigation is not the central concern of the novel. These sections also help establish important relationships between individuals and groups and how they are represented in the investigations so the rest of the novel to take a different approach. Indeed, these first sections on the investigations are important because the rest of the novel deals with the characters, their crimes, and

injustices differently than the investigators themselves. Second, I will discuss the situations and conditions of those related to and impacted by the social institutions that escape the detective's scrutiny. These sections are mainly focused on how the villains legitimize their actions and dismiss the harm they cause, thereby escaping detection or investigation, and the criminalization of their victims. The fictional detectives, therefore, are not as important in these sections as the point of these sections (and, arguably the literature as well) is that the greatest injustices and those that lead to and facilitate crime are those that are beyond the purview and responsibility of the detective. Nevertheless, some references to detectives and genre will appear in these sections. Third, I consider how characters, in response to their being exploited, oppressed, or investigated, pursue alternative forms of social organization and relationship centered around care. The formation of these communities provide antitheses to the various forms of corruption otherwise represented in the literature. The specific chapters in question are as follows:

Unjustly Treated by This Monstrous System: Exploitation and Social Institutions in *Bleak House*: This chapter examines how Charles Dickens' 1852-3 novel *Bleak House* considers how the wrong people are held responsible through the corruption of public-facing social institutions, specifically the Court of Chancery and philanthropy. The novel does this by showing how corruption and manipulation can exist within social institutions and become the means to exploitation and criminalization. They thereby become the "monstrous systems" that are the means to oppression and exploitation. Of particular interest in this chapter is the difficulty scholars have had in classifying the novel in relationship to crime and detection fiction. Through this study I would argue that the novel is not so much interested in crime as it is in the criminal and those around them.

The novel's murder mystery - the death of the corrupt and scheming lawyer Mr. Tulkinghorn - provides the main example of the legitimizing power of social institutions. This occurs because the main suspects in the investigation were those whom Tulkinghorn exploited and threatened, and so the investigation inverts the victim-villain dynamic to demonstrate the hypocrisy of Tulkinghorn and his position. The exploitative and criminalizing aspects of the law and philanthropy are further explored through a comparison of two characters pursued by detectives, the manipulative Mr. Skimpole and the frustrated man from Shropshire, Gridley. The comparison of the two shows how social institutions both exploit and can be exploited and how the exploited is made the criminal. Discussion of the novel will then turn towards the hypocrisy of Telescopic Philanthropy, practiced by Mrs. Jellyby and Pardiggle, and how their endeavors leave their own homes and families in a disastrous state. The discussion of failed philanthropy contrasts with the community formation undertaken by Esther Summerson and those around her, how she was herself rescued from an abusive situation and how she continues to do the same. The discussion of Esther will of course consider how scholarship has critiqued the Victorian ideology of the domestic angel.

No Other Success Can Compensate: Familial and Domestic Failure in *East Lynne*: This chapter examines how Ellen Wood's 1860-1 sensation novel *East Lynne* suggests that misapplied managerial systems and the withholding of affection, education, and training transform the home into a space where domestic abuses can be overlooked and perpetuated. The managerial styles in question may be useful and beneficial outside the home but are misapplied and even maliciously established within the home. The result is that novel's "criminal" characters are left with neither knowledge nor resources to be

responsible for their own lives, and so seek companionship and affection outside of the home, with disastrous results. In contrast to most studies of *East Lynne*, I will take a close look at how the structure of Richard Hare's plot as a convict (wrongfully) charged with murder prefigures and prepares readers for Isabel Vane's plot of domestic despair, her adultery and abandonment of her family, and eventual return in disguise. I will argue that the two plots produce compelling parallels between the two characters that have been ignored by scholarship. In doing so, the chapter will focus on and draw comparisons between the different domestic authority figures in the novel and their various forms of tyranny and neglect. Specifically, how Justice Hare rules his home like his courtroom; a comparison between Lord William Vane's neglectful profligacy and Cornelia Carlyle's abusive frugality and the demoralizing impact these have on Lady Isabel; and the professionalized spousal neglect of Archibald Carlyle, in facilitating the means through which his wife, Lady Isabel, is seduced. In contrast to these misguided managerial forms, the novel's closing chapters depict the reformation of communities by introducing forgiveness into domestic spaces where it was otherwise absent to reconfigure the management of the domestic space.

To Analyze the Abominable Impossibility: The Criminality of Good Intentions in *The Moonstone*: This chapter examines how Wilkie Collins' 1868 novel, *The Moonstone*, raises the possibility that the social and cultural mechanisms and practices that allow for oppressive forces are so ingrained in the minds, beliefs, and cultures of the characters that they never consider how their actions could be perpetuating oppressive customs and practices as people because they are well-intended. In other words, the novel's subtle critique is not just about empire, but also about how individuals are complicit with or

culpable of other crimes and wrongdoings as they inherit both the material boons of these crimes as well as the ideologies and practices that justify them. For example, Godfrey Ablewhite, the novel's duplicitous, deceitful thief does not actively oppress or criminalize anyone, but Gabriel Betteredge's refusal to believe that a servant could love a gentleman indirectly contributes to Rosanna Spearman's suffering and death. The novel establishes this through the investigative discussion between Blake and Betteredge about Colonel John Herncastle's motives for leaving the titular Moonstone to his niece and how their conclusions are moot and reflect more on them and others than on the colonel, showing how though individuals may express concern over the intentions or actions of others, their main concern is in ensuring their own good standing. The chapter will then focus on the novel's narration and how this "family matter" (21) is told by those distantly and professionally related to the family and how these narrators try to ingratiate themselves with the Verinder family through their narration and exculpate themselves from any harm they may have caused. From there, the chapter will consider the possibility that Franklin Blake, though cleared of the crime, may be the novel's Sensational villain. The possibility that he is the villain stems from his relationships with Rachel Verinder and Rosanna Spearman, two women who are willing to compromise their social and physical wellbeing for him and without his knowledge, by contrasting him with Godfrey Ablewhite, and from his similarity with the villains in other Sensational novels. Community formation is achieved through collaborative efforts, both scientific and investigative to find the moonstone, in contrast to Cuff and Seegrave's disagreements and the dissolution of the Verinder state in the wake thereof, a collaboration which juxtaposes the Indians and their successful return of the diamond.

2: UNJUSTLY TREATED BY THIS MONSTROUS SYSTEM:
EXPLOITATION AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN *BLEAK HOUSE*

1: A Mystery Story?

The status of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* as a detective novel is somewhat of a contested issue. John McBratney stated, "although *Bleak House* is about the detection of a crime, it is not a detective novel in the pure sense of the term" (61). Robert A Donovan claimed the Lady Dedlock plot fits "the typical pattern of the detective story" (190). R.F. Stewart remarks "*Bleak House* has a whodunit sub-plot only" (214) making the mystery a secondary part of a much larger whole. In terms of genre, Melissa Free, in an article about *The Moonstone* states "Inspector Bucket...is often cited as the first detective to appear in English Literature, but *Bleak House* is not predominantly a novel of detection...*The Moonstone* is the first of a *genre*" ("Dirty Linen" 363). Looking beyond the plotting and genre of the novel, Simon Joyce suggests reading *Bleak House* as a detective story reduces it to "an overemphasis on the linear unfolding of its mystery plots, and on the role of Bucket in their resolution" (130). This statement echoes a simpler one made by Patrick Brantlinger: "*Bleak House* is among other things a murder mystery" ("What is 'Sensational'" 22). Most damning may be John G. Cawelti's assessment: "the element of investigation of mystery is so completely subordinated to other narrative interests in this novel that *Bleak House* is no more a detective story than *Crime and Punishment*" (136). This statement from Cawelti is reasonable as he focuses on the formulas codified in crime and detective fiction, nor is it an inaccurate assessment of the novel's interest in crime and detection (or what later readers have come to expect from

the genre). However, while the “other narrative interests” may clog the novel’s potential to be a detective story, we nevertheless find the elements of Cawelti’s formula therein: Inspector Bucket as detective; Tulkinghorn as Victim; Mr. George and Lady Dedlock as suspects; and Hortense as the criminal. The chapters on Bucket’s investigation could possibly be excised with little trouble or revision and the result could very well be a self-contained detective story.

As for the "other narrative interests," the novel prioritizes Esther and Lady Dedlock's shared past and the fate of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Bucket may assume a significant role after Tulkinghorn’s murder, but it is temporary and complicates other plots – plots that complicate the limited perspective provided by Bucket. Once Bucket’s investigation overtakes the novel, we should be primed to read against the grain. A reading centered on the detective would do, would be to overlook the many connections previously presented in the novel but lack evidentiary value to Bucket’s investigation. As Caroline Levine remarks, these connections are not limited to words spoken together, sharing a scene, or appearing in the same space, but legal, medical, professional, and philanthropic, and other connections, and how focusing on Bucket would be to focus exclusively or predominantly on the legal, making other connections and interactions secondary (126). Similarly, George Levine described the novel as “Dickens’ most elaborate working out of the way all things are connected and connected by virtue of mutual dependence and relationship” (147), and the novel does not center on the life and fortunes of a single or small set of relations, the novel is a sprawling engagement of many different lives, all negatively affected by corrupt public-serving social institutions. Bucket’s investigation thereby becomes an important reading of characters and

relationships, but importantly an incomplete one: a reminder that there is much more connected to this mystery than the “narrow tack of blood” (805; ch.53) Bucket pursues.

These connections are, of course, shaped and influenced by the aforementioned “public-serving social institutions,” or institutions that perform work on behalf of those who may not be able to accomplish it themselves, specifically the Court of Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. Ostensibly, these social institutions are designed to ameliorate wrongs and injustices, but they are susceptible to corruption and misuse. Rather than benefit those in need, they enable the injustices, committed by pecuniary and self-aggrandizing villains, the Boodles, Coodles, and Doodles of London life, while the supposed beneficiaries are then exploited, becoming the victims of the very social institutions which ought to provide aid and support. By performing obligatory services – court is held; bills sent; contracts signed; visits made; etc. – these social institutions operate as legitimate as they act like criminal cabals. Attempts to strike back prove ineffective: when characters do stand against those who cause them harm, they become criminals, and where there are criminals, there are victims (such as Mr. Tulkinghorn) and detectives. There is a Mr. George, but no Saint George to slay the novel's dragons (or megalosauruses). Therefore, to better understand how the novel represents this enshrined criminality, I would suggest looking for the novel's victims rather than its detectives and exploring the reasons why these victims are mistreated and why they have no form of redress. Hence, the monstrous system: its operations are justified and so never held accountable for its disastrous ends.

Despite the many victimizations and exploitations, the novel nevertheless provides many examples of characters who do improve the lives of others, and do so

without striking out against the novel's villains. Esther and others may provide examples of care and support, they cannot address the problems that disenfranchise the novel's victims. Esther may provide Caddy Jellyby a sympathetic ear and attend to domestic matters in the brickmaker's home, but she can do nothing to reprimand or correct Mrs. Jellyby and Pardiggle. Rather than correct or reprimand villains, Esther supplements and accommodates their victims. In contrast to the exploitative systems of Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy, Esther Summerson becomes the central figure in the novel's depiction of a care community, a system dependent on mutual understanding and support. Though Esther's status as a typical domestic angel is problematic and presents an unrealistic and unhealthy depiction of womanhood, she still presents a way of life and social engagement indicative of concern for others and offering refuge from exploitation. She may not replace the monstrous systems of Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy, but, through her marriage, newfound family, charitable efforts, and friendships, she establishes an appealing (if problematic) alternative.

In this chapter, I will look at how characters exploit social institutions and those dependent on them for their self-gratification. In doing so, many characters fill multiple roles, i.e., both criminal and victim depending on the perspective, with society as depicted in the novel taking a different perspective than that of the novel itself. I will first look at how Bucket's investigation shows how social institutions use their legitimizing facades to enable abusers to maintain their pretenses of innocence. Second, I will consider how two secondary characters in the novel - Gridley and Harold Skimpole - demonstrate how social institutions use their positions to exploit and victimize others. In the third and fourth sections, I will look at how the novel's various domestic and

philanthropic subplots provide for a different type of heroism through the charitable and domestic (if problematic) example of Esther Summerson, through her contrast with Mrs. Pardiggle, Mrs. Jellyby, and her Aunt Barbary, and the formation of a new family.

2: Privileged Access: A Murder Investigation and Institutional Legitimization

As a police inspector and operative for Mr. Tulkinghorn, Inspector Bucket has privileged access to people and places. The main examples of Bucket fulfilling his detective responsibilities place him in close proximity with the solicitor Mr. Tulkinghorn: gathering information from Jo, executing a warrant on Gridley, and pursuing Tulkinghorn's murderer (even Bucket's chiding of Chadband and Mrs. Snagsby is tangential to this as it concerns their treatment of Jo and Mr. Snagsby, his first appearance in the novel). In doing so, the novel firmly places Bucket in relationship with the law, even if the novel does not explicitly state that he is an official police inspector.⁹ Bucket's association with Tulkinghorn and his privileged access has the consequence of each legitimizing the other: Bucket's pursuit of Jo and Gridley are sanctioned activities because they come directly from Mr. Tulkinghorn, a solicitor of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Bucket legitimizes Tulkinghorn's narrative position as a victim by pursuing his murderer. However, while Bucket may have privileged access to people and places, this does not make his perspective absolute or complete. Rather than seeing everything for what it is –

⁹ While Bucket's professionalism is never questioned whether or not he is an official policeman is not confirmed in the novel, though it is largely taken for granted by critics and scholars that he is. Brownson, in *The Figure of the Detective* describes Bucket as a private investigator as he is hired by Tulkinghorn, but this overlooks the ambiguous role early detectives filled. As Shpayer-Makov discusses, it was not uncommon for early official detectives to do private work on the side (25).

the responsibility of the London Narrator – Bucket’s professional interests shape his interpretations of events and characters, limiting his scope and setting his perspectives against the rest of the novel and subverting his own privileged access and his contributions to the legitimization of Tulkinghorn and Chancery.

As one with privileged access to people and places, Bucket has been compared to the Foucauldian panopticism, most notably by D.A. Miller in *The Novel and the Police*. Miller relied on Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* to consider how “not unlike the novel, the new police has charge of a ‘world’ and a ‘plot’” and reads the novelist as someone “whose activity is also conceived as a penetration of social surfaces” (23). Miller suggests that once Bucket begins his investigation into Tulkinghorn’s murder, the dynamics of the novel shift from a social to a detective narrative (69) and aggrandizes Bucket, especially in contrast to his amateur counterparts: “one must register the general failure of the amateur detectives in *Bleak House* to impose a will to truth and power. Anecdotally, their stories all reach a final point of checkmate” and cites Guppy, Krook, Tulkinghorn, even Mrs. Snagsby as unsuccessful examples of amateurish detection (70). Miller attributes their failures to individualized egocentric perspectives in contrast to Bucket’s own panoptic perspective. Considering some of the novel’s descriptions of Bucket, there is little wonder Foucault’s principles of discipline and panopticism were appealing. Miller identifies statements such as, “Time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket” (803; ch.53), “He has a keen eye for a crowd—as for what not?—and looking here and there, now from this side of the carriage, now from the other, now up at the house windows, now along the people’s heads, nothing escapes him” (804; ch.53), both of which are quoted by Miller. Additionally, Bucket “mounts a high tower in his mind and

looks out far and wide. Many solitary figures he perceives creeping through the streets” (864; ch.56) and one contemporary reviewer remarked how Bucket “can find out anything. See him in the streets, in the daytime. Follow him at night...he will infallibly reach what he is seeking” (qtd. in Joyce 130). Similarly, Peter Thoms, who takes a similar Foucauldian approach, states Bucket “desires...to follow the bloody track to the murderer and thus to possess the entire story of the crime, but he also craves more localized authority over the individual” (148), using Bucket’s pursuit of Hortense as evidence for disciplinary panopticism and his “desire for the narrative and thus for the private identity of another” (149).

Ironically, while Bucket may desire the “entire story of the crime” and authority over Hortense, it is within his professional scope to do so. However, he looks no further: he does not extend his view to consider Hortense’s situation. By contrast, the novel encourages more extensive reading as it traces its many unaddressed victimizations and criminalizations. For Bucket, it is the story of the crime - but no further. There is no space for Bucket, for example, to follow the example of Allan Woodcourt and provide care for the ailing orphan Jo. This is not Doyle’s “Blue Carbuncle” or “Devil’s Foot” where Sherlock Holmes gains knowledge of a broader narrative so he can offer compassion to the criminal. Whatever clarity Bucket provides dissipates through the dissolving of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, the death of Richard, and the inefficacy of Telescopic Philanthropy. Clarity is therefore found in failure, dissolution, disenchantment, and death as illuminates exploited and exploitable connections: characters don’t simply die, but die as a result of others’ unmitigated actions. What becomes clear is not the identity of the

criminal but why there is no recourse or punishment for the villain. The novel looks beyond the crime to reveal greater injustices.

The emphasis the novel gives to Bucket's investigation points to a limited conceptualization of crime and criminality, shaped by institutional, legal, and professional standards. Bucket's narrow focus is an antithesis to the novel's own narrative interests, a denial of how "the mysteries in *Bleak House* point to the larger mysteries of community and isolation, love and selfishness" (Brantlinger, "What is 'Sensational'" 20). The novel's multi-plot structure becomes a way to remind readers of the more complex lives and circumstances of those caught up in the investigation so when Bucket encounters them, the reader can understand them as complex characters whose interactions take them into numerous social spheres. In doing so, the novel presents them as victims of social abuses and not simply as criminals. This includes the suspects in Bucket's investigation and those tangentially related to it, such as the Bagnets, the brickmaker's family and associates, and even Sir Leicester Dedlock. Of course, what marks Bucket's suspects apart is their shared suffering directly under Mr. Tulkinghorn.

Bucket therefore does not represent Foucauldian panopticism. Though Mark Knight, in a 2009 review of trends in the study of Sensation fiction gives a privileged space to Foucault and Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (328), and discusses Foucault's dominating presence, this has not stopped scholars such as Pam Morris, Yumna Siddiqi, and Brian McCuskey, among others, from looking at ways to complicate Foucauldian readings of *Bleak House*, detection, and discipline in the Victorian novel. These criticisms just two years after *The Novel and the Police* was published, when Robert W.

Pendelton's 1990 essay "The Detective's Languishing Forefinger" asserted "by limiting his critical focus almost exclusively to the dynamics of power, Miller finally distorts the novel" (312) even if Pendelton prioritizes and overemphasizes Bucket's contributions to narrative resolution. Similarly, Kathleen Blake claims, "it is most ill-considered and anti-historical to associate Chancery with the police as panoptical institutions as Miller does" and "Miller superimposes Foucault's Panopticon, ignoring elements of Bentham's" (3). Lauren Goodlad's essay "Is There a Pastor in the *House*?" uses Dickens' interest in sanitary reform and praise of the London police to complicate Miller's arguments. Simon Joyce responds with "anything which might point to a critique of the institutions and apparatuses of power will be automatically dismissed [by Miller], as irrelevant to a reading which presumes the novel's adherence to the developing conventions of classical detective fiction" (130) and elsewhere cites Bucket's inability to contain Jo as "symptomatic of a larger failure to contain the threat of urban poverty" (137). If Miller's aim with his Foucauldian reading is to consider how Bucket and policing measures contain and restrict, the novel is full of examples where this is not the case. Looking beyond *Discipline and Punish* and the panopticon, Lauren Goodlad, rejects Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* on similar historical grounds. In her 2003 book, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society*, (complete with a chapter entitled "Beyond the Panopticon"), Goodlad cites different social and political movements in England from those in France and argues Foucault's later work on governmentality is more fitting for the study of nineteenth-century England.

Rather than an institutionalized panoptiocism, Bucket represents a professionalized myopia. Whether it is pursuing Jo, Tulkinghorn's murderer, or Lady

Dedlock, once Bucket has a task before him, he works towards its end - without looking beyond it. This myopia contrasts with the novel's primary narrators: Esther Summerson and the heterodiegetic London Narrator.¹⁰ Esther experiences what is around her and is not concerned with drawing conclusions but with helping those she encounters. The London Narrator's perspective could be described as panoptic, but they cannot intervene, nor do the observed know they are observed. For a panoptic system to work, the observed must know they are being watched and to know that there can be repercussions for improper conduct. The London Narrator shows how people conduct themselves when they think no one is watching. The rebuttal to this might be that, even if Bucket himself lacks this panoptic vision, his position as a police detective aligns him with the panopticism of social institutions, especially as a response to Robert Peel's proposal for a police force was fear that a police force could become a domestic spy network, seeing precedents in the French police (Shpayer-Makov 29). Instead, Bucket's position means there are certain limits or boundaries that dovetail with his goal-oriented approach to his cases and differs from the novel's narrators. The same argument about institutionalized panopticism also could be said of Tulkinghorn.

Tulkinghorn's efforts at a more panoptic perspective, with himself as the untouchable man in the observation tower, precipitates his own murder. A more dutiful solicitor, suspicious of a client's being exposed to scandal (as in the case of Lady Dedlock) may have sought additional information as well as the client's permission to act and with the intention of protecting the client from potential scandal. Contrast with

¹⁰ I previously used the same term to describe this narrator in my article, "A Novel of Displacement: Seeking Spatial Justice in *Bleak House's* Consequential Ground" (2021).

Sherlock Holmes being hired to secure scandalous documents held by Charles Augustus Milverton in the story of the same name. Where Holmes is a paragon of justice and detection, Tulkinghorn is, in the words of Brenda Welch, “the archetype of legal malfeasance” (51). Welch suggests Tulkinghorn fails in his role as a lawyer by his overreaching behavior and disregard of his contractual relationship with Lady Dedlock, especially since she was his client before becoming his victim (57). Rather than protect his clients out of professional obligation, Tulkinghorn seeks out information that he does not have permission to access and he does so to protect the client with greater resources, and the greatest advantage to himself: “Tulkinghorn is more than willing...to sacrifice Lady Dedlock’s interests in order to preserve Sir Leicester’s, which behavior, we could say, is not really a preservation of interests but a perversion of interests” (Welch 58). Any panopticism Tulkinghorn represents is an overreaching abuse of his legal position. This is likewise how Tulkinghorn sees Jo, Mr. George, and even Inspector Bucket. They either possess information that can link Nemo, Hawdon, and Lady Dedlock, or are at his disposal to go where he may not.

Where Bucket’s investigation implies George, Lady Dedlock, and Hortense could be suspects, the novel presents them as victims. Bucket targets them because they have reason to wish Tulkinghorn harm because Tulkinghorn had used his position to exploit them and deter their seeking redress against him. In other words, of course George, Lady Dedlock, and Hortense are suspects of Tulkinghorn’s murder when Tulkinghorn made each of them miserable and they were left without means to counter or repudiate him. He did not keep his word to Hortense to find her a new position; he threatened the Bagnets to pressure Mr. George into giving up Hawdon’s letters; all to blackmail Lady Dedlock.

Had one not already died and another lacking the wherewithal to carry out the deed, Gridley and Jo could have been suspects because they too suffered under Tulkinghorn. The result subverts the notion that detectives solve problems as Bucket reads these characters in both reasonable and justified ways but cast them contrary to how the novel depicts them.

Each of these three suspects represents a different relationship to guilt which plays out in their criminalizations: the innocent but wrongly accused; the guilty of something else; and the actual murderer. George is the innocent individual who is wrongly arrested, even if the suspicion is not unwarranted. When providing his detective's exposition to Sir Leicester Dedlock, Bucket states that he "took George into custody as having been seen hanging about there on the night, and at very night the time of the murder, also as having been overheard in high words with the deceased on former occasions—even threatening him" (833; ch.54) despite the threats being a misattribution of Tulkinghorn's clerk while discussing Gridley with George (833; ch.54). While these circumstances are enough for Bucket to arrest George, it does not mean that Bucket believes George to be guilty: "If you ask me, Sir Leicester Dedlock, whether from the first I believed George to be the murderer, I tell you candidly no, but he might be, notwithstanding, and there was enough against him to make it my duty to take him and get him kept under remand" (833; ch.54). George as the murderer is not an unwarranted conclusion (even if it is based on inaccurate information) and shows where Bucket's focus lies: his duty. Duty-bound by the law, Bucket focuses on who killed Tulkinghorn, meaning that just as he may arrest George as a suspect, he is likewise obliged to ignore much of what the novel has revealed about George. Bucket's criminalization of George

rests on the possibility that George is the murderer, and that Bucket can exploit George's possible guilt to further his own ends, namely, finding the murderer, while there is nothing George can do but comply. The rest of George's story - that he is George Rouncewell, his family serves in Chesney Wold, was a soldier, friend to the Bagnets, Jo, Allan Woodcourt, etc., to quote Bucket, "don't signify any more, so I'll not go into it" (835; ch.54). This means that Bucket likewise is obliged not to consider the circumstances that placed Tulkinghorn and George in proximity, or rather, the circumstances that made it possible for George to be targeted in the first place - letters that would link Nemo with Hawdon. When George refuses to deliver the letters, Tulkinghorn has his associate Smallweed call in debts from the Bagnets, which jeopardizes their livelihood, blackmailing George into relinquishing the letters. George is still guilty of no crime, but his proximity with the villainous Tulkinghorn brings him into proximity with the murder and its consequences: his proximity to and dislike of Tulkinghorn are enough to make him a suspect.

The criminalization of Lady Dedlock, by contrast, is of a different form than Mr. George's. Rather than an innocent party, Lady Dedlock has a scandalous secret sexual history. This may not be "criminal," but for Lady Dedlock, married to a baronet and eminent in the "world of fashion," exposure would be as bad, if not worse, than a criminal charge. Unlike George and Hortense, Lady Dedlock is neither accused nor suspected by Bucket. Nevertheless, Lady Dedlock believes that Bucket comes to Chesney Wold to arrest her because of the note declaring "Lady Dedlock, Murderess" as part of Hortense's efforts to frame her (835; ch.54). Lady Dedlock believes she has two disastrous possibilities: either she will be wrongly identified as the murderer, or her

sexual history will be exposed, and either outcome will mean her marriage and life will both be ruined. With no recourse against either of these (presumed) possibilities, she flees and is pursued, only to die in disguise, possibly of exposure, at her lover's grave. The nature of her death is as ambiguous as those of Gridley ("worn out") and Jo, but there is little doubt that it was related to her exposure to the elements, ironic considering the scandal of her hidden (or disguised) sexual history would have been an exposure itself she could neither counter nor recover from. Tulkinghorn may not rely on a lie to criminalize her as Hortense does, but the effect is the same: she believes herself criminalized and thereby denied recourse. Hortense, on the other hand, is ignorant of Lady Dedlock's sexual history, but knows that she was affiliated with and wronged by Tulkinghorn so she may displace guilt onto her despised Lady Dedlock. Lady Dedlock, like George, is thereby made a criminal through association with Tulkinghorn and by being connected with his death.

The criminalization of Hortense offers an important contrast George and Lady Dedlock because Hortense is guilty of Tulkinghorn's murder. The contrast, however, is not in how her criminalization differs from George and Lady Dedlock's, but in their shared status as Tulkinghorn's victims. When Hortense confronts Tulkinghorn about his promise to find her a good situation, he reneges and dismisses her, refusing to consider that there could be negative repercussions for doing so, stating that she could do no more than harass him. As a solicitor, Tulkinghorn believes that the law and his profession, the same institutional position which enabled him to exploit Lady Dedlock and others, will protect him from recourse. The novel establishes this with an earlier precedent: Gridley. When Gridley threatens Tulkinghorn, Tulkinghorn turns the law against him, with Bucket

pursuing him with a warrant. Tulkinghorn solves his problem with Gridley by making it unsafe for Gridley to show his face and criminalizing any effort at retaliation.

Tulkinghorn's response to Hortense is similar: he can have her locked away, forced onto a treadmill as a criminal, and thereby break her spirit. Tulkinghorn's reference to the treadmill means that, as Rachel Ernst points out, Hortense is little more than a body to be used to exhibit Lady Dedlock's dress: "Instead of asserting itself as the human subject, with power over the wearable objects, the body of the 'female figure' is rejected while the identity of the clothing is maintained. Even once Hortense is named as the model, the men who paid her to exhibit her clothing consistently reject her body" (507-8). This rejection continues when Hortense confronts Tulkinghorn. After pointing out that he and Mr. Snagsby need not endure her harassing visits, Tulkinghorn brandishes the key to his wine cellar and declares "It is a large key, but the keys of prisons are larger. In this city there are houses of correction (where the treadmills are, for women), the gates of which are very strong and heavy, and no doubt the keys too. I am afraid a lady of your spirit and activity would find it an inconvenience to have one of those keys turned upon her for any length of time" (667; ch.42). In doing so, Tulkinghorn bastardizes her pursuit of justice - to have the promise made be fulfilled - into a criminal act of harassment and trespass, acts that, in some ways, Tulkinghorn himself is guilty of. Hortense is therefore denied justice because any attempt she may make to achieve it will be used to criminalize her. Though roughly a century and an ocean separate them, Tulkinghorn's approach is a bastardization of the Miranda Rights of the United States - "Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law."

Ernst's observations of Mademoiselle Hortense being little more than a body extend further to her narrative role when she frames Lady Dedlock. Someone must be guilty of Tulkinghorn's murder, so it might as well be Lady Dedlock. She is there to round out the patterns and formulas of detection, and by making her frame and hate Lady Dedlock, Dickens can avoid making a murderer into the hero who kills the villain. The novel is filled with characters who fill these various roles - heroes, villains, victims, criminals, and detectives - many occupying more than one, but no one is both criminal and hero. By filling her with hate, Dickens denies Hortense martyrdom: to quote Kathleen Blake, "her personal motivations for murder, concerning money, mistreatment, and a job" are opposed to any pursuit of justice (15), as opposed to Lady Dedlock having a child out of wedlock, which Blake calls "the most direct threat to patrimony. It is rebellion" (12): Hortense may retaliate, but she does not rise to ideological rebellion. By contrast, we can sympathize with Gridley despite his violence because he acts out of frustration against those who wronged him, in a form of legal-judicial rebellion. Had she killed Tulkinghorn and left it at that, she could have escaped, but her malice towards Lady Dedlock and her doing so under Bucket's own roof and under his wife's scrutiny are what lead to her arrest. Much like Tulkinghorn, her own overreach, an effort at something approximating panopticism, is her downfall, not intervention facilitated by panoptic oversight. While there is some satisfaction in having Tulkinghorn and the threats he represents removed, there is also satisfaction in having someone who would turn to murder be apprehended and her hatred both verified and condemned through her framing Lady Dedlock. The murder mystery becomes a way for the novel to offer a

satisfactory resolution, to hold the villainous but socially and institutionally secure Tulkynghorn to account for his evil without further sullyng the hands of Lady Dedlock.

The examples of how Bucket's investigation criminalizes Mr. George, Lady Dedlock, and Hortense show how those empowered by social institutions can disempower others and prevent recourse against them. Bucket's role as detective is technically to provide recourse to those in need, but there are no grounds for him to do so and no benefit for Tulkynghorn's victims to find redress through other means. Returning to the Sherlock Holmes story "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton," we see Holmes and Watson meet with the infamous blackmailer at the behest of a client. It quickly becomes clear that there is nothing Holmes' client can do to improve her situation, as even going to the police would not prevent Milverton from releasing the scandalous information, prompting Holmes to burgle Milverton's estate and steal the papers (though he and Watson destroy all Milverton's documents after witnessing his murder). Appropriately enough, the story ends with Lestrade approaching Holmes seeking his advice. Holmes responds that

Well, I'm afraid I can't help you, Lestrade... The fact is that I knew this fellow Milverton, that I considered him one of the most dangerous men in London, and that I think there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch, and which therefore, to some extent, justify private revenge.... My sympathies are with the criminals rather than with the victim, and I will not handle this case. (148)

Holmes' remarks point to the popularity of private investigators in fiction – the ability to pick and choose and even romanticize what might otherwise be criminal for the sake of adventure or some alternative interpretation of justice.

Much like Holmes in “Milverton,” *Bleak House* encourages a sympathetic perspective of the criminals in the novel, and even Inspector Bucket shows sympathy when he volunteers to seek out the disappeared Lady Dedlock. Nevertheless, as a detective, he is concerned with two things: the crime and his investigation. This emphasis almost forces a reconsideration of the events of the novel - a reconsideration the novel rejects. Bucket’s investigation shows that the problems of the novel persist not through corruption alone but through legitimization. The harder one pushes against the violence of social institutions, the harder the institutions (or those empowered by them) push back. Once Tulkinghorn is murdered, it falls to Bucket to investigate, but he only needs to know who committed the crime - who broke the law, not the finances, wellbeing, lives, or spirits of others. Bucket establishes a context that centers around a murder and so looks for those who fit the formula. Bucket himself is the detective, Tulkinghorn the victim, and so there must be a guilty murderer somewhere. Unfortunately, this context reads the novel’s primary villain as a victim, providing a completely different context from the rest of the novel. The problem this raises is that the suspects have suffered under Tulkinghorn’s cold indifference. The novel makes this an unsatisfying conclusion and encourages resistance against Bucket’s rearranging of character roles. Bucket may find Tulkinghorn’s murderer, but he does not even turn his attention towards the evil Tulkinghorn has done, let alone expunge it from the world, nor does he save Lady Dedlock, who “becomes the suffering heroine of a maternal melodrama and dies in a lurid episode” (Cvetkovich 53). Similarly, Bucket may deliver the will from Smallweed to Jarndyce but not in time for it to be of any value. Limited to a single individual in a corrupt system, Bucket is always too late and can never do enough, described by

McBratney not as a panoptic force, but as “the fraught embodiment of detection gone wrong” (68). Bucket is the ambivalence of the social institutions made flesh, and not that he is ambivalent, but that he must act so, and appropriately so as an operative within the police force. The constraints on him as a police detective constrain the criminals and investigations he may pursue. Removing these constraints from Bucket may broaden the investigation and show how the criminal may be a victim, but it also opens the way for corruption and violence. You cannot give Bucket more ways to win without giving Tulkinghorn the same opportunities to exploit. This also sets him apart from many of the fictional detectives who would follow: where Bucket is constrained by his position, amateur detectives gain a measure of freedom to look beyond the crime and closer align to the values espoused in and the narrative pursued in the novel. Remove the constraints of the social institution and other courses may be pursued.

3: Criminalized, Criminalization: Gridley and Skimpole

While Hortense may be the novel’s clearest example of a murderer, she is not the only criminal in the novel. Two other characters face the prospect of arrest in the novel: Gridley and Harold Skimpole. Both are presented as having significant histories relative to their respective crimes, which are, respectively, threats and enactments of assault against Chancery personnel, and debt. Their actions bring the attention of police officials and the prospect of arrest. For Gridley it is Bucket himself in response to a warrant issued after Gridley assaulted Tulkinghorn, though Gridley admits to a history of such assaults and arrests. For Skimpole, it is Coavinses, who comes upon Skimpole to take him to jail over a matter of “twenty-four pound, sixteen, and sevenpence ha’penny” (95; ch.6).

Though Skimpole is only threatened with arrest once in the novel, it establishes his approach to money to people. Gridley and Skimpole are quite different characters; one made irascible by an unending Chancery case, and the other interested only in his own pleasure; but in juxtaposition, the two demonstrate how the novel depicts criminality and responsibility as access points to the two main social institutions the novel critiques: the Court of Chancery and Philanthropy.

Gridley is the novel's clearest example of a criminal. According to Tulkinghorn, Gridley is "a threatening, murderous, dangerous fellow" (445; ch.27) and his own description of himself: "I am violent, I know. I ought to know it. I have been in prison for contempt of court. I have been in prison for threatening the solicitor. I have been in this trouble, and that trouble, and shall be again" (252; ch.15) and Bucket recounts how he had "come into court, twenty afternoons for no other purpose than to see you [Gridley] pin the Chancellor like a bull-dog? Don't you remember when you first began to threaten the lawyers, and the peace was sworn against you two or three times a week?" The situation Gridley finds himself in, with a warrant after him for having threatened Tulkinghorn ("We are not to be put in bodily fear" [259; ch.16]), situates him as a violent criminal and shows that his assault on Tulkinghorn is not an isolated incidence but that it is another instance in a pattern of Gridley's criminal recidivism. That his criminality centers around Chancery and solicitors makes him doubly threatening: he poses a risk not just to people or society generally, but to the institutions of law and order themselves.

However, the novel's first depiction of Gridley is not of a volatile, threatening, murderous bulldog. The narrator identifies Gridley as a party in Chancery court with the cryptic appellation "The Man from Shropshire," distinguishing him from the unnamed

Chancellor and appropriately named Mr. Tangle (who never reappears). As “the Man from Shropshire” Gridley is neither “the Man from Chancery” nor “The Man from London.” He is a displaced peculiarity, an outsider removed from his own space, making him a stranger entwined in the institutionalized indifference of Chancery. We see not just Gridley’s suffering, but also the court that refuses to listen to him, as each of his three pleas of “My Lord!” (16, 18 ,19; ch.1) are answered with derision and laughter. At the first, “A few lawyers' clerks and others who know this suitor by sight linger on the chance of his furnishing some fun and enlivening the dismal weather a little,” turning him into a sort of clown or jester for their amusement. At the second, “Maces, bags, and purses indignantly proclaim silence and frown at the man from Shropshire”, he is thereafter silenced by the materials and emblems of the institution while another case is discussed. And at the third, “the Chancellor, being aware of him, has dexterously vanished. Everybody else quickly vanishes too” (19; ch.1). As the Chancellor and others vanish, the court is locked up with Gridley’s suit going unattended, despite his being a familiar presence there. None responds to or addresses his concern, despite the chancellor’s “being aware of him.” This is an entirely different depiction of Gridley from the threatening, volatile figure presented elsewhere, and a significantly more sympathetic individual - one who suffers under the unjust scorn and indignity of Chancery’s regular practitioners and beneficiaries, rather than finding the justice the institution promises. Without a name, Gridley is denied his identity, reduced to an attribute, signaling that he is not of Chancery, separate from the prisoner and those who seek a joke, proclaim silence, and vanish.

As an individual on foreign soil, he is unaware of the customs and practices of Chancery and unfamiliar with centuries old protocols. He stands apart, uninitiated to Chancery's methods and therefore is an easy target. Gridley's situation highlights how Chancery is the amalgamation of interconnected groups or communities. He gains nothing in his petitions and yet can turn nowhere for aid. According to sociologist Anthony P. Cohen, communities "draw conventions of community about them, like a cloak around the shoulders, to protect them from the elements — *other* people's way of doing things, other cultures, other communities" (63). Communities strive to protect and maintain certain standards and achieve their goals. Gridley is the contrary outsider, who, if they were to concede and give in, would jeopardize their stable operation "making itself seem a normal, even inevitable, part of the processes of the world" (MacDuffie 98). Through Gridley and Chancery, *Bleak House* shows how some individuals and communities may be content and stable, whereas others may seek to improve their status, gain more resources, and some are willing to do so to the detriment of others, while all will have some investment in guarding against and eliminating potential threats.

The novel turns Chancery - the Court of Equity - into the primary source of criminalization and corruption. To exemplify this, the London Narrator situates Chancery in the center of London and its penetrative fog. The novel's first chapter depicts the city as an impersonal, remote, and stratified space, using incomplete sentences to depict the physical, social, legal, and political spheres as massive but incomplete spaces that inevitably lead to Chancery. From atop the fog, the London Narrator focuses on how the Court of Chancery is where "in the midst of the mud and at the heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor" (14; ch.1). Situating the Lord High Chancellor in the heart of the

fog mixes social with physical and makes the law obscure, obfuscating, and penetrating. Matthew Beaumont suggests “the Lord Chancellor is not so much flesh and blood, and not so much some ‘fellow-creature’, as an almost spiritual being” (814). Though there is something spiritual in the way the unnamed Lord Chancellor is not depicted in bodily terms, it is as if he is the spirit of the place, some enigmatic entity that possesses whatever it encounters. The novel binds the Lord Chancellor, Chancery, and ecology when he addresses Mr. Tangle, who answers the Lord Chancellor with “Mlud,” a contraction of “My lord” resembling “mud” or even “my mud,” echoing the chapter’s early statements about “the muddy streets” (14; ch.1). It is as impossible to escape the fog and mud as it is to escape Chancery (18; ch.1).

The London fog is, of course, not a natural phenomenon. It is the product of rampant coal burning, governmental indifference, industrialization, and the rapid migration from rural to urban areas. Over the course of the Victorian period, the ratio of people living in rural as opposed to urban areas inverted from 5 to 1 to 1 to 5 (Perkin 3). Gridley himself is among those who have moved, albeit involuntarily, from his land in Shropshire to London, suggesting that even those outside of London are subject to the pull of the administrative force of Chancery from which, to quote Norbert Elias, “the seat of the monopoly ruler, that all the threads of a major network of interdependencies run together; here, at this particular social nexus, more and longer chains of action intersect than at any other point in the web” (388). Chancery is the “social nexus” through which everyone must, one way or another, engage with the Lord High Chancellor as autocrat, and all others beholden to him. Though Chancery may not be the type of aristocratic court Elias examines, it is a court in that people are expected and required to attend, and

the influence exercised by this court extends outward, perpetually impacting others. Those in Chancery are disembodied, entangled, made interchangeable because their individuality doesn't matter: they exist to serve the system, to enact and enable its corruption. Tulkinghorn is just one manifestation of it, a specter of Chancery made flesh. A villain, but only an aspect of villainy.

As someone repeatedly dismissed, scorned, and mocked, and yet obliged to attend for the sake of his suit, it is little wonder Gridley remarks

I was a good-enough-tempered man once, I believe. People in my part of the country say they remember me so, but now I must have this vent under my sense of injury or nothing could hold my wits together. It would be far better for you, Mr. Gridley,' the Lord Chancellor told me last week, 'not to waste your time here, and to stay, usefully employed, down in Shropshire.' 'My Lord, my Lord, I know it would,' said I to him, 'and it would have been far better for me never to have heard the name of your high office, but unhappily for me, I can't undo the past, and the past drives me here!' (252; ch.15)

Gridley argues that two and a half decades has changed him from an agreeable person to a volatile criminal. This has happened because Gridley is caught between two opposing demands. He argues that the past compels him there, which includes the original suit and the interim complications that require his presence in court. The other force is the Chancellor himself, a representative of the institution that requires his presence even as he suggests that Gridley's time and energy would be better spent elsewhere (252; ch.15). Gridley is obliged to stand before those with the power to resolve his suit who respond by directing him elsewhere, even though, to quote Gridley, "I was forced there because the law forced me and would let me go nowhere else" and even his "brother would have given up the legacy, and joyful, to escape more costs" (251; ch.15). Gridley states that the issue that brought them to Chancery was a relatively simple matter, and yet, "The costs at

that time—before the thing was begun!—were three times the legacy” and “The suit, still undecided, has fallen into rack, and ruin, and despair, with everything else” (251; ch.15). These selections from Gridley’s tirade to John Jarndyce signal his position, the inefficiency of Chancery, and the pain that has resulted from it. Gridley presents himself not so much as a criminal (though he does own up to his violent tendencies) but rather as a victim; wasted, abused, and disenfranchised by what Jarndyce calls “this monstrous system” (251; ch.15). Bereft of what he went to Chancery to gain or resolve, and yet still obliged to attend only to be mocked and ignored, and with no form of redress, Gridley is left without power or the ability to act. It is little wonder that he turned to violence.

Gridley therefore is a criminal in conduct, but whether he is one in character is another matter. As Lisa Rodensky explains, “Victorian criminal law identifies the difference between holding a person responsible for what he does and holding a person responsible for who he is” (20). Rodensky uses *Oliver Twist* and the changing behaviors of Bill Sikes and Nancy in her discussion of character and conduct and the difficulty Victorian criminal law had in administering punishments and exploring “what happens when a person and his acts become dissonant, incongruent, or even disconnected?” (38). In *Bleak House*, this concern extends beyond incongruities of an individual’s character and conduct to the influence social institutions and practices have on individuals.

Gridley’s tirade suggests that he himself may be under some confusion about his nature and character and we see his conduct in several different forms. In the first chapter, he is plaintive, perhaps speaking out of turn, but he does not act violently, or do anything to warrant Bucket’s intervention as those around him view him as a comic figure and not a threat. Nevertheless, there are the accounts of his threats and violence, as well as this

suggestion that he, once upon a time, was mild-tempered. If Gridley is a criminal, it is not because he has a criminal predisposition or violent personality, nor even because his actions have been labeled as criminal. It is because Chancery has made him one.

As frustrating as it may be, the system Gridley bemoans is not lawless or chaotic: it is carefully maintained by those who benefit from its patterns and protocols. Chancery's operations envelop and enervate uninfluential but resource-laden outsiders like Gridley, who are left with nowhere to turn for redress because they are not technically oppressed by any individual. The various solicitors and chancellors are (as the Lord Chancellor encourages Gridley to) doing their jobs and do so within the parameters of the court. There is no place for a suitor to assault the Lord Chancellor. The fact that Gridley has assaulted the Lord Chancellor in the past can be read as Gridley assaulting Law, Order, and Equity themselves, especially as the Lord Chancellor is a "spiritual" figure and never named. This is not a criminal cabal but a body of the government, even if it more closely resembles the former. They're not so much a person or character, but an elusive idea. This leaves Gridley with fight to be had but no enemy to do combat with, demonstrated by Gridley's lamentation about "the system":

The system! I am told on all hands, it's the system. I mustn't look to individuals. It's the system. I mustn't go into court and say, 'My Lord, I beg to know this from you—is this right or wrong? Have you the face to tell me I have received justice and therefore am dismissed?' My Lord knows nothing of it. He sits there to administer the system. I mustn't go to Mr. Tulkinghorn, the solicitor in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and say to him when he makes me furious by being so cool and satisfied—as they all do, for I know they gain by it while I lose, don't I?—I mustn't say to him, 'I will have something out of some one for my ruin, by fair means or foul!' HE is not responsible. It's the system. But, if I do no violence to any of them, here—I may! I don't know what may happen if I am carried beyond myself at last! I will accuse the individual workers of that system against me, face to face, before the great eternal bar! (251-2)

The novel uses Gridley and his perception of a social space that he is not a part of to show how Chancery diffuses and disembodies itself into a non-entity. It thereby eliminates any opportunity for recourse as an uncontrollable force as it consumes more than it delivers. Gridley may complain against it, but there is nothing “there” he may attack. Gridley may strike out at the lawyers and Lord Chancellor, but they are simply functionaries in the system. The system Gridley laments is maintained by those who benefit from it, and who maintain it to exploit and displace those like Gridley and the parties of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. They all benefit but there is no easy target or responsible party. As shown by Tulkinghorn’s murder, to eliminate a lawyer does not topple or interrupt the system.

Chancery draws boundaries around Gridley, setting him into a marginalized territory where he is beholden to Chancery, but Chancery is not beholden to him, where Chancery may gratify itself, but not provide justice to Gridley. By mixing the impenetrable, permeating fog and mud with Chancery, the novel binds physical, social, cultural and legal spaces, pointing to how the novel will bring together a wide range of social and economic classes and relations in spaces with deeply developed social significance sometimes beyond the understanding of those who inhabit them. Where Frazee and Brown appeal to coincidence in the novel as “one other agent in the revelation of Lady Dedlock’s secret” and “surprising connections,” (Frazee 235; Brown 57), the novel suggests otherwise. These connections, like both Lady Dedlock and Esther Summerson encountering the impoverished Jo, are less a matter of coincidence or contrivance, but rather a consequence of the interconnections of the city. The city brings together and makes apparent the interdependencies of poverty and wealth while it

displaces, disenfranchises, and even kills. Gridley therefore is forced into Chancery but is not given a place therein. He is left devoid of any community which may empower him, his struggle is in vain as his resources are depleted, until even his own vitality fails him. What he gains through his trials is the maddening, semi-prophetic vision, which only drives him to rash actions of his own. The law, in the shape of Bucket, encircles and seeks to control him, forcing his hiding, imprisonment, and death. Gridley's confusion and frustration embodies his being encompassed about by an "ecology that is functioning poorly [and] creates an imaginative confusion that deeply disturbs" (Henchman 9). Because Gridley is a part of and engaging with unhealthy, but stable enough, institutions, he has imagined something larger than Tulkinghorn or the Lord Chancellor. Gridley mentioned he might be "carried beyond himself" (252) and his reference to "the great eternal bar" possesses a sort of prophetic, apocalyptic language. The fog and miasma of London and Chancery have become clear to him, but, like many biblical prophets, he is targeted for speaking truth to power and silenced by a system designed to protect its interests. Hide as he might, there is no wilderness to which Gridley can escape to nor cry from. His prophesying is born from the miasma of London and Chancery: a revelation through poison rather than divinity.

Gridley as circumvented criminal points to how Tulkinghorn can be a villain but not a criminal because he operates within his rights as a lawyer: his actions are sanctioned whereas Gridley's assaults are not. Chancery allows Tulkinghorn, Vholes, and others to exploit and manipulate others for their own gain and they do so unchecked. Their power doesn't come from overt violence or aggression but from a violence rooted in precedents, statutes, and documents. According to Suzanne Daly, these documents

themselves are the “unifying logic of indirect, mediated violence” (22) that “function as weapons, deployed with aggressive intent to work material harm” (20). Not only do these documents enact material harm, but they separate violence and criminality from their institutionalized origins. Tulkinghorn and Vholes are not murderers with knife or pistol, but rather spiders, comparable to Sherlock Holmes’ nemesis, Professor Moriarty: “He sits motionless, like a spider in the center of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans” (Doyle, “The Final Problem” 559). Chancery and its representatives achieve this by redirecting the flow of resources to themselves. Technically, Tulkinghorn does not oppress Gridley but fulfills his legal and professional obligations, and Chancery expects Gridley to do the same. Empowering or enabling Gridley or anyone else petitioning Chancery, could mean losing fees and other resources, and would establish a precedent others would follow, jeopardizing the system. Those around Tulkinghorn are merely the means to his own betterment, and he is institutionally empowered to do so as his “greed is formalized and sanctioned, and therefore respectable” (Schelstraete and Buelens 294). Where Richard is lulled into Vholes’ hypnotic enervation, Gridley resists and fights, but the diffusion of the Chancery system inhibits his ability to identify a target because the system displaces responsibility and denies him any sanctioned means of recourse or retaliation.

By contrast, Harold Skimpole shows how someone can, even in a small, individualized way, take advantage of others through a social institution, specifically philanthropy. In doing so, Skimpole embodies the self-righteousness of those who corrupt social institutions for their own gain, demonstrated in how Skimpole displaces his

own responsibilities onto others, all the while benefitting himself. Skimpole is initially presented as one dependent on society, but with a certain amicable joviality with what seems to be scant and simple needs. As Skimpole says of himself (using the third person), “All he asked of society was to let him live. THAT wasn't much. His wants were few. Give him the papers, conversation, music, mutton, coffee, landscape, fruit in the season, a few sheets of Bristol-board, and a little claret, and he asked no more. He was a mere child in the world, but he didn't cry for the moon” and Esther describes him as speaking “with the utmost brilliancy and enjoyment, but with a certain vivacious candor—speaking of himself as if he were not at all his own affair...[he] still had his claims too, which were the general business of the community and must not be slighted. He was quite enchanting” (90; ch.6). These descriptions, however, represent Skimpole’s deceptions. It becomes clear that Skimpole’s motives are selfish, with Esther remarking, “I was confused by not exactly understanding why he was free of [duties and accountabilities]. That he WAS free of them, I scarcely doubted; he was so very clear about it himself” (90-1; ch.6). This statement, delivered with the naivety Esther signaled earlier in the novel, indicates that all is not right with Skimpole, that his own power of persuasion is immense and effective, already placing Esther, Ada, and Richard under his conniving, duplicitous spell.

Skimpole’s duplicitousness is alluded to with the two-faced remark, “I *am* a child, and I never pretend to be anything else” (494; ch.31). On the one hand, pretending is a part of childish play, pleasure, and imaginative exercise. That Skimpole does *never* pretends suggests he may *not* be a child. On the other hand, by never pretending to be anything other than a child, it suggests his being a child is itself an act of pretending, his

“childlike ethos is a carefully crafted and ultimately insidious mask” (Christianson, Garside 93). Skimpole’s childishness seems harmless enough and may even link him with other Dickensian characters such as Maggy of *Little Dorrit* and Mr. Dick *David Copperfield*. However, where Maddy and Mr. Dick need others to take care of them, Skimpole has his own family and seems independent enough so long as someone else is willing to cover the bill. Where Maggy and Mr. Dick are dependent upon others, Skimpole feigns dependence for the sake of what amounts to a confidence trick. Faced with the possibility of arrest by Coavinses, Skimpole manages to displace the responsibility for his debt onto others. He implores Richard, Ada, and Esther to be free and not deny him his freedom, as if to deny Skimpole anything, or to expect anything of him, would be tantamount to plucking the wings from a butterfly. Skimpole himself does not exhibit any violence or malicious tendencies, does not exhibit any criminal premeditation but separates himself entirely from the charge of debt, and with it, the possibility of criminality. Separation proves to be part of Skimpole’s *modus operandi*: as he remarks of Coavinses, “Don't be ruffled by your occupation. We can separate you from your office; we can separate the individual from the pursuit. We are not so prejudiced as to suppose that in private life you are otherwise than a very estimable man, with a great deal of poetry in your nature, of which you may not be conscious” (97; ch.6). His discussion of separation itself runs counter to the way the novel itself functions: rather than separation, the novel invests in complex relationships and interactions and how people cannot be separated from their occupations and pursuits, and how their public, private, and other lives impact one another. Bolstered by this notion of separation, Skimpole not only attempts to disarm Coavinses, but proceeds to separate Esther and

Richard from their money, and not just a few coins of pocket change but years' worth of savings (97; ch.6). From this scene, Fogle describes Skimpole as "brilliantly despicable...the type of irresponsibility" (1). The irony in Fogle's description is that criminals are necessarily responsible for their crimes. Skimpole not only separates others from their money but displaces responsibility: Skimpole doesn't take but others give, implying that he is no thief or criminal even as he exploits the philanthropy of others. He therefore is not responsible for others' deficiencies even if they benefit him or if he solicited them, not unlike Chancery.

With his play of childish innocence, Skimpole severs the line that connects actions and motivations. Skimpole's words suggest he intends well to all he encounters: even with Jo, he turns the prospect of the boy being imprisoned as having something of poetry about it. Ironically, as Skimpole looks for poetry in Jo, he overlooks the way Jo "is a poetic reminder of the displaced and destitute who 'move on' under the noses of the likes of Pardiggle and Jellyby" (Hatch 67). This sort of poetry - a representation of poverty in the face of philanthropy - exceeds what Skimpole is incapable of acknowledging (he would insist; he may simply be unwilling). For Skimpole, everything is beauty, music, and poetry, which curbs others from interpreting him as reckless or selfish, leaving only negligence, which he has in abundance. As a child and utterly ignorant of anything else, Skimpole separates himself from a world of harm, and in so doing, divorces himself from any personal harm. This makes him like Chancery in that both rely on the exploitation of outside parties for their sustenance. The main difference being that Skimpole renounces any claims to middle class professionalism so he may promise nothing and expect charity (Christianson 94-5). Skimpole suggests that for him

to be deprived of his pleasurable life would be a crime itself, but in doing so, Skimpole engages in his own work of diffusion as he casts himself upon the cares of society and exploits those who are willing to send money his way. Unwilling to do anything a child would not pretend to do, Skimpole shifts his creditors into their own sort of non-existence, something beyond his own ability to comprehend, and therefore, no concern of his. By not recognizing creditors as individuals or the value of the funds they provide him with, Skimpole diffuses what he does not wish to experience or engage with. Skimpole thereby inflicts charity upon others: he deceives them into situations where, if they were to abandon him, they would be the villains because he - a mere child to the world - is deprived of his simplest necessities. By directing his attention in more aesthetically pleasing directions, and with no concern for others, it suggests the idea another could think of anything other than what Skimpole himself thinks is “very odd and very curious” and yet these other ideas do not encompass Skimpole’s own curiosity. He makes no effort to explore or understand it, though he does not deny it or reject it. He simply dismisses it.

Skimpole’s own negligence of others does not simply include possible outcomes or risks, but that other’s minds and thoughts might vary from his own. Consider his speech to Coavinses:

Then you didn't think, at all events...to this effect: 'Harold Skimpole loves to see the sun shine, loves to hear the wind blow, loves to watch the changing lights and shadows, loves to hear the birds, those choristers in Nature's great cathedral. And does it seem to me that I am about to deprive Harold Skimpole of his share in such possessions, which are his only birthright!' You thought nothing to that effect? (99; ch.6)

Much like his duplicitous “never pretend to be anything else” this speech has two possible interpretations. The first suggests Skimpole expects Coavinses’ sole concern to

be the wellbeing of Harold Skimpole. The second, by describing the sunshine, the wind, the lights, etc., as both his possessions and his birthright suggests Skimpole is appealing to a more general form of justice and inheritance: that Skimpole is entitled to these things as possessions and to deprive Skimpole of such privileged access is to deprive him of his due merely by having been born. Skimpole's thereby recontextualizes himself from criminal to victim and enshrouds his selfishness with childlike naivety while still using language reminiscent of a legal or economic transaction (possessions and birthright). As Allen MacDuffie discusses "what Skimpole represents as a perfectly self-sustaining system is in fact unidirectional, concealed by euphemisms like 'adapted,' 'purposes,' and 'employment'" (100). In other words, while Skimpole projects a façade of self-sufficiency, he expends the energy and resources of others, and without concern. For example, Coavinses is not the creditor but the debt collector: another unidentified figure is involved in this transaction. If pressed on the matter, Skimpole would likely either present a similar argument on his behalf, after all, "Mankind will surely not deny to Harold Skimpole what it concedes to the butterflies!" thereby diffusing his creditors into the amorphousness of humanity (97; ch.6). Coavinses' response that he "certainly—did—NOT," consider Skimpole's self-asserted birthright indicates that this pastoral perspective had no bearing on Coavinses' duty and is followed by Skimpole's own "Very odd and very curious, the mental process is, in you men of business!" (99; ch.6). Skimpole's response shows his inability (or unwillingness) to distinguish the thoughts and beliefs of one as distinct from another, making it impossible to argue against him.

Skimpole's propensity of separation and displacement is put on display again when he informs Esther of Coavinses' arrest and in his discussions with Jarndyce

regarding the impoverished Jo. Of the then imprisoned Coavinses, Skimpole remarks “He will never do violence to the sunshine any more” (242; ch.15). Skimpole’s remark about the sunshine is a reminder of the earlier conversation with Coavinses and reflects Skimpole’s egocentrism but is contrary to his earlier statements wherein he suggested it would be impertinent to deprive Harold Skimpole of the sunshine. Though Skimpole did not describe Coavinses as “violent” or a “criminal” (though Esther describes Coavinses’ snorting as “violent” [97; ch.6]), Skimpole here redirects Coavinses’ violence away from himself, even though he was Coavinses’ target, yielding two interpretations. The first is how Skimpole, in his act of separation and redirection, does not consider that Coavinses could ever have meant any harm to himself, as such a possibility is beyond his purported understanding. The second is that Skimpole equates himself with the sun: to do violence to one is to do violence to the other: to deprive Skimpole of his “birthright” would be an affront against nature, as if depriving Skimpole of the sun is as bad as depriving the sun of Skimpole. Not that Coavinses’ relationship to the sun or his family should matter in Skimpole’s economics: Skimpole readily dismisses Coavinses despite his having children, which Skimpole himself acknowledges though he is unburdened by the fact. Shortly after this, Skimpole comments on Coavinses’ replacement’s arrival on the day of his, Skimpole’s, daughter’s birthday: “This is unreasonable and inconvenient. If you had a blue-eyed daughter you wouldn't like ME to come, uninvited, on HER birthday?” The remark is the sort of thing a parent might say to a child to correct bad behavior by encouraging the child to consider the situation of another and practice empathy. However, in Skimpole’s neglectful tendency, it highlights the disparity in how he expects to be treated and how he treats others, arguing for empathy and responsibility while

neglecting to offer any. Skimpole immediately follows this with a description of the Coavinses family's current condition: "The Coavinses had left. Three children. No mother. And that Coavinses' profession. Being unpopular. The rising Coavinses. Were at a considerable disadvantage" (242; ch.15). The distorted, fractured sentences, punctuated by Skimpole's piano playing, are reminders of Skimpole's tendency towards separation. The impact of this statement is lessened both by the periods but also how Skimpole employs it while "playing little chords where I shall put full stops," as Skimpole's intention is not to relate their tale of suffering and uncertainty in a suddenly parent-less life, but to add a little music to the "pleasant absurdity" (242; ch.15). Skimpole insists upon the "golden rule" – to treat others as oneself wants to be treated – but his application is an inverted bastardization of the principle: that others should treat Skimpole as Skimpole wants to be treated.

Skimpole's heliocentric self-importance is put on full display (even without the solar metaphor) when considering his relationship to of Jo. Skimpole's relationship with Jo points to a certain behavior that is both childlike and professional: competition. Seeing another child in his midst might mean a reduction or redistribution of resources, or an expectation to share some of his entitlements with another child. But there is only space for one child: himself. Upon Esther and Charley introducing Jo, Skimpole states that he [Skimpole] "ha[s] a constitutional objection to this sort of thing" followed by how Jo is "not safe, you know. There's a very bad sort of fever about him." What "this sort of thing" is, is left unclear. It may be proximity to the fever and fear of contagion, but as he objects before his diagnosis, it suggests the fever alone is not his primary grounds for dismissal and he will find whatever he can to justify it. His words and actions belie

economic language. His own competitiveness, and use of terms like “birthright,” “invest,” and “possession,” while subtle and in passing, suggest an economic or legal knowledge, words he can employ to articulate his position and perhaps something else going on underneath. While Esther, Jarndyce, and the servants bustle about with care and compassion on Jo’s behalf, Skimpole is his usual self-absorbed self.

Not only does Jo give Skimpole the opportunity to assert his self-importance, but also to display his hypocrisy. Jarndyce’s comment “if this wretched creature were a convicted prisoner, his hospital would be wide open to him, and he would be as well taken care of as any sick boy in the kingdom” addresses the inequalities and failings of life in London, that the innocent suffer while criminals and prisoners are cared for.

Skimpole’s response is that it would do Jo good “if he showed some misdirected energy that got him into prison” (494; ch.31), but not because it would ensure him food and a roof over his head, but because it would be poetic:

Why ISN'T he a prisoner then?...I confess I don't see why our young friend, in his degree, should not seek to invest himself with such poetry as is open to him. He is no doubt born with an appetite—probably, when he is in a safer state of health, he has an excellent appetite. Very well. At our young friend's natural dinner hour, most likely about noon, our young friend says in effect to society, 'I am hungry; will you have the goodness to produce your spoon and feed me?' Society, which has taken upon itself the general arrangement of the whole system of spoons and professes to have a spoon for our young friend, does NOT produce that spoon; and our young friend, therefore, says 'You really must excuse me if I seize it.' Now, this appears to me a case of misdirected energy, which has a certain amount of reason in it and a certain amount of romance; and I don't know but what I should be more interested in our young friend, as an illustration of such a case, than merely as a poor vagabond—which any one can be. (494-5; ch.31)

This speech fulfills two functions, appropriate given Skimpole’s duplicitousness. The first is to provide, within romantic reasoning, a justification for turning Jo out: so Jo may

procure for himself what “society” has for him, even if withheld. The second is to lay bare Skimpole’s hypocrisy. Skimpole effectively proposes Jo do precisely what Skimpole himself does: procure what he seeks to satiate his appetites, regardless of what society says, while simultaneously depriving Jo of sustaining material resources he is not equipped to procure himself. Skimpole’s question, “why ISN'T he a prisoner then?” points to another element of Skimpole’s hypocrisy: Prison is fine for others, especially those like Jo, but not for Skimpole. Skimpole thereby distinguishes himself from others - the sun, the wind, and the butterflies are *his* birthright, but not a shared privilege for humanity. Coupled with his suggestion that Jo “invest” his energy is but another example of Skimpole’s use of economic terms suggest he may have some understanding of the game he plays. While something may be said for Skimpole’s concern over contagion, especially as Esther contracts the same ambiguous disease,¹¹ Skimpole’s concern is not for others but for himself, and even when he suggests some material remuneration as part of dismissing Jo, he delivers it as an instruction to the rest: “Give him sixpence, or five shillings, or five pound ten—you are arithmeticians, and I am not—and get rid of him!” (494; ch.31). Skimpole, by contrast, would, in his childlike tones and in a way unlike Jo, demand a few pounds, shillings, or pence – and a place to rest and practice his arts. And of course, once Jarndyce is “[got] rid of” Skimpole later in the novel, Skimpole besmirches Jarndyce, ignoring the charity Jarndyce had rendered him.

¹¹ Much debate has been given over to the nature of Esther’s disease. Some consensus is that it is smallpox (Gurney 81; Beaumont 817, Bishop 801; Blake 13; Cook), where others like Gilian West provide numerous reasons why it would not be smallpox (30–34). MacLure describes the smallpox and typhus diagnoses as “never quite satisfying” and argues that the ambiguity is central to the disease’s thematic implications (96).

Skimpole's criminality is not due to a few pounds but is his combined indifference to others as he drains their resources (MacDuffie 100). While Skimpole is (in)famously modeled after Leigh Hunt (cf. Fogle, Blainey), he is also a thematic companion to Krook. Together the two make up an anthropomorphism of Chancery: one displaying the court's foulness and deprecation, and the other its callous indifference, devoted exclusively to its own interests and draining away from others. Skimpole's securing of funds from others is not unlike Krook's own disembodiment and disembodying practices, in his combustion and his conversation with Ada, Esther, and Richard, specifically his pulling at Ada's hair and comparing it to his own supply (69; ch.5). We see this with Skimpole in his compartmentalization of his daughters - they are less his offspring in need of his care and more toys or ornaments with pleasing and amusing attributes: "'This,' said Mr. Skimpole, 'is my Beauty daughter, Arethusa—plays and sings odds and ends like her father. This is my Sentiment daughter, Laura—plays a little but don't sing. This is my Comedy daughter, Kitty—sings a little but don't play. We all draw a little and compose a little, and none of us have any idea of time or money'" (676; ch.43), and he abandons them and their mother with ease and on a whim. After declaring he and his daughters are all children, it is little surprise Skimpole describes Esther as having "a fine administrative capacity and a knowledge of details perfectly surprising" (676; ch.43). The description is accurate and even flattering, but it continues Skimpole's tendency to separate people into traits advantageous to himself and is a reminder of his calling Coavinses' thinking "very odd and very curious" (99; ch.6). Esther's administrative prowess is not surprising in its depth or profundity any more than Coavinses focus on his professional responsibility is odd and curious - it is simply

because they differ from Skimpole. While Skimpole may be pursued by Coavinses and other legal officials over his financial debts, the novel is keen to show how his villainy is in his negligence and exploitation, worsened by how he separates himself from any responsibility. Whatever deficiency Skimpole may have is of no concern: another will make up the difference.

4: Cadavers in their wake: Pardiggle, Jellyby, and Telescopic Philanthropy

Skimpole, Krook, Chancery, and the court's various operatives like Tulkinghorn and Vholes, considered together, show how the fatal aspects of social institutions are not just in appropriating resources and energy, but in the exploitation of resources and energy. In other words, people are not just worn out through the depletion of their resources by others, but also when others misuse their resources and misdirect their energy. A major point raised by Skimpole is that no one is beyond exploitation, that the exploiter has no scruples about the harm or damage they cause, so long as their own interests are gratified. These interests need not be monetary in nature, even if money is essential to their operations, as shown with Telescopic Philanthropy, in the form of Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby. These are women who, in the name of altruism and charity – whose nominal work is to distribute resources rather than collect them – leave a wake of harm, injury, despondency, sadness, and death.

Much like Chancery and Skimpole, Pardiggle and Jellyby make what is beneficial harmful by dissipating the individual into the masses but do so with a different scope and direction. Pardiggle and Jellyby consider distant populations broadly defined as deserving of their beneficence, rather than considering the wellbeing of local individuals and do not

stop to consider the impacts their decisions have on those they immediately engage with. When Esther remarks that Mrs. Jellyby's eyes "had a curious habit of seeming to look a long way off. As if... they could see nothing nearer than Africa!" she alludes not just to her interests in Africa but how she overlooks everything between her and the continent (52; ch.4). This farsightedness signals a significant difference between Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. Where Tulkinghorn and Vholes, in their vampirism focused on the individual, Pardiggle and Jellyby lose sight of the individual, casting their efforts so wide that they can barely see its impact and so overlook what is more immediately needed. Both Pardiggle and Jellyby export finances to support indigenous populations, both fictional – the Boorioboola-Gha of Africa and the Tockahoopo Indians, respectively – but neglect their domestic (in both senses of the word – their homes and their nation) responsibilities in ways that, reminiscent of their own exportations, call upon those in the periphery of their domestic spheres to address and resolve. Telescopic Philanthropy has entirely different goals and functions than Chancery and contrast with the fees and circumlocution, but is a fee really that different than a subscription cost, especially if given without knowledge of its impact or even given unwillingly? This coercive extraction of resources and neglect for institutionalized ends points toward "mid-nineteenth-century charity as an institution absorbed mainly in serving its own professional goals" (Bivona, "Self-Undermining Philanthropic Impulses" 36). Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy therefore have similar results: the suffering, anxiety, and in some cases, death, of those they ought to serve and assist. However, Unlike Tulkinghorn and Vholes, the failings of Pardiggle and Jellyby are put on display and discussed by other characters.

When discussing the Jellybys with John Jarndyce, Esther and Richard are apprehensive. Of Mrs. Jellyby, they state, “perhaps she was a little unmindful of her home” and how “The little Jellybys...are really—I can't help expressing myself strongly, sir—in a devil of a state” (83; ch.6). Despite Mrs. Jellyby’s domestic failures being put on full display, they are unwilling to outright condemn her, recognizing Jarndyce as her a patron. She is, after all, not doing anything *criminal*, and her philanthropic interests have a pretense of being honorable and well-intended, even if her family is given short-shrift. There’s no easy answer, and so they lessen the impact of their criticisms with Esther’s “perhaps” and Richard’s apologetic “I can't help expressing myself strongly.” Though both Mrs. Jellyby and Pardiggle are neither criminal nor malicious in their philanthropic ideals, they do little to benefit others and even, much like Chancery and Skimpole, redirect resources and energy away from those who are in more immediate need and care, including their families. Dickens’ critique is not so much of philanthropy as it is of its export of it at the expense of those at home, such as Jo and Caddy. Ironically, in sending their attentions abroad, they similarly focus on themselves – what they can do and contribute, their energy, efforts, and involvement. Their purported foreign indigenous benefactors thereby become tools towards their own interests: it doesn’t matter who they are, what they need, or where they are: all that matters is that there is morally laudable work to be done. In other words, they do not support others for the sake of supporting others out of their own self-interest. They may not have the malice of Tulkinghorn or the sly cunning of Vholes, but they represent a similar criminalistic thrust: the exploitation of others for the sake of their own self-gratification.

The maternal failings of Mrs. Jellyby are such that she is so preoccupied with her philanthropy work that she requires the philanthropy of others to compensate for her domestic shortcomings. Before meeting Mrs. Jellyby, Esther, Ada, and Richard encounter her son Peepy with his head lodged between the railings outside their home, “while a milkman and a beadle, with the kindest intentions possible, were endeavoring to drag him back by the legs” (51; ch.4). Here, Esther and her party encounter a scene that could have been prevented under the watchful eye and careful instruction of a parent (or an older sibling). But without familial intervention, it is left to representatives of other social spheres to intervene: a milkman sets his deliveries aside to assist, and a beadle steps away from his ecclesiastical duties. This rescue introduces what Esther describes as “not only very untidy but very dirty” into spaces “strewn with papers and nearly filled by a great writing-table covered with similar litter” (53; ch.4). Upon seeing Peepy so lodged and another child “who had been poking at the child from below with a broom” Esther assumes Mrs. Jellyby to not be at home (52; ch.4). While Esther simply assumes an absent parent (correct in at least one sense) such scenes prompt critic Robert E. Lougy to adopt an almost Lovecraftian view of the Jellyby household, describing it as “a comic house of horrors in which small children escape death or mutilation only through the intervention of older siblings, servants, and Esther,” with the household literally spilling out into the street (385). While Esther would learn that Mrs. Jellyby is on the premises, she is far removed from her domestic responsibilities, a failure that continues inside as Esther and Ada are left to pity the bruised and dirty Peepy while his mother goes about her African business. The Jellyby “cosmic house of horrors” may be dismissed as a domestic space run amok - a matter of misguided intention and unattended children, as if

they came on a bad day. However, as Esther, Richard and Ada are reluctant to besmirch Mrs. Jellyby, it is her daughter Caddy who will show how the Jellby home is not in temporary state of disarray, but a perpetual state of horror.

Caddy Jellyby's conversation with Esther foregrounds her mother's perpetual failings, overshadowing any presumed good she may do. Prior to Caddy's conversation with Esther, Esther and Ada try to reconcile the scene before them. Esther remarks, "it quite confuses me. I want to understand it, and I can't understand it at all...It MUST be very good of Mrs. Jellyby to take such pains about a scheme for the benefit of natives—and yet—Peepy and the housekeeping!" (58; ch.4). Ada's response is to applaud Esther's thoughtfulness, cheerfulness, and having done so much, that Esther "would make a home out of even this house," a statement that, much like their apprehension before Mr. Jarndyce later, acknowledges the domestic chaos without acknowledging its severity or condemning Mrs. Jellyby directly (58; ch.4). Condemnation is left to Caddy. When Caddy enters, she draws comparisons between herself, Esther, and Ada and declares her hatred of Africa and the miserable state of herself and her home. Caddy's story expands the incidents of the day to show the neglect witnessed by Esther was both typical and that it leaves the entire household miserable. Through her tirade, she only directly mentions her mother once, stating "I'm always writing for Ma" in response to her not being so talented as Ada (60; ch.4). Rather than educating her, her mother employed her. She is not a daughter but a servant, raised not in a home, but in a state as bad as a public house. While Caddy may not directly rail against her mother, the implication is clear: her hatred of Africa, her misery and her "wish we were all dead" stems directly from her mother (62; ch.4). Caddy Jellyby is her mother's victim.

Caddy Jellyby's narrative would have been very different had she been silent about her feelings towards her mother and her misery under her African endeavors. To hypothesize, consider if Caddy Jellyby vanished — presumed kidnapped — and her mother besought Jarndyce to help find her, or if Esther, Ada, and Richard had taken her rescue upon themselves. A detective's mystery and missing person's case would ensue, perhaps concluding with the revelation that Caddy had not been kidnapped but had voluntarily fled her mother. The same general effect would be achieved even if Caddy's deprecating speech played out in a different context: Mrs. Jellyby's hypocrisy put on display through the suffering of her daughter and family. Involving detection (whether by Bucket, Esther, or another) would shift the form of heroism the novel presents through Jellyby's villainy. She may be a villain like Vholes and Tulkinghorn, but of a different kind, and therefore necessitates a different type of heroics: that of the domestic angel.¹² Caddy suffers because her mother fails to fulfill the mother-daughter relationship and meet her domestic obligations. This is why Mrs. Jellyby's indifference to Caddy's decision to marry is so disheartening - Mrs. Jellyby is so caught up in her philanthropy that there is no space for her to be a mother. Esther does not discover crime, but rescues victims from villains, through her concern for the needy and how she, to borrow a quote describing Woodcourt, "Saved many lives, never complained in hunger and thirst, wrapped naked people in his spare clothes, took the lead, showed them what to do,

¹² This is not to lionize or aggrandize the cult of domesticity, but to address how the novel juxtaposes the Jellyby's domestic neglect with domestic care. The next section of this chapter will provide some critique of the cult itself.

governed them, tended the sick, buried the dead, and brought the poor survivors safely off at last!” (569; ch.35).

While Caddy, Peepy, and the rest may escape violent deaths (even if only to live in a worse state, according to Caddy), violence and death appear in Mrs. Pardiggle’s wake. Where Jellyby’s failure is in the management of her domestic space, Pardiggle’s is in her approach to education and training in her home and others’. She openly disparages the state of Jellyby’s home and the rearing of her children and presents her own in contrast: “It has been observed that her young family are excluded from participation in the objects to which she is devoted. She may be right, she may be wrong; but, right or wrong, this is not my course with MY young family” (125; ch.8). Pardiggle thereafter presents her five sons as models of philanthropic endeavors. She elaborates on how

they are my companions everywhere; and by these means they acquire that knowledge of the poor, and that capacity of doing charitable business in general—in short, that taste for the sort of thing—which will render them in after life a service to their neighbours and a satisfaction to themselves. (126; ch.8)

This sets Jellyby and Pardiggle apart as one neglects her children while the other actively educates them. However, this “education” is a different form of neglect as Mrs. Pardiggle conscripts her children into her philanthropic work. Pardiggle is as unaware of their displeasure as Jellyby, or perhaps even more unaware. After she lauds her five-year-old son, Alfred, for having completed a two-hour address before a philanthropic society, Esther narrates that he “glowered at us as if he never could, or would, forgive the injury of that night” (126). The simple statement negates Mrs. Pardiggle’s entire preceding speech of her children’s philanthropy into a statement of stale hypocrisy and neglect of her own progeny.

Once out of doors, the Pardiggle's children assail Esther, pinching her and expressing their frustration of their pocket-money being "boned" by their mother for her charitable preoccupations: "What does she make a sham for, and pretend to give me money, and take it away again? Why do you call it my allowance, and never let me spend it?" (129; ch.8). That these complaints arise in earshot of Pardiggle and she ignores them shows that she fails to see the impact of her educational endeavors even as they inflict harm upon another. Much like Caddy, they are learning that they are more victims than children. Their complaint is a nuanced one: they do not focus on how they are denied money or that they are neglected like the Jellyby children, but they complain of the deception as the money is only theirs in so far as their mother can appropriate it, playing out in a bizarre sort of extortion. This sham of financial distribution is reminiscent of the way the novel represents Chancery and Dickens' own experience with the institution. Dickens took several suits to Chancery over copyright issues to regain the financial remunerations that were legally his due, but never recovered the cost of his legal fees, defeating the purpose of equity and turning the court's efforts into a sham. The same plays out as the Pardiggle children are promised money only for it to be taken away by the very beneficent entity that promised it in the first place. Pardiggle's insistence that her children engage in philanthropic endeavors, against their will and in a manner that makes them into a pack of miserable hellions, demonstrates the main problem with Pardiggle's philanthropy: the performing of the work is far more important than its actual effect.

Beyond her children, Pardiggle selfishly inflicts her bastardization of philanthropic education upon others instead of attending to their needs or conditions, demonstrated with the infamous visit to the brickmaker's home. Esther sets the scene by

describing the home as “one of a cluster of wretched hovels in a brick-field, with pigsties close to the broken windows and miserable little gardens before the doors growing nothing but stagnant pools.... At the doors and windows some men and women lounged or prowled about, and took little notice of us except to laugh to one another or to say something as we passed about gentlefolks minding their own business and not troubling their heads and muddying their shoes with coming to look after other people's” (130; ch.8). This exposition establishes the dilapidated state of the community they have entered, but juxtaposes it alongside a disdain for meddling “gentlefolks.” This is the sort of community that philanthropists, eager to improve and benefit the lives of others, would be drawn to, but their presence is an unwanted intrusion, and yet one that they – those being inflicted with philanthropy - cannot inhibit or prevent. Pardiggle’s philanthropic attentions are not a boon to be enjoyed but a burden to be endured. Indeed, Pardiggle herself declares her indefatigability and how “I enjoy hard work, and the harder you make mine, the better I like it” (132; ch.8). It is as if their obstinance and refusal is a challenge to be overcome, and Pardiggle is not motivated by the good she does but the challenge it presents, which helps explain their presence in a place where the general sentiment is that she and her companions are meddling outsiders.

Following Pardiggle’s statement of how she can’t be tired, the brickmaker, whose home she has intruded, provides the following tirade:

I wants a end of these liberties took with my place. I wants an end of being drawed like a badger. Now you're a-going to poll-pry and question according to custom—I know what you're a-going to be up to. Well! You haven't got no occasion to be up to it. I'll save you the trouble. Is my daughter a-washin? Yes, she IS a-washin. Look at the water. Smell it! That's wot we drinks. How do you like it, and what do you think of gin instead! An't my place dirty? Yes, it is dirty—it's nat'rally dirty, and it's

nat'rally onwholesome; and we've had five dirty and onwholesome children, as is all dead infants, and so much the better for them, and for us besides. Have I read the little book wot you left? No, I an't read the little book wot you left. There an't nobody here as knows how to read it; and if there wos, it wouldn't be suitable to me. It's a book fit for a babby, and I'm not a babby. If you was to leave me a doll, I shouldn't nuss it. How have I been conducting of myself? Why, I've been drunk for three days; and I'da been drunk four if I'da had the money. Don't I never mean for to go to church? No, I don't never mean for to go to church. I shouldn't be expected there, if I did; the beadle's too gen-teel for me. And how did my wife get that black eye? Why, I give it her; and if she says I didn't, she's a lie! (132; ch.8)

Of this passage, Schwarzbach made a compelling observation, that, “there is no other passage quite like this in all of nineteenth-century fiction” for the way in which a lower-class character is able to protest the intrusion into their home by their social superior, and how it is remarkable that the brickmaker “is not punished later in the novel for his aggressive behavior toward his social superiors” (100). Perhaps had Pardiggle been in earnest about helping and caring for those around her, or the brickmaker’s complaint aimed at Esther, he would have suffered rebuke, but where Pardiggle sees moral failing to be addressed by education, pontification, and pamphlets, the novel presents the brickmaker as Pardiggle’s victim, and (according to Schwarzbach), the victim of reform in general. Much like Skimpole, Pardiggle in her zeal for philanthropy and for the brickmaker to reform fails to appreciate the perspectives or conditions of another. She could consider the brickmaker lazy or unmotivated and she believes her admonitions are the necessary antidote to his sloth. Her intrusion is devoid of instruction or support, the care required to make the changes she encourages clear or worth putting into practice, nor does she consider the costs of time, energy, or labor to do so, especially as she neglects the brickmaker’s reluctance to change and his propensity for drink. Pardiggle does not aid

the situation, but gratifies her own ego, insists upon her own way of things while being obtuse about them.

Considered as a victim, the brickmaker is being punished, but unjustly and for conditions outside of his control. He shows that he is aware of his condition - drinking washing water, illiteracy, and dead children, and his poverty is only exacerbated by Pardiggle's presence. Just as Pardiggle is oblivious to the effect her education has on her children, so is she oblivious to the effect it has on the brickmaker. She fails to consider their individual circumstances, and so administers to them in generalized, superficial terms. As Esther states that she and Ada "both thought that Mrs. Pardiggle would have got on infinitely better if she had not had such a mechanical way of taking possession of people" (132-3; ch.8). However, all the blame does not lie with Pardiggle alone. The brickmaker's speech is complicated by his own admissions of alcoholism and abuse: "I'da been drunk four [days] if I'da had the money...And how did my wife get that black eye? Why, I give it her." On the one hand, he is a victim of both Pardiggle and broader social failures rooted in class differences and unsuccessful reform efforts, but he likewise plays the role of villain in his own household, and his wife a victim. The specifics of the black eye are not given, but implied it came from frustration, anger, or drunkenness, which points to a perpetuation of abuse. Society fails and abuses the brickmaker, exemplified with Pardiggle's intrusion, and in turn changes from victim to villain as he creates more victims in his own home.

During his speech, the brickmaker mentions five dead infants, but somewhere between his speech and Pardiggle's pontification, a sixth passes. When Esther and Ada enter, they see "a woman with a black eye, nursing a poor little gasping baby by the fire"

(130; ch.8) only for the child to die during their visit. The two men present, the brickmaker and the man with the dog, withdraw without tear or reverenced silence as Jenny and Liz console one another, leading Esther to remark

I thought it very touching to see these two women, coarse and shabby and beaten, so united; to see what they could be to one another; to see how they felt for one another, how the heart of each to each was softened by the hard trials of their lives. I think the best side of such people is almost hidden from us. (134-5; ch.8)

Hidden or not, Pardiggle is oblivious to it. The suffering of Jenny and Liz is only accentuated when Liz later responds that, if her husband, or her master as she calls him, knew she was out, “he'd pretty near murder me” (135; ch.8). Between the dead infant, the black eye, and the suggestion of murder for disobedience, the state of these “wretched hovels” are places where death and abuse are common, but these are likewise the problems overlooked by Pardiggle and her superficial attention to their conditions. Whether charity is wanted, Pardiggle’s superficial approach fails to address deeper problems.

Despite complaints about Pardiggle and Jellyby from their children and those they inflict their charity upon, they are not criminals. When Bucket and Snagsby visit Jenny and Liz, Liz considers how it may be better for her own infant to die rather than to see him turn to crime. As she says to Bucket, “Think of the children that your business lays with often and often, and that YOU see grow up!” (361; ch.22). This statement points to an awareness of how children become criminals due to the conditions they were born into, in a manner reminiscent of Gridley’s worsening situation: criminals are not born but made. Faced with either premature death or a life of crime, death is preferable. And yet, much as in the case of Chancery and Gridley, putting someone into a position where their

best options are crime or death, including indirectly causing or contributing to the death of another, is not itself a crime. After all, this interaction occurs in the wake of Mrs. Pardiggle violating the privacy and wellbeing of this household and through her negligence did nothing on behalf of those who suffered. Bucket may later visit, but the two visits have nothing to do with one another. Pardiggle did not consider what may have been a just treatment of the brickmaker's family, and yet there is no crime there for Bucket to detect, only a reminder that, in the face of social institutions like the police, professionalized philanthropy, and Chancery, there are only two likely outcomes as these institutions nominally established to help people instead turn them into criminals and cadavers. That Pardiggle and Jellyby escape accusations of criminality is the point. Protected by their social stations and the social acceptability of telescopic philanthropy (much like how Tulkinghorn and Vholes are protected by Chancery and their professions) they escape detection and accusation for the harm they inflict within and outside of their homes. Without their charitable endeavors (and under more modern considerations) they could be guilty of child abuse and neglect. They are equipped with the means to do something on their behalf, and yet they do nothing in support of those who need it most. They are not criminals but villains with victims in their wake, as sure as Tulkinghorn and Vholes. And so, like Tulkinghorn and Vholes, they are protected by their positions, enshrined in Telescopic Philanthropy, free from any official criminalizing scrutiny.

5: Charitable Heroes

In a society dominated by Chancery and where philanthropic efforts do more harm than good, and the local police inspector is myopic and hyper-focused on crimes

and not the conditions around them, there seems to be little for someone who prioritizes the wellbeing of others. As if to drive this point home, the novel includes a brief description of a remote incident like something out of an adventure novel involving the physician Allan Woodcourt, as well as Esther's reaction:

“Mr. Woodcourt shipwrecked!”

“Don't be agitated, my dear. He is safe. An awful scene. Death in all shapes. Hundreds of dead and dying. Fire, storm, and darkness. Numbers of the drowning thrown upon a rock. There, and through it all, my dear physician was a hero. Calm and brave through everything. Saved many lives, never complained in hunger and thirst, wrapped naked people in his spare clothes, took the lead, showed them what to do, governed them, tended the sick, buried the dead, and brought the poor survivors safely off at last! My dear, the poor emaciated creatures all but worshipped him. They fell down at his feet when they got to the land and blessed him. The whole country rings with it. Stay! Where's my bag of documents? I have got it there, and you shall read it, you shall read it!”

And I DID read all the noble history, though very slowly and imperfectly then, for my eyes were so dimmed that I could not see the words, and I cried so much that I was many times obliged to lay down the long account she had cut out of the newspaper. I felt so triumphant ever to have known the man who had done such generous and gallant deeds, I felt such glowing exultation in his renown, I so admired and loved what he had done, that I envied the storm-worn people who had fallen at his feet and blessed him as their preserver. I could myself have kneeled down then, so far away, and blessed him in my rapture that he should be so truly good and brave. I felt that no one—mother, sister, wife—could honour him more than I. I did, indeed! (568-9; ch.35)

This account is a glimpse into adventurous, foreign adventures where Woodcourt can display his heroism through his professional acumen. He is a physician, and so when the need presents itself, he rises to the occasion, even in the face of accident, disaster, and tragedy, becoming a sort of semi-divine figure worthy of worship, as if the account Esther reads were a hagiography extolling his saintly life.

While Woodcourt can apply his heroic, professionalized, medical attention in the wake of a deadly disaster in an adventurous, remote setting, his heroics take the form of

care. Woodcourt's is a story is like something out of an adventure story differs from much of the rest of the novel as it is about providing support to those that suffer – but their conditions are the product of a tragic accident, not the nefarious machinations of an individual. No crime has been committed, no malicious deed effected, so there is no other narrative to present, no Inspector Bucket to step in and steal the show or distract Woodcourt from his medical responsibilities. Esther, by contrast, envies those Woodcourt tended because of their opportunity to express their gratitude and be preserved by him. The parallel is significant because this scene follows almost immediately after Esther recovers from her disfiguring illness: “I lay ill through several weeks, and the usual tenor of my life became like an old remembrance” (555; ch.35). Much like those aided by Woodcourt, she sees herself as the victim of accident or circumstance, whose previous life has been jolted from her, where a heroic physician could have preserved her. On the one hand, the remoteness of his exploits further alienates his heroics because the London of *Bleak House* is a place largely devoid of care, as if there is no space for Woodcourt in London because everything is overtaken by Chancery, Telescopic Philanthropy, and their abuses and wickedness. That this fog-laden London defeats such heroism is suggested when Woodcourt cares for but is ultimately unable to save Jo. Where Woodcourt was able to rescue and render aid to many in the wake of the shipwreck, he is one among many who take the ailing Jo into their care, including Charley, Mr. George, and Phil Squod, and despite their efforts, Jo still dies. However, the novel neither condemns nor critiques their efforts. The novel recognizes their efforts and sincerity in caring for him despite their inability to rescue him, reinforcing how the wickedness that pervades London can overpower even the heroic Allan Woodcourt.

Rather than finding fault with the heroic physician's failure with Jo, the novel turns its ire outward: "Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, right reverends and wrong reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day" (734; ch.47). Jo's death is a product of the broader social and institutional failures and shortcomings, not those who are unable to rescue him. The narrator also says of Jo that "He is not one of Mrs. Pardiggle's Tockahoopo Indians; he is not one of Mrs. Jellyby's lambs, being wholly unconnected with Borrioboola-Gha; he is not softened by distance and unfamiliarity; he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article" (724; ch.47). That he is "home-made" is a reminder that, much like how it requires the attention of several to attempt to care for him, it is also through a combination of domestic forces that have made Jo who he is, including his own homelessness. Jo's isolation is belied by the value he has to others and the connections to others in the novel, beginning with Nemo. As I have remarked elsewhere,

Jo may 'know nothink' but he is as connected as anyone else; unfortunately, he does not, or rather cannot, identify the value of what knowledge or connections he has. His lowness contrasts him with many characters, such as Tulkinghorn, whose social position enables him to gather information, exploit connections, and commit blackmail. (Hatch 67)

Considering how Jo is misused and abused by Tulkinghorn, Bucket, Mrs. Snagsby, and Chadband, throughout the novel, the gathering of others around him points to the form of care the novel argues for: the formation of communities not rooted in the corrupt and corruptible social institutions. In contrast to the law (Bucket and Tulkinghorn), Telescopic Philanthropy (as quoted above, the novel highlights Pardiggle

and Jellyby's absence from Jo's life), and even pontificating religiosity (Mrs. Snagsby and Chadband), the novel shows a servant, a soldier, a physician, and a cripple coming together on Jo's behalf (not unlike the milkman, Beadle, and Esther who collaborate to liberate Peepy from the railing). This suggests the solution to the problems that plague society are neither in the social institutions nor in the work of individual heroes, but in the coming together of those who care, sympathize, and are willing to put another's needs ahead of their own. This becomes apparent when we consider the first person in the novel to be saved from destitution: the novel's heroine and one of its narrator's, Esther Summerson. Considering how many characters in the novel are variously some combination of villains, victims, criminals, heroes, and detectives, Esther exemplifies a pairing not found elsewhere in the novel (at least not to the same extent): she is both hero and victim.

Esther's narrative begins with her being emotionally abused by her Aunt Barbary, who kidnapped her after birth, leaving Lady Dedlock to believe her child was dead, and proceeded to raise Esther scornfully as her goddaughter. Considering how effortlessly well-behaved Esther became, the way she was raised, and the manner of her rescue by Jarndyce, she almost has more in common with Harry Potter than Hercule Poirot, and her tale, like many of those that follow it, is marked by the presence of a hero, victim, and villain. In this case, Esther is the victim of her villainous Aunt Barbary's lies and emotional abuses, and she is rescued by John Jarndyce. As her steward, he sends Kenge to check on her and sees to her being educated and be able to be a teacher herself, before she is brought to Bleak House to be companion to Richard Carstone and Ada Claire, and eventually, be engaged to Jarndyce. Though Jarndyce is not present much of the time in

her life, Esther recognizes him as the peculiar man on the train who offered and then immediately discarded the cake Esther rejected and learns that he has perpetually been in the background, a kind of fairy godfather, rescuing her from destitution by moving her from a state of isolation with her aunt to positions where she could engage with and be part of communities where she could both be nurtured and nurture in return before she becomes part of the Bleak House community.

However, Esther's victimhood is short lived. Esther provides her entire backstory, including her aunt's death, meetings with Kenge and Jarndyce, and her coming to Bleak House, within the novel's third chapter, which is the first which Esther narrates. Nowhere else is she overtly victimized by another. There is nothing to suggest she considers following Richard Carstone to his disastrous fate (her rise contrasts his fall), nor does she suffer any prolonged and manifest trauma from her life with Barbary (Esther is either incredibly resilient or her domestic piety is a maladaptive coping mechanism to an abusive childhood; cf Zwerdlinger). By being "saved" early on, Esther's role becomes more that of an observer, ideal for the novel's domestic angel, but in doing so, she can assess the lives and conditions of others. In other words, she gains privileged access not unlike Bucket's. While Esther uses the account of Woodcourt's heroism to place herself in the role of a victim (of accident), the novel uses it to remind us that she is the novel's heroine through parallels to her own life and experience with those of Woodcourt's. As the model Angel in the House, Esther is defined by the charitable and domestic qualities that she exhibits in ways similar to Woodcourt, and if he is a hero worthy of worship for tending to the sick, burying the dead, and calm and brave through it all, then Esther herself is of a similar form.

Esther's charity, and that which makes her the novel's heroine, contrasts with the methods employed by the rest of the social institutions in London. Rather than self-gratification and self-righteousness achieved through the exploitation of others and justification through social institutions that nominally do good, Esther focuses her attention and energy on the betterment of others, even to her own personal risk as demonstrated by her taking Jo into her care despite the possibility of infection. Mrs. Pardiggle may work hard in the name of her philanthropy, but it's more noise and show than care: she never looks close enough to appreciate the suffering and death around her as Esther does. Similarly, where Esther will go out of her way to help, Tulkinghorn refuses to keep his word to Hortense and is ready to dismiss the impoverished Jo. Of course, and has been referenced by other scholars and in this very chapter, self-sacrificing to the extent that Esther does is problematic. Dickens establishes her, in her saintliness, to stand as a direct opposite to the exploitative forces for Chancery and misguided philanthropy, making her into a heroine not because she (in contrast to Gridley) can attack these well-established if corrupt institutions. Her heroism lies in her efforts to benefit others. Esther is certainly a problematic embodiment and glorification of the domestic angel, but this does not mean that she does not exhibit positive traits and examples. Though Dickens himself may not agree, it calls to mind a caution the ancient Christian church implemented regarding the lives of martyrs: they are powerful stories and examples, but they are not to be emulated or actively repeated.

Esther's domestic saintliness is directly contrasted with the novel's domestic failure, Pardiggle and Jellyby. After spending the night with the Jellybys, Ada recounts to Jarndyce how "Esther was their [the children's] friend directly. Esther nursed them,

coaxed them to sleep, washed and dressed them, told them stories, kept them quiet, bought them keepsakes...and, cousin John, she softened poor Caroline, the eldest one, so much and was so thoughtful for me and so amiable! No, no, I won't be contradicted, Esther dear! You know, you know, it's true!" (85; ch.6). In the face of being made a heroine, Esther as narrator interjects in the middle of Ada's praises (in place of the ellipses above) "My dear girl! I had only gone out with Peepy after he was found and given him a little, tiny horse!" (85; ch.6). The line uses Esther's demure self-deprecation and humility to establish her qualities as a domestic angel but also to set her as a (questionable) measurement against which Jellyby and Pardiggle fail. Their domestic failures are emphasized by Esther's intervention. However, where Woodcourt's narrative has no villain, Esther's has several, all of whom provide villainous, malicious, neglectful contrasts to her good nature. In doing so, according to Juliet John, "The text holds the domestic ideal up to scrutiny as well as self-consciously promoting it" (256). In doing so, Esther, much like both the London Narrator and her own savior, John Jarndyce, creates a refuge for others, even as she becomes "a symbol of the Victorian fetish of privatization" (Bivona, Henkle 61).

The comparison to John Jarndyce, however, is not without problems of its own. The allegorically incestuous match between Esther and Jarndyce (Jarndyce is not her father, but he is a father-figure) is, to put it mildly, creepy. It points to a level of control and grooming that, seemingly even for Dickens in the 1850's, was sufficiently unsettling that Dickens introduces Woodcourt as a convenient matrimonial alternative, so Esther may marry someone less paternal for love rather than duty. It simply adds to another layer of a questionable degree of devotion to the cult of domesticity. Scholarship of the

novel has reflected considerably on her being a representative of and the unrealistic nature of the cult of domesticity and the Angel in the House. Esther is so untarnished by drama and conflict that even when Lady Dedlock realizes that this is her daughter and confesses the connection, the event and circumstances have little effect on Esther. She neither expresses great gratitude at having gained a mother, nor does she express outrage at being a bastard and therefore unable to inherit, nor does she condemn her aunt-godmother. The parentage is more a matter of convenience than a significant turn of the narrative, as if Dickens were stretching to link his two plots through his demure heroine.

While Esther is certainly an unrealistic representation of an unhealthy and impossible ideal of womanhood, she nevertheless represents many positive aspects that contrast with the abuses that appear throughout the novel. Where others are either overwhelmed by or exploitative of social institutions, she represents an alternative way to live, one based around charity and kindness rather than exploitation and abuse. Esther suffers under Ms. Barbary and from her illness so that she may be saved and thereby have a model of another to follow in her establishment of her own care community. Her heroes are John Jarndyce, who saves her from the isolation Barbary raised her to be in, and Allan Woodcourt, who has a doubled heroic role. First is as the professionalized hero of a shipwreck and second as her romantic partner, sparing her from a life as spouse to John Jarndyce. Schaffer describes how

in the first decades of the nineteenth-century, subjects tended to understand suffering as a natural part of human experience, ameliorated by ordinary people providing pleasant distractions. But around midcentury, a modern medical idea began to emerge. This new paradigm held a more dramatic view of suffering: a healthy body develops a catastrophic fault that requires a heroic intervention by an expert to cure it. (*Communities of Care* 23)

With Esther's two heroes, we see these different responses to forms of suffering, whether it be social isolation, romantic unfulfillment, or medical malady. Esther's role as suffering victim exists so she can learn for herself, care for others, and be the means for others to show alternatives to Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. John Jarndyce effectively rescues Esther, Ada, and Richard from the ruinous suit (though Richard returns to it) and Woodcourt's remote adventure and active heroics are a sharp contrast to the aptly named Telescopic Philanthropy: he doesn't just look and pine for those who suffer remotely but is present and active in supporting those around him.

Of course, reading Esther in such a way returns to her problematic depiction and a suspicious reading as her victimization is what makes her a hero. She is not so much a character representing the dynamics of individual life as she is a patient, suffering, and caring figurehead whom we are to admire, but in admiring her, we, reading a century and a half later, must concede that as she is emotionally abused into submission by her aunt (a suffering the novel makes explicit but Esther doesn't acknowledge) only for her to be set up as friend and companion to Ada. It is as if to say the ideal domestic wife must have been beaten into a submissive shape to begin with. While there is a moral in here about overcoming adversity and rising above abuse, it is not one the novel makes explicit or problematizes. After her death, Miss Barbary is virtually absent from the novel, only being referenced when Mr. Guppy uses her to make the connection between Lady Dedlock and Esther Summerson. Ms. Barbary thereby is not treated as a villain to be scorned or a trauma to be overcome, but a link in the puzzle. While we should take Esther's abusive upbringing as a step in her becoming a domestic angel suspiciously, as well as the fact that the novel doesn't explore or problematize this point, it is significant

that Esther and John Jarndyce are not interested in perpetuating or repeating this process. The community that surrounds Esther in the novel's ending is a stark contrast to her isolated formative years, creating a refuge for others who have suffered from others. It is notable that among those who are in Esther's immediate circle of acquaintances are refugees from the social institutions the novel explores and critiques: Caddy from Telescopic Philanthropy; Ada from Chancery; Charley from the police (as well as a brief commentary on the failure of Borrioboola-Gha). In doing so, Esther avoids what her aunt did and instead follows Jarndyce's example with his rehabilitation of Bleak House: create a space where those who suffered may find solace and respite.

Regardless of how questionable her upbringing was, Esther opens her life to others and looks for opportunities to provide solace and support - much like the fictional detective. Not in the sense that she solves crimes and gathers evidence, but that she provides resolution to the problems of others caused by the villains in their own lives. This is most apparent in the cases of Caddy Jellyby, Jo, and Charley. Each faced with some sort of villainy - Caddy by her mother; Jo by Bucket, Tulkinghorn, and Skimpole; and Charley by the bailiff who arrested her father and, indirectly, Skimpole again. They find solace in Esther's care and are welcomed into her found family. Of course, Esther is not alone in this effort. Beyond her immediate circle of John Jarndyce, Ada, and Richard (until he rejects Jarndyce), her narrations show her expanding her circle of influence as she can engage with more people, and while she may be a principal character in their rescue and relief, she does so with the support of others. Even when Esther falls ill, Charley reciprocates the care Esther showed her. Esther thereby provides an alternative to Jarndyce, who takes Richard and Ada into his care because they are party to the Jarndyce

and Jarndyce suit. Despite John Jarndyce's efforts to leave the case behind, he is still followed by it and his charitable decisions are influenced by it. Esther is not so discriminating in welcoming others into her circle, with her welcoming the ill and ailing Jo into her care, despite the possibility of infection. Rather than take those in need of help and shape them, as John Jarndyce did with her, Esther meets them where they are and works with them as part of a larger community. In doing so, Esther establishes a safe place for those around her in contrast to the other spaces dominated and infiltrated by corrupt social institutions. By following Esther into marriage, the novel suggests an alternative to the corruption and exploitation of Chancery with family and voluntary service. Esther replaces potentially exploitable social institutions, helping show how, according to Talia Schaffer, "in Victorian fiction, care really does take a village. And these fictional villages could boast much more diverse carers than in normative practices" (*Communities of Care* 62).

Perhaps no combination of diverse carers in the novel is as telling as when Bucket requests Esther's help in finding Lady Dedlock, who has fled out of fear of discovery. Bucket, who has otherwise been a sort of henchman or antagonist, volunteers to seek out Lady Dedlock out of concern for Sir Leicester rather than duty or employment. Bucket recognizes the need to pursue Lady Dedlock as well as the difficulty he may encounter, and so enlists Esther. The explanation Bucket gives to John Jarndyce is

If I follow her alone, she, being in ignorance of what Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, has communicated to me, may be driven to desperation. But if I follow her in company with a young lady, answering to the description of a young lady that she has a tenderness for—I ask no question, and I say no more than that—she will give me credit for being friendly. (863; ch.56)

Bucket acknowledges the impact his presence can have on people as well as Lady Dedlock's situation, having previously suggested Lady Dedlock means to commit suicide. Considering how Esther is the demure domestic angel, her going about with Bucket, across London on a wintry night as participant in an investigation, is quite different from what might otherwise be expected of her. However, her assistance is an act of care and to do so is in her character. Bucket may pursue Jo and Gridley to their inadvertent deaths, but not Esther engages in a rescue mission. In doing so, she supports both Bucket and her mother without any immediate possibility of reward and as an opportunity for the novel to redirect the detective's otherwise antagonistic energy. Rather than creating victims through his pursuit of them, Bucket can pursue Lady Dedlock as someone unjustly victimized. That he requires Esther's help speaks not just to her familiarity with Lady Dedlock, but also Esther's own willingness to support those in need. In the following chapters, Bucket undoes the work of Smallweed in discovering the will and delivering it to Jarndyce (even though the suit's depletion of funds renders it useless), demonstrating his interest in and concern with care. Though Bucket may be antagonistic at times, he is not a villain, but a demonstration of the complex nature of the very social institutions the novel critiques. Once Bucket is no longer beholden to Tulkinghorn (whether as hireling or solving his murder), his approach to problems persists, but can focus more on the wellbeing of others. No longer obliged by Tulkinghorn, it becomes clear that Bucket himself was subject to the exploitations of Chancery and those who would abuse the law for their own gain.

Of course, Bucket and Esther do not work alone. Their pursuit of Lady Dedlock brings them into contact with Jenny, the brickmaker's wife, and Allan Woodcourt, Mr.

Snagsby, and even Jo, though by this part of the novel he is dead.¹³ Not only is the pursuit of Lady Dedlock linked to other narrative interests and even the far removed and deceased Jo, but it shows the communal nature of care, requiring a diversity of people, their own experiences and knowledge to work together. Though a community may be as abstract as the system Gridley laments, its operations are fundamentally different, primarily in the way it focuses on the wellbeing of its members. Talia Schaffer describes how communities of care require a fluidity and transposition of roles: the cared for one day may be the carer the next. Contrasted with the other monstrous systems of Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy, Care relies on systems and actions where “human value is preserved and extended” (Jackson; qtd in Schaffer *Communities of Care* 4). Value is thereby found in its individual members and their wellbeing. Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy can operate even when those like Gridley and the Brickmaker are weakened and die because they are not part of its system. They are resources ripe for extraction, and to nourish them would mean depriving those in the system. In a community of care, the community is strengthened through a communal synthesis and “emphasizes synchronicity, the mutual exchange of assistance” (Schaffer, *Communities of Care* 77). Each party in a system invested in care is strengthened through the participation and engagement of others. By contrast, the more Richard leaves Jarndyce and the community at Bleak House for the company of Vholes and Skimpole, the more he is enervated. They do not form a mutually beneficial trifecta, but a vampiric partnership, with Richard as its

¹³ Jo dies at the end of Chapter 47, “Jo’s Will”, and Bucket and Esther pursue Lady Dedlock through chapter 57 one of the “Esther’s Narrative” chapters.

prey. Removed from Esther, Ada, Jarndyce, and their community, he is left to wither and die.

Though the novel shows Esther's formation of this village as she visits new people, makes new acquaintances, it is the novel's final chapter, with Esther commenting on friends and families, that this village takes shape. In this final chapter, Esther comments on her daughters, Ada and Richard's son, Charley, and Caddy's marriage to Turveydrop, and so Esther, through her marriage with Woodcourt, can eschew Chancery and the case by obtaining her middle-class life, reinforcing middle-class principles, rooted more in cooperation and family than in the oppressive dominance of Chancery. It likewise signals the possibility of liberation from obligations born from altruism or philanthropy as her marriage to Woodcourt also means she can marry out of love, rather than be tied by marriage to John Jarndyce, her philanthropic father-figure. This newfound family and community of care with the Yorkshire Bleak House, with Esther at the center, represents a social structure in direct opposition to Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. Where these institutions were imbalanced and worked to serve those who ran them at the expense of others, this community offers a diversity of lives, experience, and expertise. The novel does not dwell for long over the Yorkshire Bleak House, but the mutually beneficial relationships that compose it have been on display throughout the novel. This resolution with the newfound family reflects on the novel, not just through the Chancery abuses but at the broken and dysfunctional families and communities, starting with Miss Barbary. Considering the state of Bleak House at the start of the novel, it turns into an exploration of how a new family may develop, and a significant part of that is in the community of care.

While the closing chapter does offer some insight into this found family or village, a passing reference to Mrs. Jellyby stands out. In a chapter otherwise about how having found happiness and solace in their current situations, Esther states “Mr. Jellyby spends his evenings at her new house with his head against the wall as he used to do in her old one,” and describes Mrs. Jellyby’s “great mortification from her daughter’s ignoble marriage and pursuits” and her “disappoint[ment] in Borrioboola-Gha, which turned out a failure” (987; ch.67). Caddy’s parents are not described as members of the same community, but tangentially related. Skimpole undergoes a similar fate, departing unceremoniously from the novel after, according to Esther “a coolness rose between him and my guardian” and Skimpole’s published journal, which “showed him to have been the victim of a combination on the part of mankind against an amiable child” and condemns John Jarndyce as “the incarnation of selfishness” (935; ch.61). The omission of Jellyby and Skimpole shows how, even from these villages and found families of carers, that some are either neither welcomed nor invited, omissions made even more ironic by Skimpole’s insistence that he is above prejudice in his last speech in the novel (934; ch.61). To include Jellyby and Skimpole would be akin to returning to Chancery (which is also not referenced in the last chapter), inviting destructive persons back into a community where they could victimize and exploit: “care communities only work well if the members behave well, and there are particular forms of bad behavior—lying, silence, exploitation—that can destroy a community of care” (Schaffer, *Communities of Care* 21). Jellyby and Skimpole are just two examples where the novel shows how the home, philanthropy, and the law can be exploitative. While Esther may indicate that she or

others consciously reject Jellyby or Skimpole, their selfish approaches would be hazardous to this found family.

3: NO OTHER SUCCESS CAN COMPENSATE:
FAMILIAL AND DOMESTIC FAILURE IN *EAST LYNNE*

1: Trauma and Impoverishment

For Ellen Wood's 1863 novel *East Lynne*, crime and criminality are the byproducts of domestic trauma and impoverishment. The conditions emerge from *East Lynne* depicting the home as a part of - not apart from - the realities of social, political, judicial, and economic life. The home is not an isolated, sacrosanct space, where wife and mother reign supreme and administer goodness unto their families, but is one among many interconnected, interdependent arenas of social life. For example, remove external income and the home cannot function; similarly, deprive those in the home of training and education and they will be ill-suited for social life. The success of one sphere depends upon others. However, this interdependency does not mean that the values that make one successful in one arena will yield success in another. In her article, "The Sensational Story of West Lynne: The Problem with Professionalism," Talia Schaffer says of Archibald Carlyle "the qualities demanded for a good professional man— attentiveness, concentration, focus—end up, Wood shows, impoverishing the home" (240). The same applies to many other characters as they bring conflicting and competing values and priorities into the home. These self-assured characters introduce managerial forms contrary to the needs of the home to gratify their own self-righteousness. They fail their domestic and familial responsibilities, and so strip their homes of security, felicity, or stability and converge on those who require but are denied a nourishing home. The novel goes further and suggests that by denying others any responsibility, they are left ill-

prepared for the world and turn to crime because they were not entrusted with any responsibilities of their own. Rather than be properly trained and educated, Richard Hare and Lady Isabel Vane are mocked and spoiled. The consequence of this is that when confronted with the realities of life and that threshold of marriage, neither possesses the material resources nor the wisdom to make good decisions. Ill-prepared, they seek support elsewhere and become criminals and outcasts. Meanwhile those who impoverished the home continue largely unpunished because their managerial forms are elsewhere normalized, accepted, and successful.

Stemming from conceptions of the home and the structure of society from works like Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) and Patmore's "The Angel in the House" (1854-1862), the Victorian ideal of the home was of a sanctified, rarefied, but most importantly of all, a privatized space. Ruskin, Patmore, and others saw the home as a sanctuary that sends its goodness out into the world and offers a respite for the family that calls it home. This notion has been thoroughly addressed (and attacked) over the decades for its unfortunate consequences, foremost among them the ironic position of women and mothers. They are depicted as angelic figures who could solve the world's problems but had to be "protected" (confined) to the home. The approach taken in *East Lynne*, however, is not so much about the roles of women in the home as it is with the role of the home in society. Just because the Victorian home is a private space does not make it a safe space. The private but interconnected nature of the home makes it a space where abuses can begin and permeate. Cornelia's stinginess helps ensure *East Lynne*, in its early days under Archibald, stays solvent. Solvency, however, is a financial matter, and while it is important for a home to remain solvent (as Lord Mount Severn's profligacy shows),

the wellbeing of those within the home should not be cast aside in the name of profit. When this occurs, the home ceases to be a space for domestic respite, care, and nurture. It becomes a space subjected to moralistic tyranny by those who steer it in a way ill-adapted to the needs and conditions of domesticity.

Without the home as a haven and place of support and education, the novel's criminals, Richard Hare and Lady Isabel Vane (criminal in a moral if not legal sense) are left without recourse and turn to crime for affection and companionship, not for financial or economic gain. Indeed, both are denied this by those they, respectively, pursue and were seduced by, but their crimes are directly linked to failures of those whose responsibility it was to support and educate them. Richard Hare and Isabel Vane's experiences are complicated entwining of plots of criminalization, victimization, parallels, and foils that bring together social, economic, domestic, sexual, and even religious concerns. This confluence demonstrates how failures are not isolated, but that they compound and cascade. Failure in one sphere can result in failure elsewhere. Richard and Isabel's crimes are simply so egregious that they necessitate expulsion from polite society, despite how their failings and crimes are the products of those around them. The porousness of the Victorian home is further accentuated by the repentance and redemption Richard and Lady Isabel introduce upon their returns to their homes and families and opening the possibility for others to repent and seek redemption.

This is not to suggest that *East Lynne* champions the virtues of the cult of domesticity. On the contrary: it is to argue that the novel explores the implications for the misuse and abuse of domestic spaces and how this extends beyond the home. The novel does not suggest this porousness is a weakness in its domestic spaces or a product of

failures but is a reality of social life. Ellen Wood, or rather Mrs. Henry Wood, was aware of how financial crises can lead to a crisis of home as her husband's own speculations impoverished their family and led her to adopt a literary career. The novel depicts Archibald Carlyle as a good, honest, ethical lawyer and Cornelia Carlyle as a woman with a sound, efficient approach to business, legal and financial matters. These are not bad people. These are not dastardly Dickensian villains. After all, a lack of sound financial wisdom leads to the liquidation of the titular East Lynne estate. The novel admires their successes and recognizes their positive qualities (which is also why the novel is less kind to the capricious Justice Hare, the profligate Lord Mount Severn, and the rake Francis Levison). However, whatever positive aspects they have do not mitigate the damage they inflict upon those in their homes and families. The motto of the novel may very well be a statement from James Edward McCulloch's 1924 quasi-religious educational work *Home: The Savior of Civilization*: "No other success can compensate for failure in the home" (42).

2: The Murder of Hallijohn and the Injustices of Justice Hare

Considering the time of the novel's publication and its interest in privacy, abuse, crime, and scandal, anyone looking for an Inspector Bucket or a Sergeant Cuff is to be disappointed. R.F. Stewart, in his *And Always a Detective* laments, "one can easily imagine work for a detective in...*East Lynne*, but nothing materializes" (183). Archibald could enlist a detective to assist in clearing Richard Hare's name, identifying the enigmatic Mr. Thorn; or a suspicious detective could menace Lady Isabel as Madame Vine, like Grimstone in Braddon's *Aurora Floyd*. Nevertheless, there is much detection

in the novel. Foremost is Archibald Carlyle's investigation into Hallijohn's murder. Unlike his menacing counterparts from *Bleak House*, Carlyle represents a conscientious, careful, and honorable legal practice. He values his clients' wellbeing and avoids needlessly extending their cases and works *pro bono* on Richard's behalf. Even Lord Raymond Vane, even if it unfolds in a single chapter, investigates why Isabel abandoned her family. In both cases, the dual nature of detective fiction as explained by Tzvetan Todorov plays out: the story of the investigation and the story of the crime (44).

Archibald Carlyle and Raymond Vane are reminders that detection in Victorian novels is frequently performed by those who are not detectives. Examples include fellow barrister Robert Audley of *Lady Audley's Secret*, and insurance agents in Charles Felix's *The Notting Hill Mystery* and Dixon Druce of L.T. Meade and Robert Eustace's *The Sorceress of the Strand* who would follow decades later. Even those not connected to legal professions, such as Walter Hartright of Collins' *The Woman in White*, engage in detection. Though Carlyle may not be a professional detective, he is in a professionalized position that enables him to gather information and advocate on his client's behalf. Much like many of the more heroic fictional detectives, Victorian or otherwise, his focus is on what is right and civil, not on earning his fee. As for Raymond Vane, he needs to do little beyond interview Carlyle and Lady Isabel and to put the pieces together. However, while the novel follows investigations of its own, the conclusions reached by Carlyle regarding Hallijohn's murder and Vane about Isabel's adultery only tell part of their stories. The very fact that there are major elements that contribute to and precipitate Richard and Isabel's flights are overlooked by their respective detectives, and it is these other major elements that the novel pursues.

Most commentary on the novel prioritizes Isabel and references to Richard are sparse, if he is considered at all. The summary on the back cover of the Broadview Press edition, used for this study, makes no reference to Richard or his plot at all (likewise the Oxford World Classics edition). To cite a personal experience, when recommending the novel to a friend, I focused on the tale of adultery, abandonment, and redemption, only including the murder mystery as an engaging but decorative supplement. Scholarly prioritizing of Lady Isabel's plot may stem from feminist scholars such as Elaine Showalter (1977) and Jeanna B. Elliott (1976) who found in the novel complex treatments of women, feminine relationships, marriage, divorce, maternity, etc. These and other related issues have been discussed at length by scholars such as Lyn Pykett, Ann Cvetkovitch, Talia Schaffer, and others. Nor is the novel limited to a female scholarship, as scholars such as Andrew Mangham ("Ellen (Mrs. Henry) Wood"), Andrew Maunder, Dan Bivona ("The House in the Child"), and Brian McCuskey have commented on the novel's depiction of gender relationships, roles, domesticity, privacy, and surveillance. Despite a range of attention, however, the murder investigation is almost always overlooked or given scant attention, even in the works of Bivona, Maunder, and McCuskey, who emphasize surveillance and policing. With a feminist perspective, there is little out of the ordinary for Richard's plot to offer other than a routine narrative about patriarchal oppression, though this focuses more on Justice Hare than on Richard, and Isabel provides more compelling examples (and will be discussed in greater detail below).

However, Richard's plot is important for the novel because it provides a framework for Isabel's plot to follow and complicate. Not only do the two plots, to quote

Elisabeth Rose Gruner, “share a thematical and structural interest in motherhood or, more broadly, parenthood” (“Plotting the Mother” 312) but Isabel’s plot expands upon and complicates the narrative elements of criminalization and victimization that occur in Richard’s. Richard Hare is accused of murdering a local farmer, George Hallijohn, while courting Hallijohn’s daughter, Aphrodite “Afy” Hallijohn. The case against Richard is strong. The murder weapon was his own pistol, and witnesses place him in the vicinity of the Hallijohn home, with one of them, Otway Bethel, confiding in Carlyle that he saw Richard with gun in hand leaving the Hallijohn home, though he withheld this information at the inquest so as not to worsen matters for Richard, especially as Richard did not appear at the inquest, solidifying official and public suspicion against him. When meeting Carlyle, Richard insists upon his innocence and that the murder was committed by a stranger to West Lynne, an aristocratic dandy and rival for Afy’s affection, Captain Thorn, and that he, Richard, had loaned the gun to Hallijohn. Carlyle is not initially optimistic about Richard’s explanation but decides to consider the possibility and make inquiries. As he does so, Carlyle becomes increasingly convinced of Richard’s innocence and investigates. The investigation, however, is limited by access to witnesses - Otway Bethel and Locksley spend most of their time away from West Lynne and Afy has vanished to London in the wake of her father’s death, where some believe she is living with Richard.

Despite the sensational scandal the murder provides, the investigation, conducted by Archibald Carlyle, lingers in the novel's background.¹⁴ The most scandalous aspects of the murder plot in *East Lynne* - the duplicitous courtship, the murder, Richard's flight - all occurred 18 months before the beginning of the novel, and are presented by Richard in a clandestine conversation with Carlyle. References to the investigation appear sporadically and in hushed tones, primarily between Carlyle, Barbara, and Mrs. Hare, as information is gradually collected whenever someone connected to the investigation - Otway Bethel, Locksley, and Afy Hallijohn - appear. The investigation nevertheless contributes to Isabel's plot, as Carlyle's meetings with Barbara spur Isabel to suspect his fidelity, a suspicion Levison encourages and exploits. Even George Hallijohn, the murder victim, is narratively sidelined¹⁵ as the novel is more concerned with establishing Richard's innocence, facilitated by establishing the identity of the real murderer. This may draw a connection between Richard and Isabel as both are victimized and criminalized through the efforts of the same villain, but the connection is superficial because Richard is not directly antagonized by Levison, with nothing suggesting Levison targeted or framed Richard. Considering his election campaign and seduction of Isabel, Levison is an opportunist rather than schemer. Levison is not an active threat to be handled with care or avoided, no scheming, conniving dastardly manipulator from an

¹⁴ Compare this with Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, which focuses exclusively on the investigation or *Aurora Floyd*, where the police detective Mr. Grimstone's presence threatens newfound stability after Aurora's first husband is murdered.

¹⁵ Hallijohn's first name is only used 4 times in the novel, first being uttered by a policeman late in the novel when arresting Francis Levison. Other uses of the name "George" in the novel are either exclamations or references to King George the Third and St. George.

Agatha Christie novel. As far as Richard is concerned, Levison is more of an inimical MacGuffin: its nature and details don't matter, so long as there is something there. The real threat to Richard is his father, Justice Hare.

During their interview, Archibald informs Richard that, after the guilty verdict was handed down at the inquest Richard was not present for. In that meeting, Justice Hare "took an oath in the justice-room, in the presence of his brother magistrates, that if he could find you he would deliver you up to justice, and that he would do it, though you might not turn up for ten years to come" and concludes by stating, "You know his disposition, Richard, and therefore may be sure he will keep it" (76; ch.4). While Carlyle's first comments address Justice Hare's drive for justice, his comment on Justice Hare's disposition shifts the discussion from the law-room and "brother magistrates" to personal and familial associations. This shift creates parallels between courtroom, home, and family. Though voiced by Carlyle, these reinforce how Justice Hare sees little difference between his profession and his home (this also shows how Carlyle likewise doesn't differentiate, discussed below). This is not an issue of legal precedent or procedure, but the capriciousness of an individual who manages his home and the courtroom with the same disposition. The issues at stake, therefore, are multifaceted and cross these various boundaries. Carlyle and Richard don't just need to consider the law, but familial and personal connections as well. Richard's response to the oath is to further shift matters into the familial and domestic by stating that his father had taken every opportunity to mock and abuse him, that

I know that he never treated me as he ought...If my health was delicate, causing my poor mother to indulge me, ought that to have been a reason for his ridiculing me on every possible occasion, public and private? Had

my home been made happier I should not have sought the society I did elsewhere. (76; ch.4)

Deprived of a nurturing environment in the home, Richard sought affection elsewhere, but, as his story attests, this left him a fugitive, wrongly (but not unreasonably) accused of murder.

Despite his title and position, Justice Hare provides little “justice” in the novel and establishes how capricious the administration of justice may be. No major scenes feature him serving judgment in the courtroom, and his practices are called into question by others, including the narrator. Talia Schaffer describes him as “a rural, crude, jovial magistracy in which no specialized training is ever dreamed of, and presiding at the bench seems reliant on pipes of tobacco and drinks. He is no professional, but a version of an eighteenth-century squire, and his rulings are ludicrous” (“The Sensational Story” 230). The reference to tobacco and drinks demonstrates Carlyle employing flattery and exploiting the Justice’s vices rather than by any appeal to legal precedent or statute, whispering to Justice Hare that “We could not get on without you; all heads...are not gifted with the clear good sense of yours” (86; ch.5). On the one hand, this suggests that Justice Hare is pliable and supple, susceptible to change, but his obstinacy regarding his son suggests otherwise. Instead, it shows that the way to win over Justice Hare is not through careful legal consideration but by conceding to his self-righteousness. Carlyle’s comment is also a reminder that Justice Hare is one among many justices. Though they go unnamed, Archibald Carlyle invites many justices to his apartments to discuss a case, each justice presumably with their own perspective on the issue, as it has been brought to the attention of others and, again, the decisions have been brought into question. There is

no indication that any one of these unidentified justices possesses anything approaching sound judicial judgment or that Justice Hare could consider any as having the same “good sense” Carlyle flatters him with. In doing so, the novel establishes how “the law is dangerous because capricious, prone to unpredictable errors and abuses” the very problems the law exists to prevent (McCuskey 368). This event is especially telling because Carlyle uses it as a blind, to deceive Justice Hare and remove him from his home so Archibald can visit Richard in secret.

If justice is inextricable from those who dispense it, then it is difficult to divide the (un)professional workings of Justice Hare from the restrictive way he manages his home. Justice Hare’s domestic influence is felt even before he first appears. The scene opens with Mrs. Hare, “the poor invalid,” waiting at home with an agonizing thirst (60; ch.3). She waits for the prescribed time to take her tea according to her husband’s dictates, even though he is not present and despite her daughter, Barbara’s, recommendations (Boucher 94). When Justice Hare enters, “with pompous features, and a pompous walk” and his wife requests the tea be served early, his response is that “Oh, it’s near seven; you won’t have long to wait” and the narrator comments that “He had not spoken unkindly or roughly, simply with indifference” (61-2; ch.3). Ironically, such judicial indifference and exactitude may be befitting the courtroom, but not for an invalid wife. Despite such tonal indifference, Justice Hare’s inescapable presence is felt further when Barbara insists on a fire being made and Mrs. Hare insists to their servant there be, “Plenty of sticks, Jasper, that it may burn up quickly,” followed by the narrator’s commentary that she spoke “in a pleading voice, as if the sticks were Jasper’s and not hers” (62; ch.3). Despite her being a marriage partner and mistress of the Grove, Mrs.

Hare is not free to act, or if she does, it is because Barbara has consented, but the actions must still be furtively to evade Justice Hare's judgments.

Justice Hare invokes a sense of Foucauldian Panopticism, but this is felt more by his family and not practiced by those who could surveil his home on his behalf: the servants. In his article, "The Kitchen Police," Brian McCuskey states "the Victorian novel constructs servants as a domestic police force precisely because they are not agents of discipline. Instead, servants act as surrogates of discipline, standing in for the forms of power and authority that circulate invisibly within Victorian society" (363). While there are certainly situations where this is the case, Jasper and the other servants at the Grove (and even elsewhere in the novel) are either not complicit in the dominance of disciplining forces or can be easily deceived. For example, when Mrs. Hare and Barbara give their servants wine and cake, in honor of Anne's (Barbara's elder sister) birthday so Richard may visit his home while Justice Hare is away. The tense anxiety of being observed is present, but with careful maneuvering, surveilling agents are set aside or avoided. If the servants were surveilling agents of Justice Hare, they would report the fire being made without his consent. The case could be made that Justice Hare would notice the missing sticks, but this stockpile is presumably kept in the kitchen or some space reserved for servants, household supplies, or other mundanities, and so is outside of his purview. The prevailing sense is less that Justice Hare permeates all and more that what Justice Hare doesn't know won't hurt him, and that this is practiced by both Justice Hare's family and by his servants. Similarly, Barbara mentions a servant, Eliza, who was dismissed for continuing to refer to Richard by name, despite Justice Hare's insistence that Richard not be mentioned by name (75-76; ch.4). These indiscretions are presented

as forgetfulness by the servant but are sufficient infractions as to be dismissed by Justice Hare. Such forgetfulness and lapses in judgment are not the making of servant-driven panopticism. While Justice Hare may not domineer through panopticism, he does so through his dictates and an insistence. As a Justice, his dictates in the courtroom are final, and he brings the same domineering force into his home. It is as if Justice Hare cannot comprehend that he could be in the wrong about anything, hence requiring Carlyle's use of flattery and plying him with cigars to lure the Justice into a different way of thinking. Justice Hare's word is law. The implication, therefore, is that any variation from his stipulations are criminal acts and should be handled accordingly. Of course, there are no implications that Justice Hare places his family under house arrest or deliberately deprives them, and Barbara shows significant ability in defying him. Nevertheless, Mrs. Hare and Richard have been abused to the point where any variation must be kept hidden or they must flee to escape the Justice's justice.

The above-described circumstances of Richard's plot point to two overlapping plots in the novel. Foremost in the novel is the plot of the investigation, with Carlyle as detective trying to find the true criminal with Richard as the victim. This plot drives the conflict surrounding Richard and even contributes to Isabel's flight from East Lynne, but it is not the only circumstance wherein Richard is victimized. This leads to the second plot, which is how Justice Hare's mocking abuses of his son made Justice Hare a villain and Richard a Victim. Of course, and as discussed above, the two plots are not mutually exclusive. Justice Hare's victimization of his son facilitated the circumstances for Richard to pursue Afy and become Francis Levison's victim as well, even if for Levison it is more a convenience than a nefarious endeavor on his part. Richard Hare, therefore, is

the victim twice over, with the resolution of one plot becoming the catalyst for the resolution of the other. Distinct as these two plots may be, they both require one another. The investigation plot therefore becomes embedded into the larger paternal conflict and the resolution of the mystery and clearing of Richard's name is necessary for Justice Hare to come face to face with his own errors and change his ways. Just as one plot provided the groundwork for the other, the resolution of one enables the resolution of the other. This enmeshing of plots in Richard's case is made clear early in the novel, with the aforementioned discussion between Carlyle and Richard and the question of the inquest becoming a question of a father's treatment. This establishes a pattern Lady Isabel's plot will repeat. A similar overlapping of plots of criminalization and victimization appears as Isabel moves from place to place, abuser to abuser, and in each situation, she is (much like Richard Hare) treated as the villain and criminal. Much like how Richard is interpreted as a murderer, Isabel is repeatedly presented as being criminally in the wrong. Whether by virtue of her class, vanity, adultery, or even for the failings of her father, she is seen as responsible regardless of the consequences of others' influence on her life. Ellen Wood's dwelling on Isabel's internal turmoil as Madame Vine points to how Isabel *is* guilty of much she is accused of, as opposed to Richard. Nevertheless, much as how the novel expands the plot of the investigation on Richard's behalf to show how he was victimized long before the murder, so too does the novel point to how others have made Lady Isabel miserable and victimized her long before her sins of infidelity.

3: The Crimes – and Sins – of Lady Isabel

Though her crimes may not be criminal in the same way as theft, arson, or murder may be, Lady Isabel's marriage is a matter of a legal contract and her adultery a violation of strict social and religious codes. Her adultery not only gives grounds for a divorce, signaling her failure to adhere to her marriage contract, but it also points toward her failure to live up to "the pressures placed on [her] gender and class group" (Boucher 91). In this way, she resembles her profligate father: engaging in contracts and agreements but failing to keep to their terms (she also resembles Richard in that she was absent from any inquiry or court proceedings where she could have pled her case). Beyond the fact of the divorce, the novel provides few details about its nature or conditions, save that Carlyle would not pursue damages because, according to Lord Mount Severn, "He holds the apparently obsolete opinion that money cannot wipe out a wife's dishonor" (though great damages were awarded by the jury which Carlyle handed over to the county hospital) (360; ch.31). Isabel suffers the legal consequences, and, like Richard, becomes a fugitive. However, unlike Richard, her fugitive status is based on her social standing. No one swears revenge against her or to bring her to further justice: the law accomplishes what it can. Nevertheless, she still faces the shame and social opprobrium of her transgressions. She is rendered a *persona non grata* and cannot return to either East or West Lynne, unlike her seducer Levison. Even in their small abode in France, Levison mentions that their servants believe them to be married to prevent any scandal (360; ch.31). She may not face imprisonment, but she is an exile from her home and family because her crime was a violation of both the legal and social standards and expectations of wife and mother.

Isabel, however, does not dwell exclusively on the legal and social aspects.

Instead, Isabel (aided by the narrator) emphasizes her violation of divine law:

She had forfeited her duty to God, had deliberately broken his commandments, for the one poor miserable mistake of flying with Francis Levison....The very instant—the very night of her departure, she awoke to what she had done. The guilt, whose aspect had been shunned in the prospective, assumed at once its true frightful color, the blackness of darkness; and a lively remorse, a never-dying anguish, took possession of her soul forever. Oh, reader, believe me! Lady—wife—mother! Should you ever be tempted to abandon your home, so will you awake. Whatever trials may be the lot of your married life, though they may magnify themselves to your crushed spirit as beyond the nature, the endurance of woman to bear, resolve to bear them; fall down upon your knees, and pray to be enabled to bear them—pray for patience—pray for strength to resist the demon that would tempt you to escape; bear unto death, rather than forfeit your fair name and your good conscience; for be assured that the alternative, if you do rush on to it, will be found worse than death. (335; ch.26)

The language is religious in nature, invoking God instead of the law, earthly courts, or police; her soul rather than her reputation; temptation, and the term “trials” clearly refers to hardships one endures in life and not the formal criminal courts. There is the invocation to prayer as a response to trials and temptation, and the idea of a fate worse than death. The narrator’s commentary presumes divinely appointed values and mandates about the nature of marriage and maternity, and that Lady Isabel has knowingly disregarded these. The spiritual component establishes the rest of her plot: through self-inflicted suffering while trying to fill an approximation of a maternal role, she can make amends and achieve redemption.

However, though divine redemption is open to her, there is no space for earthly exoneration. Her crime is her own and neither ignorance nor work can undo it. Even though she acted on bad information, she still sins in her adultery and abandonment,

despite Levison's involvement and deception, Carlyle's neglect, and Cornelia's abuse, among others. Instead of exonerating her, her ignorance further condemns her for losing faith and trust in her husband and making false accusations against him and answering his presumed infidelity with her own infidelity. Aside from her letter to Carlyle accusing him of unfaithfulness, Isabel does not dwell on the abuses she endured at East Lynne. She accepts her condition and looks forward to the torments of her self-imposed penance.

What is common across Lady Isabel's journey, both before and after her adultery, is that her suffering (and victimization) stems from the domestic and familial neglect of others. This is not to suggest that Lady Isabel deserves to be pampered or shielded from every discomfort, but that those around her are so fixated with their own values and concerns that Lady Isabel becomes a secondary concern at best and an annoyance at worst. Lady Isabel has not been raised to sufficiently contribute, as she has little to offer anyone else beyond her beauty and good manners, nor does she raise any concerns or problems when she is mistreated. Likewise, those around her are not interested in caring for her. This is not "care" in a servile, exploitative, or invisibilized sense, but in a mutually beneficial arrangement of support (Schaffer, *Communities of Care* 6). A pampered lifestyle under her father initiates this cascading failure. According to Maunder, "Isabel's failings as a middle-class wife stem from her immersion in a completely different mode of behavior, having been raised as an aristocrat in an economically and physically degenerate family unit" (62). Had Lord Mount Severn been more responsible with his wealth and her education, she would not have been left destitute and helpless. Once her father dies, she must face the fact that she has neither money nor talent and must rely on the kindness of others to subsist, a kindness she is denied.

Her belief that she is divinely at fault only worsens when Lord Raymond Vane finds her in France and informs her that what she thought was infidelity was Carlyle's guardian against domestic tyranny, albeit of a home other than his own. Between religious and legal matters, there is also her position as a mother and domestic housekeeper, but here too, she falls short. Simpson says that "it is Isabel's lack of occupation after her marriage that lowers her self-worth and impedes her judgment" (594). Isabel did little as Carlyle's wife; indeed, she wasn't brought up to be much more than an ornament, and Cornelia never gives her an opportunity to govern. She is therefore flung between extremes, expected to fulfill multiple roles, but never adequately fulfilling them due to a lack of training and education. Despite civil, social, and religious matters, Isabel's being deceived and misinformed has no bearing in the matter. According to her reflections, it was her obligation to persist, even with an unfaithful husband, despite whatever suffering may follow. This perspective is repeated later in Barbara's comment to Alice Challoner, Levison's wife: "Still he is your husband" (625; ch.56). When Alice rails against him for his crimes and deceits, Barbara points out that she, Alice, must remain with Levison even if he is a scoundrel. The implication is that even if Carlyle were the unfaithful scoundrel Levison makes him out to be, she would still not be justified in these violations. Lady Isabel's fall from grace prompts Andrew Maunder (in paraphrasing Miller's *The Novel and the Police*) to comment "the realist novel's function as a guidebook to impressionable young women or would-be transgressors, by showing within the narrative, the unequivocal consequences of deviating from prescribed codes of conduct" (62). To deviate from prescribed codes of conduct is to set oneself up for social scrutiny and punishment.

Of course, despite there being no law broken, her flight leaves East Lynne in need of an explanation, and so the facets of her life and those around her open to scrutiny. However, because there is no legal obligation for an investigation, it is left to amateur work and Carlyle's support of Richard can be kept a secret.¹⁶ There are two separate investigations into Lady Isabel's crime that are much more succinct than those into Richard's. They are given little attention in the novel and are resolved without fanfare because each center on the reasons behind Lady Isabel's abandonment. Lady Isabel's being seen leaving with Levison, her behavior with Joyce, the note left behind for Archibald, and the infant Francis are enough to condemn her. The mystery is not *what* she did but *why*. The first of the two investigations occur immediately after her flight, when Carlyle, Joyce, and Cornelia debate and the discovery of the note left by Isabel. The second is the investigation conducted by Raymond Vane. Those left behind after Lady Isabel's flight contemplate her actions, moving from suicide to kidnapping before considering that she could be abandoning her family, highlighting the fact that her infidelity is the worst and most unthinkable of all possible explanations.

The search has the hallmarks of a mystery story in its early stages: witnesses, testimony, evidence in search of a motive, all of which leaves two possible explanations, both pointing in different directions, with neither acknowledging the other yet without ruling the other out. These include Joyce's accusation of Cornelia's abuse and Lady Isabel's letter accusing Carlyle of infidelity. Joyce's accusation provides a possible and

¹⁶ A police investigation might seek out Lady Isabel's motives, which would hinge on Carlyle's visits to the Grove, which could compromise his own work for Richard as it could mean exposure and compromising a client's position.

reasonable explanation. However, Cornelia's guilt is cast into doubt when Carlyle discovers the letter accusing him of infidelity, vilifying him but upon false grounds. The implications are that Isabel was spurred to action by other forces, even if the decision was hers. Foremost among these outside forces is, of course, Francis Levison, but Cornelia and Carlyle are also condemned for their treatment of Isabel and making Levison appear to be a viable option. In either case, her husband and his half-sister had both failed Isabel as they had made East Lynne an unsafe place for her. However, despite explanations and the possibility that Lady Isabel was deceived, abused, and seduced, Lady Isabel inevitably fills an ignoble, even villainous role in this situation: she was not removed under duress from East Lynne, but succumbed to seduction and abandoned her husband and children. Even with evidence that could explain her behavior, it does not excuse or justify it, and the letter to Carlyle only furthers the mystery, necessitating the second investigation of Lord Raymond Vane.

A year after her abandonment and now a divorced and fallen woman, Lord Vane assumes paternal responsibility on her behalf. Visiting her in France, he states "it is a father's duty to look into motives and causes and actions, although the events in themselves may be, as in this case, irreparable. Your father is gone, but I stand in his place, there is no one else to stand in it" (357; ch.31). What Raymond Vane describes as a "father's duty" is the work of a detective. This also provides a moment of noble action from the aristocracy (Tromp, "Mrs. Henry Wood" 261) and a moment of parental oversight and concern that has otherwise been absent from Isabel's life. Raymond Vane explains how he went to East Lynne where Carlyle showed him her letter, which led to Carlyle's explanation of his work on behalf of Richard Hare, explaining that what Isabel

thought was his infidelity was actually Archibald protecting Richard from his volatile father. This news deepens Lady Isabel's sorrow, reinforcing in her the idea that, not only was she in the wrong to leave regardless of her husband's actions, but that she wronged a good man.

However, while Vane's investigation is thorough, it overlooks the possibility that Isabel was the victim of abuse. It fixates on the note left by Isabel and her presumed jealousy, while giving Archibald space to account for himself, something Isabel was unwilling to do before her flight. In the entire chapter where Lord Vane meets with Lady Isabel, there is no mention of Cornelia. Raymond Vane's investigation satisfies the mystery raised by the letter and looks no further. Though Lord Raymond Vane's investigation suggests that Isabel is guilty and acted out of haste and rashness based on insufficient and inaccurate information, Joyce's accusation of Cornelia is a reminder that external factors contributed precipitated Lady Isabel's flight. Though Archibald, his household, society at large, the law, and even the novel itself may see her as an adulteress deserving of her fate, she is nevertheless a victim of those around her. Every domestic situation Lady Isabel enters turns to her detriment because those connected with her fail their domestic and familial responsibilities. Lady Isabel may be a criminal, sinner, and failure, but she was given little opportunity to be anything else.

The investigations, in their brevity and simplicity, demonstrate how those around Lady Isabel continue to fail her as they do not consider a broader perspective. When Isabel accuses Archibald of infidelity, there is no consideration of how Cornelia abused her or how her father failed her. He does not contradict Joyce's accusation but forgets about it. Similarly, when Raymond Vane meets with Isabel, he does not suggest that

Carlyle could have been more open or upfront with his wife, but that all the blame lies on her. Of course, Joyce's accusation of Cornelia likewise does not consider Archibald's own failures or Lord William Vane's treatment of his daughter. Each picks up a piece of the puzzle, as it were, and tries to explain everything by drawing a single line between Isabel's abandonment and the actions of another. These investigations, therefore, are superficial, much like how the society of West Lynne is quick to condemn Richard Hare. The evidence is significant and damning in its precision, but a larger situation exists that complicates matters.

4: Paternal Negligence

The opening lines of *East Lynne* establish the characters and relationships between Lord William Vane, Earl of Mount Severn, Archibald Carlyle, and Lady Isabel. The aged beyond his years Lord Mount Severn is looking to sell the estate of East Lynne to help ease the debt he has incurred from his wasteful lifestyle, burning through an excess of his 60,000 pounds per annum, which has also left his only daughter, Lady Isabel, with nothing to inherit of her own. Carlyle enters, and by virtue of his middle class, professional values, and inherited fortune, can purchase East Lynne and thereby help Lord Mount Severn in his financial troubles. Though Carlyle does not completely alleviate Lord Mount Severn of his debt or the threat of his creditors, he does provide some relief. Despite the chapter being entitled "The Lady Isabel," it begins with Lord Mount Severn. Where he was once cautious and studious, a promising barrister, he is now wasteful and irresponsible. Lady Isabel therefore is unlikely to be left an inheritance, due not only to Lord Mount Severn's profligacy, but also due to his Gretna Green

marriage, depriving his wife of any inheritance of her own that could be passed down to Lady Isabel.

The novel neither criticizes nor condemns Lord Mount Severn for the sale nor is Mr. Carlyle vilified for his purchase. The novel treats the financial transaction as a valid and appropriate one, and one well-handled according to applicable laws. The need to sell East Lynne is only a symptom of his deeper profligacy. Lady Isabel is not victimized by the sale of the estate but by her father's neglect of his responsibilities as a father to ensure his daughter is educated and cared for. Lady Isabel is spoiled sweet (as opposed to being spoiled rotten), but she cannot survive on charms and beauty alone; as stated by the narrator, she was "reared in seclusion more simply and quietly than falls to the general lot of peers' daughters, completely inexperienced, Isabel was unfit to battle with the world" (217; ch.17). Of course, the sale does not leave Lady Isabel homeless (this is accomplished through his death). It is but one estate owned by her father and one that is not entailed, but it shows Vane's priority is in clearing away his debt: any rearrangement of his affairs is to his own benefit, not that of his daughter. He openly admits that he had not been careful enough with his finances to leave anything behind for Isabel, and after his death, the new Lord Raymond Vane complains that the late Earl had not even insured his own life to provide for Isabel. The sad appearance of matters is that Lord Vane prioritizes his own finances over the wellbeing of his daughter. The novel is clear that his death was premature and unexpected: "His years were barely nine and forty, yet in all save years, he was an aged man" (41; ch.1). Perhaps had he turned things around in his next decade of life, he could have better provided for her, with there being some faint indication that this is his aim. Nevertheless, the sale of East Lynne, conducted in secret, is

not done to benefit Lady Isabel: nothing of the sale is set aside for her and she is to bear the brunt of his recklessness.

The sale of East Lynne juxtaposes Lord Mount Severn's profligacy with Carlyle as a middle-class paragon who has both inherited money (from his mother) and is a respected professional. The comparison shows how the burgeoning professional middle class must rise to the occasion where the wizened aristocracy fails. Catherine Gibbs discusses how the responsibility of social morality "devolves on the middle-class because it has been abdicated by an effete and corrupt aristocracy" (51). Likewise, Ann Cvetkovich remarks that "Isabel's melodramatic affects can be read as the aristocracy's form of decadence, which must be renounced by the bourgeoisie in favor of the work and discipline that allows them to attain the status of class they aspire to replace" (109) and Andrew Maunder remarks that the "tale of identity for the newly affluent middle classes [which] draws upon the discourses of degeneration to reinforce both bourgeois (moral) hegemony and notions of aristocratic decline" (63). Daniel Bivona even considers how the fall of the "upper-class figure to be the proper subject of dramatic attention, the riveting spectacle which unifies the action of the novel" ("The House in the Child" 113). The aristocratic fall certainly commands attention, and the spectacle of East Lynne overrun by creditors adds to this. As the gout-laden indebted aristocrat, morally, socially, and financially fallen, Lord Mount Severn suffers from his decisions, but most of all brings suffering upon his daughter Lady Isabel. Upon his death, she is not only bereft of a father, but of any peaceful space she may comfortably call home. She isn't simply denied a comfortable home but her very own sense of peace and security as she learns that her

lifestyle was founded on lies and deception perpetrated by her own father and she is left to the ire of her scornful relative, the new Lady Mount Severn, Emma Vane.

Lord Vane victimizes his daughter by failing to provide for her or prepare her for life. The novel represents this with the degree of destitution Isabel faces and her subsequent dependency on others as she becomes a transitory figure. Isabel inhabits more homes and under different conditions than anyone else in the novel. Richard may move between London and West Lynne, but Isabel is the less grounded of the two. This peripatetic condition derives from her father's failure because he did not sufficiently provide for her, whether in terms of setting aside money or in other training and preparation. Because she was not trained or educated to care for herself, others must care for her. Though her initial home was Castle Marling, she is visiting East Lynne as it is one of her father's estates. After his death, she returns to Castle Marling, but not as daughter to an earl but as the destitute niece of the new Earl. She then returns to East Lynne as wife of Archibald Carlyle, spends a period in France for her health where she is courted by Levison. Lady Isabel's peripatetic life would culminate with the train accident, having moved from place to place, between different roles, relations, and classes, and even between life and death. Of course, as Madame Vine she must assume some responsibility and works as a paid companion to the Crosby family and eventually governess to her own children. Her movement may continue with her new identity, but it returns her to her previous home where she may have an opportunity to fulfill some of the responsibilities she abandoned.

Regardless of the distinction between how Lord Mount Severn and Lady Isabel view East Lynne, the sale points to an important aspect of homes: they are material

commodities.¹⁷ They are bought and sold, just as much as the things within them, such as when Lady Isabel asks Carlyle whether her own clothes are hers or if they were included in the sale with the furniture. On the one hand, the sale of the estate is an intrusion of public, business life into domestic space. On another, it is a necessary part of life. In either case, Lady Isabel is left unprepared. Lord Mount Severn's many creditors enter the estate and plan to lay claim to furniture until they are interrupted by Mr. Carlyle and the declaration that they were sold to him (the carriage, horses, and, as it turns out, the deceased's body, are not so protected). The creditors own words are reminders of the transactional nature of domestic life: the things in the home are manufactured, traded, bought, and sold, and Lord Vane's irresponsible mismanagement reduces everything back to this monetary state. Whatever domestic value they possess comes with a price tag that includes the many other professionals who were involved in its creation and distribution. Any sentimental value attached to something pales in comparison to its value in pounds. The home and everything in it are inextricably linked with the world outside the home, and the home becomes another point of economic, financial, transaction, demystified from its sanctified station.

¹⁷ The liquidation of East Lynne also challenges notions of separate spheres. The novel's depiction of social spaces as porous signals the way in which different spheres of life impact and intrude upon one another, especially the home. In the case of Lord Vane, it is how the profligacy of the wasteful aristocracy undermines the home as a potential haven by turning the home from a familial and domestic space into a financial asset, and one that must be exchanged in secret. To Lord Mount Severn, it is an asset that can be dispensed with to help him manage some of his costs and debt. It is not separate from the world of business and finances but is encompassed by it. This could be read as public life intruding upon the private, but the cause of the sale is Lord Mount Severn's own profligacy and vanity. He sells it secretly to uphold a certain persona that keeps him in a position of prosperity and prestige. He aims to maintain the facade of aristocratic prosperity.

Of course, any sentimentality is undermined by Lord Mount Severn's profligacy and his unjust actions towards his daughter and creditors. He is considered a scoundrel who "has ruined thousands" by his wanton lifestyle, and while the arrest of the body is looked down upon, no one can state whether it is or is not illegal, and Carlyle references an actual case of it happening in the past.¹⁸ Whether or not an earl could be sent to debtors prison is another matter, but the novel and its characters are clear in their judgment, even if they vary in degree: Lord Mount Severn was a villain, if not a criminal, who spent what he did not have and while his debts are the main focus and his many creditors are left with little they can do, the consensus is that his greatest crime was in leaving his daughter destitute. The prolonged impact of the injustice of failing his daughter is highlighted by the arrest of the corpse: death may liberate him from consequences, but not those around him. Lyn Pykett discussed how the wife pays for the husband's lack of sympathy, but here, the same can be said of father and daughter (*Improper* 120).

While Lord Mount Severn's creditors are willing to see Lady Isabel as a fellow victim, she nevertheless shared in the spoils of her father's profligacy, making her complicit or an accomplice, at least in the eyes of some of the debtors. In response to being told that they cannot meet with Lady Isabel and that she has no knowledge of the state of affairs, an unnamed creditor declares "She didn't find it trouble to help to spend our money" (134; ch.10). The moment lacks the drama of a pair of Jewish sentinels standing guard over the cadaver, but the implication is clear: Lady Isabel participated in

¹⁸ A footnote in the Broadview edition cites the 1841 funeral of Robert Carr, Bishop of Worcester, as possibly being the case Carlyle references (139; ch.10).

the spending of the borrowed money, and so she shares in the responsibility. Lady Isabel therefore is a criminal and villain, party to a wantonness that “has ruined thousands” (136; ch.10). She benefited while they were cheated, and yet she was ignorant and is among the ruined. Her fate indicates a conflict of justice. For the creditors to leave her anything would mean for her to be treated with the justice she (or the novel suggests) she deserves, by doing what her father had not. However, if any creditors did leave her anything, they would walk away with less, their own demands for justice not met, and none can be generous in this situation because, with the number of creditors, if any retreat and forgiveness of the debt, another would take their place and demand their fair due. Lord Mount Severn, in death, leaves a situation wherein justice cannot be satisfied: his daughter uncared for (emphasized by her ill-treatment under the new Lady Mount Severn) and thrust on the kindness of others, while others are left in comparable situations, doomed to never have what they were promised returned. The balances of justice left behind by Lord Mount Severn are not only imbalanced but broken: to satisfy one would be to rob from the other, and there are none responsible save the late Lord Mount Severn.

Faced with a situation with no resolution she can enact, Lady Isabel needs a rescuer and finds one in the form of Mr. Archibald Carlyle. Though Archibald cannot restore Lady Isabel to a position of wealth and status, he can spare her from the wrath of the debtors. As East Lynne is his estate, he can dismiss them and provide some comfort to Lady Isabel by reassuring her that her clothes are her own, and, upon her departure from East Lynne, a hundred-pound note. The significance of the hundred-pound note stays with Lady Isabel as she includes it in a recitation of happy marital moments in a

dying speech before Archibald at the novel's end. Archibald reappears to rescue Lady Isabel from the harassment of her extended family and offers to marry her, affirming his love and that she will grow to love him (168; ch.12). Though dramatic, these heroic acts are superficial at best. Though he purchased East Lynne, providing Lord Mount Severn with some financial relief, it is not enough, and the purchase of the estate does little to alleviate Lady Isabel's orphaned condition. The circumstance is only a few steps away from a Romantic or Gothic novel. Lady Isabel's circumstance parallels the Dashwood family in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*: deprived of a patriarch, the women are forced onto those who ought to be sympathetic but cannot be bothered. Rather than provide Lady Isabel with a sure foundation to live her life, these circumstances reinforce her victimization. With no means, she is left to be shuttled from one abuser to another, before and after her marriage.

5: The Abuses of The Stingy Spinster

Though Lord William Vane brings ruin to his own home and family, the novel similarly demonstrates that the opposite end - absolute frugality - does not yield a better result. Cornelia Carlyle's financial inclinations are a stark contrast to the wantonness of Lord Mount Severn. She is relentlessly preoccupied with earning and saving money and disdains those who do not espouse her economic zeal. When Cornelia is introduced, Wood tries to present her economic obsessions positively. However, almost every situation she appears in she is, to quote Barbara Hare, "that cantankerous old Corny" (71; ch.3). When discussing rejected suitors, the novel recounts one in particular: a new curate. The curate's nervous stammering led her to believe he was seeking a subscription,

not a marriage proposal (79-80). She never even considers the possibility of marriage and is outraged by the proposal when it comes out. Not only will she tally the economic cost of every transaction, but she considers no other way to interpret any interactions. That she is a single, property-owning woman in Victorian England is related to this. If Cornelia married, her property would transfer to her husband (Simpson 591; though this outcome is not discussed in the novel). She is so involved in business of any kind, going so far as to force her brother to reveal the reasons for Barbara Hare's visit, that she comes off as intelligent and capable, but stubborn and prying in contrast to her brother's usual discretion in his legal practice. She may be good with money and legal matters, but with little else. Neither Lord Mount Severn nor Cornelia has much understanding of the worth of money. One is ruined and ruins by excess, and one whose excessive stinginess ruins others. One has expended his resources, and the other has hoarded, but without any goal. As Cornelia forces her economic management on East Lynne and Lady Isabel, it is important to remember that she is not entirely wrong. Household management requires familiarity with financial matters: the care and maintenance of a home relies on the economic transactions that take place outside of it.

Cornelia's fault, therefore, in forcing her stingy values onto others, not in blending the economic and the domestic. This plays out regarding Mr. Kane's concert. Kane's interest in music has left him unable to pay for his large family, though not out of any abuse or neglect (Though Cornelia would disagree). To raise money to care for his family, he holds a public concert. His chances of success are slim until Lady Isabel uses her aristocratic position to draw attention to it. For Mr. Kane, continued domestic success relies on public performances and the intervention of others, especially the aristocracy.

Those in attendance may not dictate how Kane should manage his household, but they provide for him through their attendance. However, the novel demonstrates that this is by no means the rule of interdependent social life. To return to Schaffer's statement about Archibald, the attributes that yield success in one arena may impoverish another. One cannot manage a home, a marriage, or a family, in the same way one manages a legal practice, a musical concert, a party, or financial investments. Similarly, the demands of social life may require one to yield certain priorities or obligations in favor of some other concern. Lady Isabel demonstrates this when she convinces her father and Mr. Carlyle to attend the concert by appealing to the influence her and her father's attending would bring. Neither Lord Mount Severn nor Mr. Carlyle shirk the benefit that would come from the concert and the unfortunate condition of Mr. Kane, his wife, and seven children, even if they lack Lady Isabel's altruistic zeal. Cornelia takes the reverse course. She does not consider Kane's concert a worthwhile investment and sees little more than the price and material nature of the tickets, and condemns Kane for perceived paternal, social, and domestic failures: "Poor folks get a heap of children about them, and then ask for pity. I should say it would be more just if they asked for blame" and refuses to believe the concert could be a pleasant evening, entirely rejecting her brother's interpretation of events (115; ch.8). The exchange contrasts with Mr. Carlyle telling Lady Isabel that Kane "is half starved" (113; ch.8). Hearing this, Isabel is distraught, even contrite and repentant of her "her carelessness, her ignorance, her indifference" for not offering him a meal while he tuned their piano (113; ch.8). For Isabel, a lapse of charity, even if in ignorance, is a grave sin. For Cornelia, charity would be a waste.

Cornelia may not make Kane out to be an abuser or a criminal, but he merits her disdain because he does not meet her expectations of professional and domestic management. Unlike Carlyle, who decides to support the concert at Isabel's recommendation, Cornelia is unwilling to adapt to a different situation or reevaluate her priorities. She may value her self-righteousness, but the novel does not validate her financial piety. The implication is the importance of applying appropriate forms of conduct and behavior to the space and situation. Cornelia may shirk Kane's concert, but she might think otherwise if, in a few years, the Kane brood turned to housebreaking for want of bread. Such hypotheticals aside, these failures to adapt are not simply moments of carelessness or indifference: they are the imposition of one set of values upon another without consideration for their use, application, or appropriateness. Cornelia does not consider how supporting Kane could benefit him or the community she belongs to, only how it empties her own pockets. Her stinginess may make her a wealthy woman and a potentially fine lawyer, but it does not make her a good person. The manager at the office should trade professional demeanor for that of spouse and parent in the home because his wife and children's needs differ from those of his clients, because, as Mr. Carlyle shows (and will be discussed later), it is detrimental to not meet his home and family in an appropriate way.

Cornelia may be unwavering because she has spent much of her life being more mother than sister to Archibald, but she is unwilling to give up authority over her half-brother-son, despite his professional and financial success. The narrator states that she

Reared him, loved him and ruled him. She bore for him all the authority of a mother; the boy had known no other, and, when a little child he had called her Mamma Corny. Mamma Corny had done her duty by him, that

was undoubted; but Mamma Corny had never relaxed her rule; with an iron hand she liked to rule him now, in great things as in small, just as she had done in the days of his babyhood. (78; ch.5)

Archibald may have progressed in life to the point where he can manage his own legal practice and pursue significant retail decisions without her, but she persists in infantilizing Archibald. Her love does not extend to trust, as evidenced when she bullies information from him and Barbara about the latter's visit to Carlyle's offices when Barbara claims her visit is on money matters and Archibald legal ones (88; ch.5). Coupled with her complaints about pipes and curtains, Cornelia walks the line between housekeeper and parent. On the one hand, she has her domestic role as maternal figure and caregiver, but on the other, she refuses to relinquish control or authority to Archibald. Her "love" justifies her suspicion of his meetings, and eventually her punishment of Archibald for marrying Cornelia. Cornelia does not describe her treatment of Lady Isabel as a "punishment," but this is the air it takes. Cornelia considers the engagement an affront against her and her values: Archibald acted without consulting her, his half-sister-mother, and has married someone who, Cornelia assumes, possesses values entirely contrary to her own. Cornelia therefore sees Isabel in a way similar to how she sees Kane: someone who has valued things other than money and profit, has and is inclined to make unwise financial decisions, and therefore is beneath her and deserving of her ire. She, therefore, without consulting Carlyle (much like how he did not consult her) moves into East Lynne and assumes the role of housekeeper. While she may nominally be housekeeper, she is primarily Mamma Corny and will continue her rule.

The position of housekeeper enables Cornelia to perpetually harass Lady Isabel for a non-existent wanton lifestyle. Cornelia's management of East Lynne shows how she

assumes a bastardized maternal role, seeing herself as the wise parent and Archibald as the foolish child. Upon her entrance into East Lynne, she tells Archibald of her former quarters,

I have let it furnished: the people enter today. You cannot turn me out of East Lynne into the road, or to furnished lodgings, Archibald. There will be enough expense, without our keeping on two houses: and most people, in your place, would jump at the prospect of my living here. Your wife will be mistress; I do not intend to take her honors from her; but I will save her a world of trouble in management, be as useful to her as a housekeeper. She will be glad of that, inexperienced as she is: I dare say she never gave a domestic order in her life. (191; ch.15)

The narrator's response is that Carlyle "had great reverence for his sister's judgment: force of habit is strong upon all of us" (191; ch.15). The implication is that Cornelia has trained Carlyle to abide by her precepts, for him to be the unquestioningly obedient child. Cornelia simply gets her way because she has always had her way and because she has trained others to understand that her actions are best. In public (masculine) spaces of business, finance, and even the law, there is some merit in this.

However, while this makes Cornelia financially successful, she weaponizes her frugality in the domestic space. As described by the narrator, "Isabel would have been altogether happy but for Miss Carlyle" and proceeds to describe how Cornelia was "the bane of the household" who

deferred outwardly to Lady Isabel as the mistress; but the real mistress was herself. Isabel was little more than an automaton. Her impulses were checked, her wishes frustrated, her actions tacitly condemned by the imperiously-willed Miss Carlyle....Not a day passed but Miss Carlyle, by dint of hints and innuendoes, contrived to impress upon Lady Isabel the unfortunate blow to his own interests that Mr. Carlyle's marriage had been, the ruinous expense she had entailed upon the family. (216; ch.17)

These harassments stem from Cornelia's weaponized frugality and abusive temperament. As she states upon learning of Archibald's marriage, "I will never forgive him....and I will never forgive or tolerate her" (176; ch.13). Whatever redeemable qualities Wood planned for Cornelia are overshadowed or forgotten behind this spinster's penny-pinching stinginess, demands, manipulation of her half-brother, and for the ire that she sets against Lady Isabel. When Isabel insists upon a new dress for herself and a frock for her daughter Isabel, Cornelia counters Lady Isabel's instructions and when Lady Isabel prepares to have the dressmaker come, Cornelia retorts with "You will be sorry for not listening to me, ma'am, when your husband shall be brought to poverty. He works like a horse now, and with all his slaving, can scarcely, I fear, keep expenses down;" the narrator follows Cornelia's reprimand with "The same tale had been dinned into her ears ever since she married him." (311; ch.26). Considering the fallout of her own father's wastefulness, this is not a light threat. Though the novel does not provide accounting for East Lynne, Carlyle never suggests flagging finances while the servants' gossip focuses on (an exaggerated account of) Cornelia's treatment of Isabel. Contrary to what Miller and McCuskey (369) say of servant gossip, this scene is not about policing or surveillance because Cornelia is confident that she is in the right and refuses to budge or consider alternatives. Her imperiousness generates gossip, but the gossip does not impact her but reinforces the novel's vilifying of Cornelia and maintains sympathy for Lady Isabel.

Such reprimands contrast a conversation between Cornelia and Barbara before Lady Isabel's departure and show that Cornelia acts out of malice rather than a sense of frugality or propriety. When Barbara asks how Cornelia likes Lady Isabel, she responds

“Better than I thought I should....I had expected airs and graces and pretence, and I must say she is free from them” (207; ch.16). This contrasts with Cornelia’s earlier complaint, upon hearing of the marriage from Mr. Dill, that she is “that fine-lady child” (176; ch.13) and to when Lord Vane and Lady Isabel attend church and, in the words of Barbara Hare, “she has no silks, and no feathers, and no anything!...She’s more plainly dressed than anybody in the church!” (107; ch.7). Despite prior evidence to the contrary, Cornelia assumes the worst of Lady Isabel and is disappointed when she does not measure up to the level of indulgence she had presumed. This, however, does not stop Cornelia in her crusade against her half-sister-in-law: despite her own acknowledgements that Lady Isabel is not as bad as she presumed, she still treats her as such. Following her admission that Lady Isabel lacks the presumed finery, she states that “She seems quite wrapped up in Archibald and watches for his coming home like a cat watches for a mouse. She is dull without him...she is more precious to him than any gold that was ever coined into money” which Cornelia concludes is “absurd” (207,208; ch.16). Cornelia then declares that she supposes Lady Isabel’s attachment absurd and provides a description of how Lady Isabel attended to Carlyle during a headache, taking his tea in to him and having her cambric handkerchief on, and suggests that had she, Cornelia, needed to care for Carlyle, she would have administered salts and senna and then gone to bed (208; ch.16). That such marital displays of care and affection are absurd to Cornelia is understandable following her rejection of the curate. Such “fadding,” as Cornelia describes it, is absurd because she considers it to be a waste of time, energy, and resources. Barbara’s silence suggests that she disagrees, but that there is nothing to be achieved by contradicting the stingy spinster.

The combination of servant gossip, surveillance, and finances, however, betray Cornelia in the wake of Lady Isabel's flight with Joyce's condemnation of Cornelia:

I have longed to say it to you many a hundred times, sir; but it is right that you should hear it, now things have come to this dreadful ending. Since the very night Lady Isabel came home here, your wife, she had been taunted with the cost she has brought to East Lynne and to you. If she wanted but the simplest thing, she was forbidden to have it, and told that she was bringing her husband to poverty.... I have seen her, ma'am, come away from your reproaches with the tears in her eyes, and her hands meekly clasped upon her bosom, as though life was heavy to bear. A gentle-spirited, high-born lady, as I know she was, could not fail to be driven to desperation; and I know that she has been. (331; ch.28)

That Cornelia drove Isabel to desperation points to how Isabel did not simply have different values or beliefs that clashed with Cornelia's, but that Cornelia attacked and went out of her way to make East Lynne an inhospitable place for Lady Isabel. This was not simply a conflict of values, as the demure and already suffering Lady Isabel was reluctant to cause further problems and had already entered a state of contrite submission following her father's financial failure and Emma's outright abuse. This was Cornelia weaponizing her own virtues in antagonism to Lady Isabel. Ironically considering the attention scholars have given to Ellen Wood's disdain of the upper classes and the need of the middle classes to take up the slack, Cornelia shows the inverse: an excessive adherence to middle class values can be just as damaging as the wantonness of the aristocracy. If Lord William Vane showed that the home could succumb to outside forces, Cornelia shows that internal pressures could lead to an implosion as Cornelia assumes Emma Vane's role as abuser and victimizer. She is so involved in business of any kind that she forces her brother to reveal the reasons for Barbara Hare's visit and she comes off as intelligent but stubborn and prying in contrast to her brother's usual

discretion in his legal practice. That Cornelia is so obsessed with money and being regarded as good of a lawyer as her father suggests that she reads business matters in a similar legal vein: economic and business decisions are ones to be weighed judiciously, with moral and ethical implications. Lord Mount Severn and Cornelia are foils to each other: one ruined by excess, and one whose stinginess is excessive itself, and neither knowing the worth of their wealth. As for the servant's surveillance, though they were aware of what was going on, it was not reported. The gossip was merely gossip. Empty words devoid of the means toward the correction of Foucauldian discipline. Even after Cornelia's abuse and Isabel's flight, she stays on as mistress of East Lynne until Carlyle remarries, and even then, she does not understand why she is being turned out until Carlyle informs her of his now being against two mistresses. Cornelia, despite being called out by surveilling servants, suffers no correction or guilty conscious for her actions against Lady Isabel.

6: An Inattentive Hero

In contrast to Lord William Vane and Cornelia Carlyle, Archibald Carlyle's approach to finances and money is more moderate. He is financially secure, lives comfortably, and is interested in investing what he has, but he does not shirk work or responsibilities, even being elected to parliament. He does not forsake personal and professional ethics for the sake of profit, nor is he unwilling to drop a few pounds for another's benefit. Archibald Carlyle represents moderation and care for the individual where others focus on their own excessive self-importance, self-gratification, and self-righteousness. Between his good nature and legal acumen, in contrast to Justice Hare in

particular, Archibald is the best situated to do good on a large scale. However, while Carlyle's sympathy and adherence to the law contrasts him with Justice Hare, the two share a common failing: they mix the personal, the private, and the professional. Where Justice Hare does so through capricious dominance, Carlyle does so by forgetting the boundaries between home and work. His failures are not so much from excess as they are a misplacement of priorities and inattention to domestic matters. Prior to his marriage, his life was stable but primarily professional. His maternal half-sister Cornelia is his main familial and domestic association and considering prior discussion of her, she would have established financially solvent and stable professional and household spaces. That the Carlyle apartments are immediately adjoining the Carlyle legal practice show the proximity and blurred space between the two, making their differences superficial (78; ch.5). Though Carlyle has adopted a more conscientious, sympathetic, and ethical approach to other people than Cornelia, his perspective of the world is tinged with either business, money, or both. He is altruistic and caring, but in doing so fails to see his own shortcomings or the dangers that his family and home may face when he mixes the personal and the professional.

As previously discussed, Carlyle's initial relationship with East Lynne is a financial one: he had "been looking out for an eligible property to invest some money upon" (46; ch.1). That he was on the verge of renting it to the Carew family (who appear nowhere else in the novel) just before his marriage is a reminder of this, and his willingness to marry Isabel out of love and practice law in an honorable, respectable way indicates Carlyle is multifaceted and complementary. These various aspects all mingle in one man, but while these are admirable traits they are ultimately to his and his family's

detriment. Having been raised by the stingy Cornelia and considering that his domestic and professional quarters existed side by side in the center of West Lynne (ch 5), it is not surprising that he (not unlike Lord William Vane) lacks the marital and domestic acumen required to let his home be a safe space. Carlyle, therefore, is as unsuccessful as Cornelia in recognizing that there may be a benefit in keeping the professional and domestic separate or that the separate spheres rely on different methods of management and maintenance. With two household mistresses, his wife and his half-sister, Carlyle does little to tend to or oversee the domestic conditions or requirements of his family or to check any potential problems or deficiencies that may arise. Instead, the home becomes an extension of his professional life, a porous space where he may conduct business and attend to clients. In particular, the rakish Francis Levison, who gradually ingratiates himself into the lives of Isabel and Carlyle and then into East Lynne. Carlyle lets this happen despite warnings from friends and associates about Levison's character. While Isabel eventually (she resists at first) succumbs to his seductions, Carlyle likewise is won over, and views his relationship with Levison along conflicting, confused lines between the friendly and professional.

Carlyle, therefore, and much like Lord Mount Severn, fails through his inattention to the conditions of those in his care, which leaves space open for abuse and seduction. Carlyle's poorly defined boundaries between domestic and professional are demonstrated when he takes Richard's case. When he needs to lure Justice Hare away from The Grove to meet with Richard, he offers his own home for the justices to meet over pipes and refreshment to discuss a legal case, and against the wishes of Cornelia. Cornelia's protests, however, have less to do with propriety than with her own condition, of being

“poisoned” by the pipes, and the superficial conditions of the home, namely, the recently cleaned curtains. Though Cornelia doesn’t address the cost of the clean curtains or the cost of Archibald’s proposal to replace them if they are blackened by the smoke (87; ch.5), the implication is that bringing such business matters into the home will sully it, and Cornelia’s undermines her own protests when she joins the justices’ conversation, making the home more an extension of professional matters than a place for domestic ones. The domestic and the professional, therefore, are interchangeable. When all parties concerned are professionals, this is of little concern, as this scene is when the novel informs us of Cornelia that “It was said in the town that she was as good a lawyer as her father had been: she undoubtedly possessed sound judgment in legal matters, and quick penetration” (89-90; ch.6). In this situation, Carlyle uses the home’s porous nature to his professional advantage, and while there is some risk of demeaning the home (the blackened curtains) this is never an issue again. Any threat is a minor one, but only because none of those present pose a threat to the current professional-domestic order of the Carlyle home.

Once matters shift to a married life with children and an Earl’s daughter, the situations and risks change, but no one adapts their perspectives or values to account for the needs of domestic marriage. As discussed above, Cornelia prevented East Lynne from being a safe space for Lady Isabel, as “her impulses were checked, her wishes frustrated, her actions tacitly condemned by the imperiously-willed Miss Carlyle” (216; ch.17). That Carlyle leaves these abuses unchecked is coupled with Lady Isabel’s lack of training or education, combined with Raymond Vane’s confirming a suspicion of Isabel’s that marrying her “had entailed on him an expense and a style of living he would not

otherwise have deemed himself justified in affording” (217; ch.17). It is, therefore, little wonder that Lady Isabel weakens and saddens while at East Lynne, prompting Dr. Martin to suggest some time abroad to regain her strength. In response to the recommendation that she go to either the French or Belgium coast, Carlyle responds with “Should you think it well for her to go so far from home?” (245; ch.20). Carlyle’s query belies the contradictions Isabel suffers under and Carlyle’s inattention. Leaving would do her good, but not because of the remedial effects of change of location or sea bathing but because leaving home would be a respite from Cornelia’s abuses. The fault of Carlyle (and perhaps Dr. Martin as well) is in the inability to see the connection between Isabel’s current domestic conditions and her mental state.

While Isabel’s health does improve in France, it is due to her receiving affection and attention from Francis Levison (in Carlyle’s absence), not from any sea-bathing. While Lady Isabel expressed interest in Levison before her marriage, at the time he denied any possibility of marriage due to his “uncertain prospects” (167; ch.12). However, when Carlyle takes Lady Isabel to Boulogne to recover her health, Carlyle does not stay with her the entire time (though he does stay 3 days when his intention had been only one). Carlyle’s departure creates a void which Levison quickly fills. Though Lady Isabel welcomes his attention and the two spend some time together, the novel points out that he accompanies her, “uninvited,” into her quarters at the Hotel des Bains in Boulogne, and this despite the new earl, among others, discouraging her from any attachment to Levison. Levison volunteers to keep her company in Boulogne, though Lady Isabel “suffered his companionship, as she would that of an indifferent stranger” though he is her only acquaintance there (257; ch.21). Levison’s usurpation of Carlyle’s

role in Boulange is emphasized when Isabel jokes that she is improving and “had no need of his arm and his escort” to which Levison counters that her husband was not there to give her his arm (257; ch.21). The novel implies that these associations with Levison are complementary to her recovery, especially when “she was conscious that all the fresh emotions of her youth had come again” (258; ch.21). The implication being that the “emotions of her youth” refers directly back to her pre-marital sentiments toward Francis Levison, with the further implication that her marriage lacks romance and affection as she had felt toward Captain Levison, much like how Cornelia has turned East Lynne into a place of abuse and devoid of care. Isabel is thereby torn between her heart and her husband, and she is aware of and does what she can to distance herself from Levison, especially after his suggestion that she threw her life away on Carlyle, followed by his declaration of love to her (265; ch.22). Isabel’s response, that “You are talking to me as you have no right to talk!...Who but you, would so insult me, taking advantage of my momentarily unprotected condition. Would you dare to do it, were Mr. Carlyle within reach!” (266; ch.22). Even after Carlyle’s return to England, she feels attraction toward Levison, not her husband. By not fulfilling his spousal obligations, Carlyle carelessly leaves a space for Levison to fill in Boulange. The problem is not an absence of a partner but a lack of reciprocated affection and care.

Carlyle’s lack of affection appears when he prioritizes professional and financial matters over Isabel’s wishes. When Carlyle comes to Boulogne, he has forgotten that Isabel mentioned Levison in one of her letters. Rather than being upset or suspicious over his wife has been spending time with a known philanderer, Carlyle states that he “feel[s] much indebted to” Levison for the care he has shown to Lady Isabel, and invites to dine

with them, with the narrator remarking that “the first meal he had been invited to in the house” (260; ch.21). While the offer of the meal is amicable, it is a transaction. Carlyle has already established that there is little difference between domestic and professional spaces or the economic exchanges that occur between or within the two, going back to the pipes and Justice Hare. Though the narrator doesn’t suggest Levison has any long-term plans, Levison uses this opportunity to ingratiate himself with Carlyle. He lays out his financial situation, his Parisian exile, and asks Carlyle if he sees any way to return to England. After some discussion, Carlyle offers to see Sir Peter Levison, Francis’ granduncle, about the matter. In doing so, Levison mirrors Richard Hare’s exiled condition as he appears contrite, humbled by his situation and in need of support and recommendations, and it gives Carlyle an opportunity to be the friend-professional to assist him in finding a solution to let him return home. Carlyle agrees to do so “as your friend...not as your solicitor” for “in return for your kind attention to my wife” even though Carlyle will effectively be working *pro bono* on Levison’s behalf. While Carlyle describes his actions as those of a friend, his remark that he will do so as a “return” nevertheless makes the agreement transactional. It confuses the difference between friend and solicitor and between professional service and acts of care and treats Lady Isabel as a token in a transaction: friends repaying favors with the wife as the currency.

Isabel’s own self-management is undermined by her husband’s inattention and Levison’s ingratiation with Carlyle, which are juxtaposed with Lady Isabel’s unspoken desire to be separate from the disgraced rake. Carlyle is indifferent to and quickly dismisses her wishes that Levison not visit. Carlyle suggests nothing can be done and that Levison’s “ill doings or well doings cannot affect us for the short period he is likely to

remain” (275; ch.23). While Levison and Carlyle discuss Levison’s financial position and Carlyle agrees to meet with Sir Peter as a friend of Levison’s, Lady Isabel resolves to return with Carlyle to England so that she may distance herself from Levison. She decides to petition her husband out of concern “that further companionship with Francis Levison might augment the sentiments she entertained for him to a height that her life, for perhaps years to come, would be one of unhappiness, a sort of concealment; and, more than all, she shrank from the consciousness of the bitter wrong that these sentiments cast upon her husband” (262; ch.22). This passage foreshadows what will eventually happen in the novel, with her abandoning Carlyle and her family and becoming Levison’s lover and a fallen woman. The narrator continues, stating that

she could no more repress it than she could repress her own sense of being; and, mixed with it, was the stern voice of conscience, overwhelming her with the most lively terror. She would have given all she possessed to be able to overcome it. She would have given half the years of her future life to separate herself at once and forever from [Levison]. (261; ch.22)

Of course, that just in the other room Carlyle is offering to help Levison return from his exile presages when Carlyle will eventually invite Levison into East Lynne, back into his wife’s presence. Carlyle rejects her petition to return with him, not because of a concern for her health, but because they rented the apartments for six weeks. Citing what is effectively a contract and investment, Carlyle rejects not only his wife’s request to return but the purpose of the stay. Her stated reasoning for wishing to return, that “I am so dull without you” was insufficient reason for Carlyle in so doing, Carlyle “commends[s] his wife to the further attention Captain Levison” (262-3; ch.22). That which Carlyle deems beneficial is what Lady Isabel fears. Her outward appearance may be improved (and it is

this Carlyle recognizes) but her mental and emotional situation is compromised because of her anxieties of being near Levison as doing so places her between her marriage and an emotional connection to Francis Levison. Lady Isabel and Carlyle's interests do not align but Isabel is unwilling to communicate her concerns to either her husband or Levison because to do so would be to betray to Carlyle that Levison declared his love for her, which could in turn lead to her owing to her own sentiments for Levison but not for her husband.

Carlyle, of course, does not intend to subject his wife to the very "terrors" she aimed to avoid, but it does show Carlyle's inability to read the conditions of his own home and wife. His inability is highlighted when he first leaves Boulogne, and Lady Isabel remarks, "Do not get making love to Barbara Hare while I am away." The narrator follows this with, "She spoke in a tone half jest, half serious—could he but have seen how her heart was breaking! Mr. Carlyle took it wholly as a jest, and went away laughing" (254; ch.21). Carlyle's laughter at the thought of a romantic attachment reflects Cornelia's response to the curate's ill-fated proposal. Perhaps had Carlyle recognized some concern in his wife's words he would have been more careful with his visits to The Grove and in his reporting of them to his wife. Of course, as shown when Barbara visits his office early in the novel and Cornelia's subsequent interrogation, it requires more than Lady Isabel's demure inquiry to gain information, but instead requires Cornelia's scrutiny and demands. Unfortunately, Carlyle never sees how her heart breaks or considers how Barbara's visit to East Lynne while she is recovering in France could be poorly received, especially considering Carlyle's own forgetfulness regarding Levison. It is only in Lady Isabel's outward displays of pain and sorrow after the death of her father and under the

abuse of Lady Emma Vane that he recognizes her as someone suffering and in need.

Ironically, as his wife, she is silent about her suffering. After all, he had saved her from a destitute life as a dependent upon Raymond and Emma Vane. He was her hero who took her suffering seriously and acted on her behalf, whether to the amount of a hundred pounds or as a marriage proposal. However, his heroic deed completed, he presumes to settle down to a mundane life.

Isabel, therefore, makes reasonable claims against Carlyle but does so upon the wrong grounds. Upon her desertion, her note for Archibald accuses him, stating that he “goaded her to it” and that he should tell their children, if they inquire after her, that “you outraged and betrayed her, driving her to the very depth of desperation ere she quitted them in her despair” (332; ch.28). While accusatory, the narrator’s free-indirect commentary states that it “was totally incomprehensible. How had he outraged her? In what manner had he goaded her to it. The discomforts alluded to by Joyce, and the work of his sister, had evidently no part in this; yet what had he done? He read the letter again, more slowly. No he could not comprehend it; he had not the clue” (332; ch.28). The reference, of course, is to Archibald being seen at The Grove, where, presumably, he was having an affair with Barbara Hare. Carlyle’s bewilderment, his inability to imagine what he could have done to betray his wife, bespeaks his inability to see his being at the Hare household as anything but a professional engagement. To quote Talia Schaffer, “Since Carlyle has assigned these meetings to the category of work, it never occurs to him that anyone else might imagine they belong to the category of home” (“The Sensational Story” 238-9). Of course, much as Carlyle cannot consider how his appearance at The Grove could be misconstrued, it is the same for Lady Isabel: she can only imagine one

reason for her husband's behavior, even if she is goaded by Levison. Nevertheless, While Isabel may be given some lenience because she was not privy to Richard's case, Carlyle is still at fault. Carlyle's invitation to Levison and his reticence about his time at The Grove demonstrate how his inaction and inattention allows his wife's happiness and comfort to be taken for granted. Returning to Lady Isabel's letter, her accusations are not so much inaccurate or unfounded as they are misdirected. What she perceives as his infidelity is rather a symptom of his neglect and inattention, which contributed to her broken heart. Carlyle may be exonerated by his professional interests and actions at the Hare Household, serving as sentinel against the capricious Justice Hare, especially in Lady Isabel's eyes, but his inability to see the consequences of his actions. Indeed, "every sacred feeling which ought to exist between man and wife was betrayed by Mr. Carlyle" but with his professionalized kindness to Francis Levison, and not with infidelity to Barbara (322; ch.27).

Lyn Pykett considers how "the well-intentioned, but ignorant and hence unsympathetic husband is, in part, responsible for a domestic situation for which the wife pays the price of banishment and exile" (*Improper* 120). Though there is cause for professional discretion, especially for a lawyer, he does not consider how appearances could impact his home and family. Carlyle changes from the romantic rescuer to the professional busybody who assumes all is well at home because he has a wife, maternal half-sister, and servants to manage everything. In doing so, he is as complicit in Lady Isabel's suffering as Cornelia and specifically resembles the disgraced Lord Mount Severn. First, Archibald resembles the late Earl because he has allowed Lady Isabel's emotional needs to be unmet and failed to meet his spousal obligations, preoccupied by

professional obligations to the point of allowing his own home to be so desecrated, from within and without. Carlyle's second resemblance is his inattention to the conditions of his home leave its porousness open to dangerous and threatening agents. The debtors descending on East Lynne after the earl's death is echoed in Carlyle's welcoming Levison into his home. Though Levison is the primary agent in the seduction of Lady Isabel, she had done what she could to prevent it earlier, but Levison simply exploited the unhappy conditions at East Lynne for his own gratification.

7: Christian Heroics: Forgiveness, Repentance, and Reconciliation

In a novel full of failures, the trial regarding Hallijohn's murder is a success. Richard's name is cleared and Levison, the real murderer, is sentenced for his crime. The trial is not only a natural end to a narrative of crime, disguises, and investigation, but to Lady Isabel's situation as well. Even though she has been roundly condemned for her adultery, Levison has been able to live exploit double standards about class, wealth, title, and gender so that he may remain in society and even run for parliament while Lady Isabel, his partner in adultery must live in disgrace and disguise. While his position and fortune enable him to run for parliament, it likewise exposes Levison, setting him in a public space where, in the words of Rosenman, "he becomes fair game" even if Carlyle "retains his defensive masculinity" and Levison suffers public humiliation (dunked in a pond) and from his arrest for murder (31). By making Levison the murderer, the novel indulges in poetic justice by ensuring that the man who was instrumental in the downfall of the novel's heroine and the rupture of Carlyle's home endure punishment, and not only for a murder, but for a murder with sensual, sexual, illicit undertones to it. Levison is

therefore not just punished for the murder of George Hallijohn, but for his lascivious lifestyle and habits that have caused harm, shame, and injury to fall upon others.

However, the trial does not resolve the conflicts that permeate the novel's two plots. Despite the legal overtones that permeate the trial and the divorce, the main conflicts that drove the novel deal more with the treatment of others within domestic spaces. While Levison's arrest and his punishment – execution commuted to penal servitude,¹⁹ the narrator describes is stated as being a harsher punishment (673; ch.60) – offers some satisfaction, it leaves much work to be done: resolving the legal aspects have exposed other social and familial conflicts the law cannot address, allowing the novel to refocus its attention away from legality, crimes, and their punishments to divinity, repentance, and forgiveness. The Judge's words at the end of the trial signal this shift, stating first, "I can but enjoin you...to pass the little time that probably remains to you on earth in seeking repentance and forgiveness" and "may the Lord God Almighty have mercy on your immortal soul!" (639; ch.57). Though dealing explicitly with the law, this speech signals a shift from legal to divine matters. After all, much of the novel has focused on extra-legal concerns and their legal ramifications and implications, as well as seeking a superior form of justice, some alternative to the stern tyrannies of Justice Hare and Cornelia Carlyle. With this moment, the novel prioritizes more Christian and eschatological forms of justice. In stark contrast to the oaths of Justice Hare and Cornelia Carlyle, the novel redirects its resolution away from either the capricious or inflexible

¹⁹ In the 1883 edition of the novel, Levison's punishment is commuted to transportation.

nature of the law or the inflexibility of the offended to a form of justice open for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Levison, therefore, in the parlance of the genre, is something of a red herring. The red herring is a distraction, a subplot, McGuffin, or secondary character made to appear guilty, responsible, or significant when they are, in fact, an innocent or irrelevant distraction. Of course, Levison is one of the novel's villains and is guilty of murder, seduction, adultery (and fornication, considering his relationship with Afy Hallijohn), amid his wasteful profligacy, but his villainy is of secondary importance. As discussed previously, his seduction of Lady Isabel is enabled by the rough treatment she received from Cornelia and the neglect of Archibald, both of which were facilitated by her lack of training, education, and inheritance from her profligate father. For Richard's plot, Richard blames his seeking comfort elsewhere because he could not find it under his father's roof, making him cross paths with Levison. In both of these cases the trauma endured by Isabel and Richard predates Levison's crossing their paths. The domestic failures establish weaknesses for Levison to exploit. He is an outsider who benefits from the trauma endured by others. Punishing Levison may provide poetic justice for Lady Isabel and clear Richard's name, but it does not resolve their plots and the conflicts that led them to crime in the first place. Levison has no role in Richard's tragic upbringing, and so the resolution must be between father and son. Likewise, Isabel's plot is only resolved once she is free to be herself - on her deathbed - with her former husband. In other words, catching the killer and seducer does not provide the novel with a satisfactory conclusion because there are other plots - other traumas - that need to be resolved. The courtroom and legal intervention only appear to be a point of finality and resolution to be

superseded by other conflicts and forms of justice. Dramatic as it is, the trial would be a hollow, unsatisfactory place to end the novel. Perhaps the novel would resolve with courtrooms if the conflicts that led to courtrooms were legal in nature - to paraphrase McCuskey, if legal concerns *directly* initiated the two major plots instead of indirectly. Though both plots have moments that require legal intervention - marriage and divorce proceedings and a murder trial, as this chapter has pursued up to this point - the crimes Richard and Isabel are accused of are initiated by failures and abuses that escape legal intervention. Heartless as Cornelia may be towards Isabel, she has done nothing to warrant arrest, and while the law may work upon Levison as a murderer, it cannot arrest, transport, or execute him for his seductions.²⁰

The trial's place in the novel, therefore serves to resolve the legal situations introduced by the crimes committed in the novel, and does so with a poetic flourish (Levison is the villain of both Richard and Isabel's plots). However, as the trial ends reminders of God, Christian divinity, repentance, and forgiveness, the novel redirects its attention back to domestic spaces and suggests a different form of heroism, one rooted in Christian principles of forgiveness rather than judicial ones. In shifting from justice to forgiveness, the novel likewise changes the nature of heroism.

Richard's plot is about how he has suffered under false accusations, his father's and communities' capricious judgments, and how he has had to live in hiding, and his ability to overcome accusations against him and his commitment to justice, honesty,

²⁰ It is also worth noting that Levison's bid for parliament was done to stave off the repercussions of the debts he has accumulated (507; ch.43).

family, and forgiveness gives him an opportunity to be the hero of his own plot.²¹ Carlyle was the hero in the plot of the investigation, acting as Richard's detective as well as legal counsel, setting up the possibility that Richard's name could be cleared, and the real murderer identified. However, much like how Levison is not connected to the plot of Richard's harsh upbringing, neither is Carlyle, nor can Carlyle facilitate the reconciliation that would be needed to resolve Richard's plot. In contrast to Carlyle's middle class and legal minded heroism (that makes him an ideal candidate for parliament), Richard's heroism is, appropriately, of a softer, gentler, even domestic kind, albeit one fortified by the gentlemanly poise he exhibits while delivering his testimony and under cross examination. Tromp contrasts Richard's feminine qualities²² with Cornelia's masculinity, but little has been said about how these qualities contrast with his father's stern capriciousness or how these feminine qualities enable him to display a form of heroism that is Christian rather than judicial in nature ("Mrs. Henry Wood" 265-6). After all, the Apostle Paul includes truth, honesty, and justice alongside purity, loveliness, and virtue as traits to be pursued by followers of Christ (*Authorized King James Phil. 4:8*). Richard's testimony at the trial is itself almost like a Christian confession: "I swear that it is truth, and the whole truth, so far as I am cognizant of it...I could not assert it more solemnly were I before God" (634; ch.57). He likewise assumes responsibility for his

²¹ If Richard's newfound confidence is from his life as a laborer, Wood does not indicate it. On the contrary: she draws a direct connection between his demeanor and his clothing, stating that "with his working dress Richard had thrown off his working manners" (631; ch.57).

²² Constantini considers how "Wood sketched out alternative male characters endowed with typical feminine virtues — such as patience and gentleness" (266) but does not discuss Richard here specifically.

past actions, admitting to his secrecy when questioned about it and asserting that he had no ill designs toward Afy and that he acted out of love, and regarding his disappearance, he states that he did so out of fear and that, “But for my own conduct, the charge never would have been laid to me” (634; ch.57). Where the detective’s heroics are in detecting guilt assigning responsibility, Richard’s is in acceptance of responsibility. In doing so, he manifests strength in his honesty, meekness, and humility.

Up to this point in Richard’s plot, there have been a lot of mistakes and failures. Not only has Justice Hare vilified his own son, but so has West Lynne, and the fact that Bethel and Locksley withheld information (even if on Richard’s behalf) shows their own failures. While the trial shows that things can be set right, it also shows that legal intervention cannot resolve everything. There is more at stake than a murder mystery, and even more on trial than just Richard Hare and Francis Levison. The Hare household, Justice Hare specifically, and West Lynne collectively must face their own reckoning for their ill treatment of Richard considering this new information. The trial, especially the judge’s council to Levison, brings to the fore something that has lingered in the back of the novel and Isabel’s plot: in a world full of people failing one another, what does reconciliation look like and how is it achieved? For Richard and West Lynne, it is a quick and exultant affair. Immediately following Richard’s arraignment, where “Richard, poor, ill-used, baited Richard was a free man again;” The moments after his arraignment are described as “the scene of all scenes” (640; ch.57). The narrator remarks

they had liked him in his unoffending boyhood, but they had been none the less ready to cast their harsh stones at him, and to thunder down their denunciations when the time came. In proportion to their fierceness then, was their contrition now; Richard had been innocent all the while; they

had been more guilty than he...they expressed with shame their repentance, they said the future would atone for the past. (640; ch.57)

The novel does not problematize this ready acceptance. On the one hand, it shows how fickle the gossipy West Lynne is, but on the other, it does show their repentance and contrition, quickly replacing their ire with friendship.

The scene following the trial provides the second of two references in the novel to the Biblical account of Christ and the woman caught in adultery and the benefits of Christian forgiveness. In describing West Lynne's previous ire, the narrator states, "they had been none the less ready to cast their harsh stones at him" (640; ch.57). The first reference to this Biblical account deals with Afy Hallijohn's putting on of airs to attend the trial, ironic because while she flaunts herself as someone above her station, it is implied she has been Levison's kept woman in London. The casting of stones refers to the communal form of capital punishment for crimes such as murder, adultery, blasphemy and sabbath-breaking under the Law of Moses. However, the reference to stoning, especially refraining from doing so, the novel evokes the New Testament tale of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery. The woman caught in the act was brought to Jesus by those who would entrap and accuse Him. Jesus' response was that "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7), followed by instructing her to "go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). This reference to stoning therefore is the narrator's way to both condemn and exculpate West Lynne for its hasty condemnation of Richard Hare. Much like those accusing the Biblical woman taken in adultery, they were ready to strike but are repentant having recognized their own

shortcomings and failures, continuing the Christian imagery and principles invoked by the judge.

However, the general populace of West Lynne, though quick to condemn Richard, had not actively harmed him. They are similar in this respect to Francis Levison: they are not antagonistic villains who set Richard up to fail but take advantage of his situation to criminalize him. Certainly, their gossip and antagonism contributed to Richard's need to live in hiding, but they did not actively exploit or abuse him. In the wake of this exultant display, however, is Richard's father, Justice Hare, who has spent much of the novel as a looming, imposing, threatening figure. However, the Justice, no matter how capricious he may be, has seen his son exonerated and defend himself in a courtroom - Justice's own arena (though he was not presiding at the time). The narrator states that "when Richard extracted himself, and turned, in his pleasant, forgiving, loving nature, to his father, the stern old justice, forgetting his pride and pomposity, burst into tears and sobbed like a child, as he murmured something about his also needing forgiveness" (640; ch.57).

Richard's response is that "it is forgiven and forgotten already. Think how happy we shall be again together, you, and I, and my mother" and the Justice, who has dominated his home much as he had his courtroom, is forgiven by his son, and collapses "in a second stroke of paralysis" (640; ch.57). The request for forgiveness echoes the force of the law in condemning Levison and calling him to repent, the chapter - and Richard's plot - ends not with Richard's being exonerated but with a moment of acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Little is said about Justice Hare's two paralyzing strokes and that, while he would recover, he "would never again be the man he had been" (623; ch.56). Scant scholarly

attention has been given to Justice Hare's paralysis, perhaps in part because Wood says very little of it. For example, there are no scenes of him, in a semi-catatonic state, muttering like a child as he regains his wits or in, what could have been a powerful parallel with his introduction of the novel, beseeching Jasper to bring him his tea and to light a fire, especially when one of the few comments on the paralysis, from Elizabeth Gruner, is that "for Mrs. Hare, a lifetime of repression finally repaid with her husband's debilitating stroke" and her release from tyranny ("Plotting the Mother" 317). Though she does not cite the passage, Gruner's commentary likely originates from the narrator's statement following the first stroke: "People cannot act with unnatural harshness toward a child, and then discover they have been in the wrong, with impunity. Thus it proved with Mr. Justice Hare" (623; ch.56). This commentary links the stroke to the most recent scene with Justice Hare prior to the stroke, namely the interview with Afy Hallijohn about her relationships with Thorn (Francis Levison) and Richard Hare. Justice Hare is the chairman but does little in the scene (Wood even seems to forget that Justice Hare is present by the end of the chapter). The narrator's commentary about his "unnatural harshness" draws the direct connection between Justice Hare's behavior, the results of the interview, and the possibility that he could be in the wrong, and if he is wrong, it is not just about a decision he made but it is about the very principles upon which he lives his life. The possibility that he could be in the wrong shakes him, not only physically but mentally as well, as if to prepare him for the trial and to make him ready to request forgiveness of his son. The comment on his inability to fully recover is a reflection of the effects of the medical condition, but the narrator also ascribes it to be a shock stemming from his tyrannical capriciousness, which has shaped every aspect of his life: the public,

professional, and judicial (all wrapped up together) as well as his private, domestic, and paternal. Faced with such a possibility that he has been so callous means he must “undergo[] a cleansing of sorts, even a form of expiation...for past mistakes” (Matus 6).

The double meaning behind the comment that Justice Hare “would never again be the man he had been” may sound despairing, but it has positive potential. Returning to the man he had been before would mean returning to the capricious and mocking father that Richard Hare described to Carlyle at their moonlight interview early in the novel, and although Richard’s display in court is quite different from his nervous discussion with Carlyle on that occasion, it would not do for him to return to the same space where he had been abused and under the same conditions. The stroke and Justice Hare’s change make it possible for The Grove to become a place where healing and care can occur. That Justice Hare may need to be on the receiving end of this care is especially telling. Replacing the tyrant with another invalid will require a drastic change in the management of household affairs. It is as if Justice Hare could not be trusted to persist, that he needed to be debilitated for his family to be whole, not trusting him to remain as patriarch after he has ruled his home with such tyranny for so long. Considering Richard’s own feminine traits, the displacement of a tyrannical father, who may be an invalid similar to his wife, sets up the possibility that The Grove is shifting from a space of despotism to a space of care (even if the novel does little else with the Hare household following the trial). For Richard to become caregiver to both his ailing parents could run counter to Schaffer’s argument that communities of care are balanced and equitable, where people switch roles between carer and cared for, but weakening Justice Hare creates the

possibility that The Grove will be a safe space for Richard, that the forgiveness Richard offers to his father is not just about the trial but the years of abuse and mocking.

However, Lady Isabel is denied such familial and social restitution. When Raymond Vane visits Lady Isabel in France and learns just how mistaken she was about Archibald, the narrator states that “Her face had become crimson; crimson at her past lamentable folly. And there was no redemption!” (359; ch.31). Similarly, Alice Levison, nee Challoner, in conversation with Barbara about Francis complains that “Were not his other sins impediment enough but he must have crime, also, and woo me! He has done me deep and irredeemable wrong” (625; ch.56). Even earlier than these, regarding the broken cross, Francis Levison states that “I feel that it can never be atoned for...that the heartfelt homage of my whole life would not be sufficient compensation” (58; ch.2) despite his offering to have it mended. Of course, in the case of Levison and the cross, this is more flattery than sincerity, but in each case, the possibility of redemption or atonement are nullified: the harm that has been done cannot be undone. These moments contrast with, in the moments after Richard’s arraignment, the populace of West Lynne congratulating Richard “expressed with shame their repentance; they said the future would atone for the past” (640; ch.57). However, Richard’s exoneration, reintroduction into West Lynne, as well as Levison’s penal servitude set up the possibility of new domestic paradigms centered around forgiveness and reconciliation. This possibility is further maintained with Levison’s sentence of execution is commuted to penal servitude. He must suffer a fate comparable to Lady Isabel: suffer for his crimes in labor and exile, stripped of the benefits that came with his title and position, but likewise prolonging his opportunity for earthly repentance. For Lady Isabel, she voluntarily takes upon herself the

suffering requisite for atonement. As the narrator states “Had she not resolved, in her first bitter repentance, *to take up her cross* daily, and bear it?” (455; ch.39). Madame Vine becomes a mask to hide behind so Lady Isabel can suffer in silent isolation and earn her repentance. This, however, conflicts with the novel’s otherwise staunch view on Lady Isabel’s crimes and the main contrast between her and Richard: the falsely accused and the undoubtedly fallen. Regarding such contradictions, Lyn Pykett argues that “*East Lynne* destabilises its own norms” (*Improper* 133) and that the novel “allows (or even requires) its readers to think two otherwise contradictory things at once” (*Improper* 132). Pykett cites the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism in assessing how the novel simultaneously encourages readers to accept Barbara’s femininity and to reject Isabel, even while making Isabel a character worthy of sympathy and how Barbara changes from “silent but active rebellion against her father” to the emotional mistress of East Lynne (*Improper* 133).

However, considering that a major part of the novel is how abusive and injurious behaviors and practices are normalized, this type of inconsistency has its place: success in one space does not guarantee success in another, nor will the managerial methods of one sphere apply or prove productive in another. Regarding Pykett’s example of Barbara, she has little reason to silently rebel as mistress of East Lynne. The norms are unstable because they cannot be universally applied. The prospect of atonement and redemption shows this instability. On the one hand, redemption and atonement are impossible because the damage has been done. There is discussion of mending Isabel’s broken cross (which is never described in the novel), but Lady Isabel must thereafter attend the party, in the words of Mrs. Emma Vane (the future Lady Mount Severn), “unfortunately short

of jewelry” and thereby disparaging both Isabel and her father (55; ch.2). Alice Levison comments on the undeserved shame Levison has inflicted upon her and their child. And finally, the narrator describes Isabel’s flight as “irrevocable” (335; ch.29). Each of these examples mix elements of the private and public, the social and the familial, reinforcing how distinct social spheres interact and engage with one another and how the damage done in one space extends and inflicts upon others and in ways that certainly cannot be undone. However, the social, familial, professional, and judicial spheres are not the only ones the novel invokes: there is a spiritual and divine component to redemption as well. As discussed above, Lady Isabel’s primary concern is not legal but divine in nature: “She had forfeited her duty to God, had deliberately broken his commandments,” (335; ch.29). Social, familial, maternal, and judicial forms of redemption are closed off to her, leaving her with a purgatorial life as Madame Vine, the torturous means to pursue the only redemption left open to her: divine.

In seeking her divine redemption, Lady Isabel becomes a Christian hero. Her heroism is not that of overcoming others but of overcoming herself. Of course, to overcome herself, she must be victim and villain in one. Despite the novel’s willingness to condemn Levison, Cornelia, Carlyle, and Lord William Vane for their shortcomings, negligences, manipulations, and abuses, neither Isabel nor the novel are willing to blame another for her abandonment and adultery. She becomes the principal villain of her own narrative because she has inflicted the most harm upon herself. Though this is not her initial motivation in becoming Madame Vine, the disguise becomes her confessor’s cell and her tool of self-flagellation. While Boucher describes Isabel’s change into Madame Vine “as narrative punishment for Isabel’s promiscuity, [that] also liberates the character

from typical conventions” (95), it also enables her to inflict suffering upon herself as a means towards redemption by forcing herself into a position where she must show tremendous restraint or face discovery. According to Loesberg, “Much of the sympathy that accrues to her playing the role of governess, and thus much of the sensational effect, results from her constantly reacting to a situation as if she were Isabel Vane when the world takes her to be Madame Vine” (120-121). In showing this restraint she not only suffers, but suffers in silent isolation, taking the burdens upon herself because she had rejected those who could have been there on her behalf.

As Madame Vine, Lady Isabel can find space in her old home, but it is a condition in which she must, not unlike Richard Hare in disguise, contort herself to fit in. As Madame Vine, Lady Isabel’s life becomes an inversion of what it once was, someone both material in her deformities and contortions, and yet spectral and ghost-like. The novel emphasizes this with the stooped, unattractive, gap-toothed, baggy-clothed appearance, complete with the blue spectacles (the loss of which almost reveals her identity) she adopts as Madame Vine. In this change of demeanor and form she is a servant rather than a lady or wife; she is an educator rather than a mother. Lady Isabel can work out her divine redemption by fulfilling her maternal duties to the extent open to her (as governess) and through the suffering she must endure due to her tragic fall within the place that was her home. She does what she can and suffers in compensation for what she cannot, trying to hide her true identity. Discussing Christian sensation fiction, Surridge and Leighton remark that “Readers’ focus ultimately lies not on solving mystery but on bearing witness to moral fortitude and, in some cases, to shortcomings that must be overcome by faith and repentance” (37). Finding forgiveness is instrumental to how

the novel concludes its plots as it brings together its various characters and they must account for the shortcomings of themselves and the fortitude of others. Reconciliation is not in the working of justice but in the restoration of the home through forgiveness. Lady Isabel then moves, ghostlike, haunting her old home, still bound to earth until she achieves a divine redemption. Her ghostly characteristics as Madame Vine have drawn some attention from scholars. Andrew Maunder describes the returned Lady Isabel as a ghost, but does not explore the image, while Bivona describes her as a ghostly presence that must be banished (“The House in the Child” 118) and Andrew Mangham comments on how she “haunt[s] a strange hinterland between life and death, respectability and grace” (“Life after death” 294). Patricia McKee describes her “as a kind of ghost” but does more with the image of a shadow, drawing parallels between her and Barbara Hare, the two women in Archibald Carlyle’s life: as Madame Vine, Isabel must pine for the man she loves while he displays affection for another, much like Barbara experienced before she became Mrs. Carlyle. Though Boucher does not adopt a “ghostly” terminology, she does consider the incorporeality and ethereal nature of Isabel, attributing it to “aristocratic disembodiment” caught up in class and gender signifiers (95-6).

Isabel’s suffering, however, is a process of embodiment. Countering these ghostly interpretations, Tamar Heller states that “Isabel Vane is punished by having to conceal who she is, but the reader's voyeuristic window into her thoughts makes the character who is a blank to others a more fully embodied character than any of them” (138). Similarly, Kimberly Harrison states that “the train crash which in the novel leaves the adulterous wife limping and hunched, her tortured and disfigured body both the site of

punishment for her transgression and a marker of her wrongdoing” emphasizing the way her disfigurements as Madame Vine are part of her repentant suffering (180). The fact of how popular the novel was in adaptation, especially of William’s death, speaks to the importance of the body in suffering. Anglicanism rejects the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, but Lady Isabel’s state is a purgatorial one: she has experienced a “death” in the train accident (and even in her fall) and is suffering for her sins so she may gain a heavenly reward. Madame Vine may be disembodied as a representation of Lady Isabel’s death, a sort of Jacob Marley-like disheveled specter of her former grandeur, but Lady Isabel must be embodied as part of her suffering. If there is no purgatory then repentance must be done in the flesh, completed prior to her death.

While Isabel’s prolonged suffering and repentance as Madame Vine is presented as earning her divine redemption, she remains unredeemed and unacceptable among her earthly communities. There may be space for Madame Vine but there is none for Lady Isabel, and her fallen state - regardless of her repentance - excludes her as Isabel Vane. After her death, Carlyle reassures Barbara that he would not “have allowed it to go on” had he known (689; ch.62). Much like how there is nothing to be done to reverse the damage done by Lord William Vane’s profligacy, there is nothing in social, legal, or familial terms for Lady Isabel to regain any previous state. And so, she must turn to divine forgiveness, which will result in her suffering and death, which opens the way for her gaining a communal space, in heaven if not in earth. She reassures her dying son and others that her family will be whole in heaven. Of course, if Christian values of forgiveness overtake the judicial and professional aspects of the novel and Lady Isabel pursues and ardently believes that she has achieved her divine redemption and will be

saved, there is the prospect of a heavenly community. Indeed, Lady Isabel finds much comfort in this idea, believing that she and Carlyle will be together with their children. This introduces complications the novel does not address, namely the possibility of Carlyle being a bigamist in heaven (if not on earth). McAleavey considers how Isabel's view of heaven "may have multiple occupants" (195) if one remembers Barbara and her children with Carlyle. Cleere, elaborating on McAleavey, states that "many Victorian Christians anticipated a material heaven much like Isabel's: they looked forward to an embodied paradise that would reunite believers with a loving community of recognizable friends and relations. This familial fantasy was somewhat dampened, however, by the problem of earthly remarriages, which promised the newly dead not an ecstatic homecoming, but rather a complicated and potentially crowded conjugal afterlife." (212)

Isabel's suffering reconciles herself with God as well as the very nature of domestic space in the novel and does so without relying on the domestic angel. When Isabel reveals herself to Cornelia and Archibald, it impinges upon them as well. In doing so, Lady Isabel continues her private suffering as she seeks forgiveness from her former husband and sister-in-law. The gestures of forgiveness are a way to overlook wrongs of the past, to heal old wounds, and provide the possibility of a safe and stable continuation. Isabel remarks that she needs Archibald to forgive her. The gesture of forgiveness, however, occur in a safe social space: because Isabel is dying, they don't need to reintegrate the fallen woman into their society (that awkwardness can be postponed for Heaven). Even though Lady Isabel is the criminal, it is up to others to forgive. Something that has to do with recognizing the reciprocal nature of crimes, villainy, and their outcomes. It gives many the opportunity to change and improve. To paraphrase what

Surridge and Leighton say of Wood's *The High Mills*: "Because readers...have access to [Isabel]'s painful emotions of guilt and loss, they become Christian students of that forgiveness, gradually gaining inspiration from both characters as exemplars of the repentant sinner and reluctant forgiver" (48). Similarly, Bizzotto comments on Wood's "ability to convert sensation's emotional affect into religious allegory (302). As much as the novel condemns Lady Isabel for her adultery and abandonment as well as Cornelia and Archibald Carlyle for their abuse and neglect of Lady Isabel, the novel's closing chapters suggest that forgiveness runs both ways: just as Isabel petitions Cornelia for forgiveness, so too does Cornelia petition Isabel:

"Child," [Cornelia] she, drawing near to and leaning over Lady Isabel, "had I anything to do with sending you from East Lynne?"

Lady Isabel shook her head and cast down her gaze, as she whispered: "You did not send me; you did not help to send me. I was not very happy with you, but that was not the cause—of my going away. Forgive me, Miss Carlyle, forgive me!"

"Thank God!" inwardly breathed Miss Carlyle. "Forgive me," she said, aloud and in agitation, touching her hand. "I could have made your home happier, and I wish I had done it. I have wished it ever since you left it."

They are stung by learning that, not only is Lady Isabel alive, but that she has been dwelling alongside them. This interaction between Cornelia and the dying Isabel points to Joyce's accusation of Cornelia's abuse and Isabel's cryptic letter to Archibald. And yet it doesn't exonerate Cornelia. Isabel may not blame Cornelia for her treatment of her, but the isolated utterances of "Thank God!" and "Forgive me," point to two different situations. Cornelia is grateful that she did not (or that Isabel doesn't fault her) drive Isabel from East Lynne or into Levison's arms but nevertheless acknowledges how she wronged Isabel. Forgiveness, therefore, is mutual: both parties, despite the wrongs they

have committed, are willing to recognize how the others have changed and regretted their past actions, especially because Cornelia's pursuit of forgiveness indicates that she recognizes that her treatment was wrong because it denied Isabel of a happy home life. Cornelia doesn't take Isabel's suggestion that she did not drive her away to justify her treatment of her or, for example, suggest that had she been even more strict that she would have learned better and not have run away in the first place. Nor does Isabel use this as an opportunity to consider justifications or rationalize her leaving as somehow connected to Cornelia's abuse.

Though Cornelia and Archibald's suffering may be momentary compared to the years Lady Isabel resided at East Lynne as Madame Vine, their pain paves the way for their own repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The privacy of Isabel's conferences with Cornelia and Archibald (and Joyce's safeguarding her identity) points to the private nature of the home and replaces Cornelia and Archibald's financially minded concerns with pricking consciousnesses and a reassertion of domestic values, echoing those set by Richard and Justice Hare: reconciliation and forgiveness. Her final death is treated as a confirmation of her complete repentance, with Beller describing it by stating that "for Wood, death cannot be considered a punishment in any straightforward way....It would therefore be more consistent to read Isabel Vane's death as a final blessing, bestowed by Wood as a recognition of her true goodness and patient suffering" (225). Isabel may not create a new community, but through her death she suggests prioritizing divinity and forgiveness as central values in the home. Her ardent belief in a heavenly family unit points to this, but Carlyle's statement to Barbara, which closes the novel, "never forget that the only way to ensure peace in the end is to strive always to be doing right,

unselfishly under God” (691; ch.62) following her declaration of jealousy and a desire to be a better mother to Archibald and Isabel’s children, suggests that Isabel, in her confidences with Archibald and Cornelia is extending to the rest of East Lynne. These confidences and their moments of reassurance were what were absent from Isabel and Archibald earlier in their relationship, on both parts.

While there is some quasi-religious, melodramatic convenience in these moments of reconciliation, it does not resolve the social problems Madame Vine creates, namely the scandal that would undoubtedly follow West Lynne’s newly elected member of parliament, Archibald Carlyle, if it were learned that his presumably dead ex-wife was living in disguise under his home. Lady Isabel’s death, therefore, is not just a “final blessing” for Isabel, but one for Archibald. He can reconcile with his former wife in a private way, thereby avoiding potential scandal. Following her death and burial, Archibald meets with Barbara and informs her of Madame Vine’s identity and insists that he knew nothing of Madame Vine’s identity and that he would not have allowed her to remain had he known. Meanwhile “West Lynne looked on with approbation, and conjectured that the governess had left sufficient money to bury herself; but, of course, that was Mr. Carlyle’s affair, not West Lynne’s” (688; ch.62). Isabel’s confidences before her death and Archibald’s confiding in his wife Madame Vine’s identity, combined with West Lynne perceiving the burial as “Mr. Carlyle’s affair” reestablishes the privacy of the home without overemphasizing the sort of harmful secrecy that contributed to Lady Isabel’s flight. The novel does not stamp out, ignore, or overlook the failures that led to the criminal acts of its heroes, but it does make the case for a stable domestic environment through familial reconciliation and domestic restitution, reconciliation,

repentance, and forgiveness. In doing so, the novel suggests that the failures or abuses of one do not excuse or permit the failures and abuses of another.

4: THE ABOMINABLE IMPOSSIBILITY:

THE CRIMINALITY OF GOOD INTENTIONS IN *THE MOONSTONE*

1: Well Intentioned

For all the harm caused by the likes of Pardiggle and Jellyby of *Bleak House* and Lord Mount Severn in *East Lynne*, it can be said they had good intentions. This sets them apart from more dastardly villains like Francis Levison, and even Mr. Tulkinghorn presents his motives for blackmailing Lady Dedlock on her husband's behalf. This is not to renege on what was discussed in the previous chapters or to exculpate these and other villainous characters. Much of the critique surrounding these well-intentioned villains is that their intentions do not spare others from the suffering and pain left in their wake. These characters represent the adage that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. I mention these well-intentioned villains to contrast with Wilkie Collins' 1868 novel, *The Moonstone*. Widely regarded as the first (or at least the first significant) English detective story, *The Moonstone* differs from many of its contemporary novels of detection by having no outright villainous characters. True, few novels have quite the range of despicable characters as *Bleak House* and *East Lynne*, but even novels such as *David Copperfield*, *The Woman in White*, and *Mary Barton* have no compunction about making their villains obvious and from shielding them from consequences for much of their novels so they may persist in their villainy.

Such is not the case in *The Moonstone*. There are no easy targets, no characters active in the events of the mystery upon whom we can rest our suspicion and ire as they demean, exploit, violate, and manipulate those around them. Colonel John Herncastle

seems to fit this role, but his death precipitates and initiates the plot – he is not directly present to oppress those around him. Even the novel’s criminal, Godfrey Ablewhite, doesn’t menace the rest of the cast with his devious manipulations. He hides his lascivious, luxurious lifestyle. There are none in the novel who so readily embody wickedness, evil, and villainy quite like Tulkinghorn, Cornelia Carlyle, or Francis Levison. If any character menaces others, it is reserved for the early appearances of the detectives themselves, Superintendent Seegrave and Sergeant Cuff, and later the pious Drusilla Clack, and even she is more of an annoying caricature of Evangelical Christianity, not a villain. She is not another Tulkinghorn whose position and power make him a constant threat, nor a Uriah Heep whose “umble” character is part of an ingratiating, manipulative deception. Clack wields no social power over those around her, so when she speaks out of line, she is easily dismissed. Nevertheless, what can be said of much of *The Moonstone*’s cast can likewise be said of these characters in *Bleak House*, and *East Lynne*, among others: despite any villainy and disastrous consequences, they mean well. Indeed, the type of villainy we see in *The Moonstone* is of a different form altogether, one more subtle and subdued, one that refuses to confront the “abominable impossibility” that it may be complicit in the harm that befalls others. Indeed, to much of the cast of *The Moonstone*, they could never consider themselves culpable or responsible because they all mean well.

Most any discussion of the novel’s relationship to detective fiction includes the quote from T.S. Eliot that “*The Moonstone* is the first and greatest of English detective novels” and how detective fiction was “a genre invented by Collins and not by Poe” (167). Similar attention was lauded over it by Dorothy Sayers, calling it “probably the

very finest detective story ever written” and G.K. Chesterton called it “probably the best detective tale in the world” (132). Scholars and critics have followed in a similar vein, such as John G. Cawelti, in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, describing the novel as “a precursor of the great body of detective fiction” (134) and even suggests Doyle “took his cue” from Collins’ novel with *Hound of the Baskervilles* by adopting “a variety of narrative perspectives” (110). Ian Ousby, in *Bloodhounds of Heaven*, focuses on the shifting narrative and how this introduces conflicting and even contradictory depictions of events. In R.F. Stewart’s book *And Always a Detective...*, where he strives to argue sensation and detective fiction are the same genre, Collins and *The Moonstone* appear frequently alongside Poe, Doyle, and Gaboriau, with Stewart observing that while *The Moonstone* is a detective story, it was first a sensation novel in that the genre of detective fiction not yet being formalized and recognized (70). And, of course, D.A. Miller’s *The Novel and the Police*, which considers how, despite the police being dismissed, the same effect is achieved, suggesting the novel is about how society polices itself (49-50) and contests how, despite its many narrators, the novel is “*monological* — always speaking a master-voice that corrects, overrides, subordinates, or sublates all other voices it allows to speak” (54). The responses and complications of Miller’s work with *The Moonstone* has been addressed by scholars such as Lara Karpenko, who argues “the novel’s logic is propelled by the sensational pleasure of detection” (135). Nayder raises questions over the “hermeneutics of suspicion” and questions Miller’s use not just of Foucault but Bakhtin and *The Dialogic Imagination* as well: “Miller distorts Bakhtin’s theory of the novel because there is no place for the dialogic in the disciplinary society he describes” (215). Similarly, Niketa G. Narayan points out Miller’s study makes no mention of the

Brahmin priests, whom she describes as “the real ‘active’ and central police force in the novel” in contrast to others who suggest the priests haunt the periphery of the novel (785). Ian Duncan, earlier than Narayan, points out the novel depicts “an India that exceeds and outlasts British dominion and knowledge” (302). The many different perspectives, narrators, and narratives in the novel speak in many different voices, variously dealing with female subjectivity and individuality, protection of resources and assets, the pervasiveness of Imperial influences, etc., even the mere removal of the diamond, a single act. To quote Tim Dolin, “Whether this event is a theft, an act of sexual violation, a symbolic enactment of imperial invasion, or a symbolic of imperial resistance is left undecided” (83). To which I would ask, why can’t it be all of them?

These examples show how discussion of detection in the Victorian novel lends itself to larger social and cultural issues, not just surveillance and discipline. The scrutiny afforded by the interactions of people across disparate groups, places, and time intersect in seismic ways as scholars studying literature related to empire and colonialism have found in it a powerful yet subtle critique of empire. In accordance with its place as a preeminent detective story, some like Gooch and Lonoff have considered the novel’s testamentary narrative style, each narrator providing their own chronicle of events. Such observations date back to John R. Reed’s 1973 essay “English Imperialism and the Unacknowledged crime of *The Moonstone*” in which Reed calls *The Moonstone* “a novel of serious social criticism” (281) and comments on Collins’ disapproval of English society’s oppressive nature. Reed makes many observations that later scholarship would echo, such as how “proper citizens may be gravely unsettled by circumstances that appear to compromise Rachel’s reputation, illegal possession of goods does not trouble them”

(284) and how “In destroying Ablewhite, the Indian priests expose the crimes of which all English society is guilty. The mask of respectability is torn from the British Empire with the disclosure of the dead Ablewhite’s identity” (285), and “by identifying Jennings, a strongly favorable character, with the [Indian] priests, Collins unobtrusively guides his readers to the conclusion that their endeavor is also a misunderstood but noble dedication” (286). Reed likewise makes comparisons to the historical contexts of the novel, the Anglo-Sikh war, Seringapatam, and how, in the novel, the diamond was returned to India the same year the Koh-i-Noor was given to Queen Victoria by the East India company (286-7).

In the 50 years since Reed’s publication, such observations have been a staple of criticism of the novel. Studies such as Melissa Free’s “Dirty Linen,” Jaya Mehta’s “English Romance: Indian Violence” and Roy Ashish’s “The Fabulous Imperialist Semiotic of *The Moonstone*” follow Reed and explore the novel’s deft handling of empire, such as how Mr. Ablewhite Sr.’s rage is the type of thing the British and other characters would have attributed to the Indians. Significant among these is Krishna Manavalli’s “Collins, Colonial Crime, and the Brahmin Sublime: The Orientalist Vision of a Hindu-Brahmin India in *The Moonstone*” which subverts much of the anti-Imperialist discourse around *The Moonstone* analyzing how the novel handles Muslim imperialism. However, focusing on the novel’s critique of empire is a limited view of the novel. The novel’s criticisms of empire are part of a larger critique of rigid ideological adherence, or, as Carens describes it, idolatry of certain English values and practices, discussed more below. The abominable impossibility is not simply that the differences between the “civilized” and “savage” are not so distinct as some may believe, but that the

ideological foundations we cling to may themselves be hypocritical and injurious to others – despite the best of intentions. The abominable impossibility is that the cultural values and practices that sanction much we call good may in fact be the cause of much harm, suffering, and crime.

By contrast, in setting up my study of *The Moonstone*, I wish to draw a brief comparison to Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, written over half a century earlier, and Gilbert and Gubar's treatment of Austen's Gothic parody. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar observe that while General Tilney, the father of her suitor Henry Tilney, may not be the dangerous Gothic villain Catherine Morland fantasizes him to be, he still embodies an oppressive patriarchy that cajoles a woman into replacing her own perspective to match those of the men around her and in doing so displaces whatever dangers she may perceive. Gilbert and Gubar conclude "Austen rewrites the Gothic not because she disagrees with her sister novelists about the confinement of women, but because she believes women have been imprisoned more effectively by miseducation than by walls and more by financial dependency, which is the authentic ancestral curse, than by any verbal oath of warning" (135) and "Austen redefines the gothic...by showing that Catherine Morland is trapped, not inside the General's Abbey, but inside his fiction, a tale in which she figures as an heiress and thus a suitable bride for his second son" (137). General Tilney is as bad or worse than Catherine makes him out to be because the elements that allow him to be an oppressive and domineering figure are largely taken for granted.

The Moonstone engages in a similar work: the social mechanisms that empower oppressive forces are so ingrained that the characters never consider how their actions

could be perpetuating oppressive beliefs because they are well-intended. This approach shifts questions of guilt away from Godfrey Ablewhite onto the cast of the novel and asks whether or to what extent they are guilty or complicit in the crimes and wrongdoing of others as they unwittingly perpetuate oppressive cultural standards. Barry Milligan describes the novel's characters as "willess, hypnotized children" who cannot confront the cultural and racial problems that inform their lives as they are seduced by the allure of the diamond and (British interpretation of) Indian culture (82). They are therefore inattentive to the entangling of motives, actions, and consequences and the difficulty - if not impossibility - of addressing and resolving crime because whether something is a crime requires consideration of the actions and motives of those involved in the supposed crime, which cannot be determined (or guessed at) until after the crime has been committed. Indeed, this raises the possibility that they are reluctant or unable to properly identify crimes and criminals because to do so would be to question their own ideological foundations. As stated by Lisa Rodensky, "Victorian criminal law identifies the difference between holding a person responsible for what he does and holding a person responsible for who he is" (20). A crime hinges on an event, but guilt hinges on a state of mind, but should someone be punished if they mean well but cause harm? *The Moonstone* presents a world where almost no one is guilty, but everyone is complicit and where the true test of character is in determining motives and states of mind through actions and consequences. This leads to what Franklin Blake calls "the abominable impossibility": the terrifying possibility one has been complicit with and contributed to the perpetuation of crimes and injustices committed by others.

2: Herncastle's Motivations – Blake and Betteredge Investigate

The importance of intentions is initiated by the “investigation” Blake and Betteredge conduct into Colonel Herncastle’s motives behind leaving Rachel Verinder the diamond. To do so, they focus on their own experiences with the “wicked Colonel” and emphasize those relative to the diamond and so become both witnesses and detectives (42). Their discussion may not involve the sort of evidence gathering one may expect of a detective’s investigation (as will be seen once Seegrave and Cuff enter the novel), but it is a reminder of how intention and motivation, the mental state of the perpetrator, is often considered important in determining criminal guilt (cf. Rodensky 17-20). In other words, it establishes that malicious intent is essential for criminality. In most fictional criminal investigations, the mystery deals with who did what - who is the guilty party who must be identified and apprehended. Even examples that play with this, such as Agatha Christie’s *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, where Poirot initially exonerates the guilty party until sufficient evidence could be found against them, the novel keeps the murderer’s identity secret, hence the popularity of the term “whodunit.” While *The Moonstone* is invested in a “whodunit” plot, Blake and Betteredge’s discussion of Herncastle’s motives don’t ask *who* but *if* a crime, or something malicious, has taken place, contingent upon the Colonel’s intentions, and the accompanying complications and complicity.

The evidence presented centers around two issues: the Colonel’s “wicked” character and the stipulations in his will regarding the diamond. Blake tells Betteredge “I have made some discoveries in London about my uncle Herncastle and his Diamond, which have rather an ugly look to my eyes; and I want you to confirm them. You called

him the ‘wicked Colonel’ just now. Search your memory, my old friend, and tell me why” (42). Betteredge thereafter recounts the Colonel’s visit on Rachel’s birthday two years since, calls him “one of the greatest blackguards that ever lived” (43) and describes his time in the army, including “In the matter of bravery (to give him his due), he was a mixture of bull-dog and game-cock, with a dash of the savage” and how the Colonel “didn’t dare acknowledge” how he acquired the diamond (43). Betteredge then recounts how polite society avoided him: “men wouldn’t let him into their clubs; the women—more than one—whom he wanted to marry, refused him; friends and relations got too near-sighted to see him in the street”; how rumors told about his experiments in chemistry, his revelry with “the lowest people in the lowest slums of London”; and his “solitary, vicious, underground life” (44). All of this presumably centers around the story of the diamond, which corroborates the information presented in the prologue, and suggests what the unnamed cousin intended to be a family matter did not remain one, as Colonel Herncastle was shunned not just by his family but by society in general. As far as Betteredge is concerned, the Colonel’s visit on Rachel’s birthday exemplified and perpetuated his wickedness, as the Colonel “had made attempts by letter, more than once already, to be reconciled with my lady, for no other purpose, I am firmly persuaded, than to annoy her” (45) and “I am firmly persuaded, at the same time, that the devil remained in undisturbed possession of the Honourable John, and that the last abominable act in the life of that abominable man was (saving your presence) to take the clergyman in!” (45).

However, the Colonel Herncastle’s will presents a potentially contrary view. The will states

I give the Diamond to her daughter Rachel, in token of my free

forgiveness of the injury which her conduct towards me has been the means of inflicting on my reputation in my lifetime; and especially in proof that I pardon, as becomes a dying man, the insult offered to me as an officer and a gentleman, when her servant, by her orders, closed the door of her house against me, on the occasion of her daughter's birthday. (53)

Betteredge acknowledges this statement conflicts with his own belief "that the Colonel had died as wickedly as he had lived" and that "I don't say the copy from his Will actually converted me from that opinion: I only say it staggered me" (54). The will and the Colonel's supposed forgiveness raises the possibility of expunging his earlier crimes. In drafting his will, the Colonel assumes the moral high ground as he describes his "forgiveness of the injury which her conduct towards me has been the means of inflicting on my reputation in my lifetime." He is not seeking forgiveness but offering it, turning himself into the victim of Julia Verinder's ill-treatment of him. Herncastle's will presents him as assuming the moral high ground as the one spurned and offended - he anticipates or presumes Lady Julia's repentance with the diamond as peace-offering. Nevertheless, Blake and Betteredge doubt his motives. Blake sees two possible directions this mystery or motivations could face: either John Herncastle wished his estranged family well, or he intends to pass the curse of the diamond and the pursuing conspiracy on to those who rebuffed him. Herncastle is either contrite or vengeful, with either good or wicked intentions.²³

The prospect of the conspiracy centers on three points: the colonel's will, Blake's being followed in London, and the three Indian jugglers. Referring to the Colonel's will,

²³ The consensus among scholars is the Colonel's intentions were malicious. For examples, see Carens (133), Fernandez (90), Talairach-Vielmans (77-78), and Narayan (787). Hennelley raises the question but does not answer it (44).

Blake produces an excerpt from it stating that if the Colonel died by violence, the diamond would be secretly sent to Amsterdam where it would be cut up into between 4 and 6 perfect brilliants. Betteredge assumes doing so would lessen the value of the diamond, thereby “cheating the rogues” (51), but Blake informs him the various perfect brilliants “would be, collectively, worth more money than the large—but imperfect single stone” (51). Therefore, robbery for the sake of financial gain is not the question, so Blake suggests the Indian conspiracy has “some old Hindoo superstition at the bottom of it” (51) and the destruction of the diamond would frustrate them. According to Blake, the Colonel “is not satisfied with saying to the enemies he dreads, ‘Kill me—and you will be no nearer to the Diamond than you are now; it is where you can’t get at it—in the guarded strongroom of a bank.’ He says instead, ‘Kill me—and the Diamond will be the Diamond no longer; its identity will be destroyed’” (51). Moving beyond the will, Blake asks whether the conspiracy survived the Colonel’s death. To this Blake recounts how he saw “a shabby, dark-complexioned man” on three separate occasions in London: outside the bank after acquiring the diamond, when returning to the bank with the diamond (as he would be detained in London), and finally outside the bank again, only to elude him before boarding the train to Yorkshire. Combined with Betteredge and Penelope’s report of the jugglers and their mysterious conversation about whether “the English Gentleman will travel today” and “Has the English gentleman got It about him” (42 ²⁴), Blake asks, “whether I am wrongly attaching a meaning to a mere accident? or whether we really have evidence of the Indians being on the track of the Moonstone, the moment it is

²⁴ This citation refers to when Betteredge reports this to Blake. Both lines are also spoken by the Indians on 31, and this is discussed by Betteredge and Penelope on 32.

removed from the safe keeping of the bank?” (52).

As pertinent as this line of questioning is, they do not resolve it, nor do they even approach a satisfactory resolution. When Blake asks Betteredge his opinion on the Indian Conspiracy, Betteredge’s tells Blake he “should like to shy the Diamond into the quicksand, and settle the question in that way” (52). Blake responds that if Betteredge had the value of the diamond, he would do so, which Betteredge follows with: “It’s curious to note, when your mind’s anxious, how very far in the way of relief a very small joke will go. We found a fund of merriment, at the time, in the notion of making away with Miss Rachel’s lawful property, and getting Mr. Blake, as executor, into dreadful trouble—though where the merriment was, I am quite at a loss to discover now” (53). The discussion thereafter shifts to the question of the Colonel’s motive. However, this “fund of merriment” diminishes the severity of the threat posed by the Indian conspiracy, and Betteredge contradicts when he said, “you won’t find the ghost of a joke in our conversation on the subject of the jugglers” (33). In making light of the situation, Betteredge shows his own inconsistency and inability to draw conclusions and make connections and echoing his comment about how his late wife’s defects: she “was never keeping to the matter in hand” a defect which Betteredge himself spends two chapters indulging in himself (41). Blake’s question raised about evidence of the conspiracy goes unanswered, and not with the ambiguity they would arrive at regarding the Colonel’s intentions. Rather than pause over the matter and consider its ambiguity or resolve to “wait” on the matter, they dismiss it with a joke and diminishes whatever perceived threat the Indians may pose.

Blake and Betteredge are left with the following: the Indians are not worthy of

serious consideration, and they can only assess Colonel Herncastle's intentions once they have more information. For Blake, the requisite information is the domestic disruption following the theft of the diamond and Cuff and Seegrave's unsuccessful investigations. At this time, Blake's conclusion is to renege on his earlier conviction that Herncastle's intentions could have been good. Accompanied by Betteredge's suggestion that they "wait and see what happens in time" (56) implies crimes and criminality require both negative consequences and malicious intent. This makes crime prevention or control difficult, if not impossible, because criminal detection relies on working backwards: from the negative effects, one may discover the crime, and from the crime, one can discover malicious intent.

The Moonstone, however, disrupts this neat and easy formulation of intentionality and crime with the death of the Wicked Colonel John Herncastle. Even though Blake believes Colonel Herncastle to be guilty of malicious intent, he cannot prove it to the extent he implies, nor do the disappearance of the diamond and the domestic disruptions implicate the colonel. It is as if Blake forgets the "Wicked Colonel" was not only absent from the party but dead. Herncastle is no longer an active agent. For all the uncertainty and ambiguity introduced regarding the Honorable Colonel John Herncastle's motives, this ceases to be an issue once the diamond is stolen. The mystery of who stole the diamond - who committed a crime - takes center stage and remains there for the rest of the novel. In terms of the causation and sequence of events, Herncastle's motives are irrelevant.

All this raises a different question altogether: does the colonel's motive matter in any possible way? At the end of their discussion, Blake states "I don't want to alarm my

aunt without reason...And I don't want to leave her without what may be a needful warning. If you were in my place, Betteredge, tell me, in one word, what would you do?" After almost two chapters discussing Colonel Herncastle, this is the first we hear of this quandary. When Blake had earlier recounted the history of the diamond, Betteredge interjected Blake's monologue with "I began to see my lady and Miss Rachel at the end of it all, now. Not a word he said escaped me" (52). Considering the discussion of the diamond's history, its having been left to Rachel, the Indian conspiracy, and threats against the Colonel's life, concerns about what to say to Lady Julia are reasonable. However, the discussion centers on Colonel Herncastle's motivations and intentions in leaving the diamond, while taking the Indian Conspiracy almost for granted. When posing his questions to Betteredge, Blake asks if the Colonel "*purposely* left a legacy of trouble and danger to his sister, through the innocent medium of his sister's child?" (46; emphasis added). That the anxiety is over Herncastle's intentions is further borne out when Rachel is given the diamond and Lady Verinder the extract from the will. Lady Verinder demands to meet with Betteredge, who describes the interview as "a repetition of what had passed between Mr. Franklin and me at the Shivering Sand—with this difference, that I took care to keep my own counsel about the jugglers, seeing that nothing had happened to justify me in alarming my lady on this head" (74).

Betteredge assumes that anything bad happening is contingent on Colonel Herncastle's intentions. This raises the question of just what Blake would warn his aunt of -- Herncastle's ill wishes, or a potentially murderous Indian cabal? The former is the primary concern. This is peculiar because Herncastle, despite whatever motivations he had, is dead. If Herncastle meant ill, there are three courses of action for his survivors:

the first is to believe in the curse and trust that whomsoever accepts the diamond will suffer under its supernatural force. The second is a mundane variation of the first: trust in the Indians to pursue their quarry, making Rachel their target. The third is the most outlandish - the Colonel had secretly ensured measures would be taken to see to it his sister's family would be tormented, as if he had joined the Indian Conspiracy. This third option is, of course, absurd. Nevertheless, in attributing agency to the late Colonel, this is the type of thing that would warrant Blake's alarming his aunt to the Colonel's leaving the diamond with malicious intent. Unless there were proof he left a legacy to the Indians to assist them in their pursuit of the diamond, there is nothing related to the Colonel to report, especially given how his possession of the diamond is an open family secret (though Rachel seems to be ignorant of it). Had Betteredge and Blake's discussion centered instead on the Indians and their identity and motivations, this would yield a more productive discussion, and yet that which Blake and Betteredge have to say about the Indians is taken for granted. If there is anything to warn Lady Julia of, it would not be the Colonel's intention, but it would be intention of the three mysterious jugglers as the Colonel's intention cannot have direct bearing on the events that transpire once Rachel has the Moonstone, and yet they do not read their presence as a serious threat, despite Blake being followed in London and the jugglers with the boy and the ink.

While Colonel Herncastle cannot ensure any immediate threats regarding the diamond, he embodies other threats to the family, namely reminding them of undesirable family resemblances. Timothy Carens observes Colonel Herncastle's family repudiate and ostracize him because they see too much of themselves in him as he indulges in what they keep hidden (132). This family resemblance is not limited to a "family temper" and

his indulging in it alone, but the possibility the gentrified English household could itself be the seat of the type of savagery attributed to Indians (45, 73; Also 127 in reference to Franklin Blake). This makes the Colonel a variation on the Imperial Gothic. Patrick Brantlinger, in *Rule of Darkness* identifies 3 principal themes of the Imperial Gothic: regression or “going native”; invasion by “barbarism or demonism”; and “the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world” (230). The absence of the third principal from *The Moonstone* means it doesn’t fit exactly the genre Brantlinger describes, but Collins nevertheless subverts the first two. By contrast, consider the Sherlock Holmes villain, Dr. Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”²⁵. Roylott is a doctor who married and practiced medicine in India and returned a widower, complete with a menagerie of Indian animals (not unlike Herncastle). He is noted for having inherited his family’s violent temper, including having spent time in prison for killing his Indian butler. Doyle (unsurprisingly) implies Roylott’s time in India worsened this inherited familial, atavistic defect, as if India literally brings out the worst in people, especially as Roylott uses an Indian snake to murder one of his daughters and attempt to murder the other. Roylott has “gone native” through his exacerbated, atavistic temper, and through the menagerie he weaponizes against his family.

Despite similarities between the two, Herncastle’s violence is presented as part of the British Imperial mission, his temper worsened not by being in India but from his service in the Imperial army. As a variation of the Imperial Gothic, the threat is not that colonized peoples may come and wreak havoc on England, but that those who wreaked

²⁵ Jaya Mehta, by contrast, compares Herncastle to Major Sholto of Doyle’s *The Sign of Four*.

havoc in India may do the same at home. Herncastle therefore becomes a family scapegoat upon whom they may excise their own complicity in the violence of English imperialism. This excising begins with the Prologue, a document designed to alienate John Herncastle and reintegrate its author into the family's good will, and yet the particulars of their relationship (beyond their being cousins) and even the name of the Prologue's author are not provided. His tale may be important, but only because it helps explain Herncastle's villainy, while he, Herncastle's fellow combatant at Seringapatam, is forgotten. Jaya Mehta points out John Herncastle's command to set a guard at the door after he is discovered with the bloody dagger and surrounded by the three dead Indians, "prefigures the attempt of more sympathetic characters to barricade themselves from colonial retribution, rewritten as colonial violence" (620). The unnamed cousin's own account is such an attempt. To remember him would be to struggle with the complexity of his narrative and situation relative to his cousin. Though Colonel John Herncastle may be guilty of murder, his Imperial violence is not dissimilar from the carnage enacted by General Baird's army before Tippoo Sultan was found. Such dissociations are convenient psychological measures for the characters: they can divorce themselves from the violence of others while still benefiting from and minimizing the severity of the threats and consequences the violence produced.

Such dissociations lie behind the investigation conducted by Blake and Betteredge. Blake and Betteredge arrive at different conclusions, even if they phrase them with cautious qualifiers and conditionals. They are both careful to neither absolutely impugn the potentially repentant colonel, nor are they keen to outright condemn him. As discussed above, their investigation is misguided because it downplays the Indian

conspiracy while fixating on the motives of the late Colonel Herncastle *to help them decide how to act*. While the Colonel's motives are inconsequential in the sequence of events, they may be consequential for Blake and Betteredge because how they represent or interpret the Colonel shapes their actions and intentions. This explains why the two approach the issue with conflicting interests: for Betteredge, it is because he and his mistress could have rejected the amicable appeals of a repentant, well-intended individual, and for Blake, it is because he could be party to his revenge.

Betteredge wants the Colonel to be the "one of the greatest blackguards that ever lived" (43), but the Colonel's visit on Rachel's birthday two years since does not bear this out. Betteredge begins his account of this event with the following:

Going up into the hall, there I found the Colonel, wasted, and worn, and old, and shabby, and as wild and as wicked as ever.

"Go up to my sister," says he; "and say that I have called to wish my niece many happy returns of the day."

He had made attempts by letter, more than once already, to be reconciled with my lady, for no other purpose, I am firmly persuaded, than to annoy her. But this was the first time he had actually come to the house. I had it on the tip of my tongue to say that my mistress had a party that night. But the devilish look of him daunted me.

The Colonel's words are amicable and Betteredge does not describe his tone negatively. Nevertheless, Betteredge frames this statement with his biased perspective. Betteredge demeans his appearance and says he has his "devilish look," and refers to the Colonel's "attempts by letter" at reconciliation, which Betteredge believes were to annoy Lady Verinder. No other account of this scene appears for comparison or to suggest Betteredge's perception of the Colonel is Betteredge sharing in the family prejudice or that the efforts at reconciliation were genuine. Blake also neither requests nor includes these letters as evidence of a potentially repentant motive, denying Herncastle the chance

to speak on his own behalf. Herncastle is further juxtaposed with his sister, Lady Julia, who behaves according to Betteredge's expectations of the Colonel when she responds to the Colonel's presence at her home with "the family temper" and Betteredge "tried to plead for civiller answer" than what Lady Julia instructed him to give (45). Where Lady Verinder displays the family temper, John Herncastle defies Betteredge's expectations and responds in a subdued way, even if Betteredge interprets it as "horridly mischievous" (45), and Timothy Carens suggests Herncastle's inward chuckle as his perception of his sister's own hypocrisy (133). Betteredge is not subtle about his interpretations of the scene and his characterization of Herncastle, despite the colonel defying these expectations and not indulging in "the family temper." We should doubt Betteredge's own testimony because he applies his own prejudices to Colonel Herncastle and simply finds what he wants to.

Lady Verinder emerges from this scene worse than Colonel Herncastle, but this is something unacceptable to Betteredge. In this case, we see Betteredge striving to be honest about the situation, but also determined to present the Colonel as the villain and uphold Lady Julia. Sue Lonoff describes Collins' use of multiple narrators by stating "as the speakers reveal what they have seen and heard, they also reveal themselves" (145). It is therefore a great irony that while Herncastle perceives this hypocrisy, he does not display it himself. He defies Betteredge's expectations, remains civil and does not push matters, withholding the family temper. Among the earliest description Betteredge provides of Lady Verinder is that she was "a Christian woman, if ever there was one yet" (34) in response to her willingness to accept Rosanna Spearman - a repentant and reformed thief - into her home. Betteredge would rather give his Lady the benefit of the

doubt and concede to her being harassed and vexed by her blackguard of a brother and so sees her brother as nothing else, despite the possibility he may likewise be a repentant and reformed thief (and murderer). This is not to say Betteredge is necessarily wrong, misguided, or malicious in his interpretations, but his ability to accurately assess events is questionable. If Betteredge had misinterpreted these interactions, it would mean he had, even at his Lady's command, cast out and ostracized a well-intentioned and repentant member of his Lady's family. It is in Betteredge's best interest to depict the Colonel as a villain to Blake than suggest he and his Lady may not be so Christian as he presumes themselves to be.

The possibility Betteredge misread this interaction is borne out by other misinterpretations he makes. For example, his comic statement that the late Mrs. Betteredge possessed the defect of not being able to settle on anything and Betteredge's own two false starts to his narrative for the same defect: Betteredge insists on withdrawing the mote in her eye while unaware of the beam in his own (Matt. 7:3-5). While this example has some hypocritical humor in it, the consequences of his misreadings escalate into dire situations. For example, he diminishes the threat posed by the Indians with a joke (as discussed above) and Sergeant Cuff dupes Betteredge into being his Watson, with Cuff even acknowledging he knew Blake would be on to him if he sought his help instead (175). Betteredge's deductions only become all the more dire when his laughing rejection of Penelope's suggestion of Rosanna's infatuation with Franklin Blake, which indirectly contributes to her death. Whether or not the Colonel was repentant and meant well is still a moot point, insignificant not just because he is dead, but because for Gabriel Betteredge, the "apostle of English common sense" (Carens 134),

to concede the Colonel was “a penitent and Christian man” calls his own and his Lady’s Christianity and Englishness into question. It would mean they indulged in “the family temper” and failed to live up to their charitable, civilized, Christian, English standards, while the violent, eccentric, outcast blackguard of a brother has practiced a more Christian life than they do in his repentance.

Blake’s circumstances require him to take the opposite approach to Betteredge: to consider the possibility the colonel was repentant and well-intentioned. The question of Herncastle’s character matters to Blake because if the latter is the case, then Blake has, even without intending to do so, been an instrument or accomplice of Colonel Herncastle’s inflicting harm upon others. However, Blake’s approach yields no satisfactory conclusion about the Colonel’s character. The questions he raises are, first, why the gem was left to Rachel instead of Lady Verinder; second, how the Colonel knew Rachel would accept the diamond; and third, why the diamond being left to Rachel was contingent on Lady Verinder still being alive. In response to the first two, Betteredge states Lady Verinder would refuse anything left to her by her brother, and “Is there any young lady in existence, sir, who could resist the temptation of accepting such a birthday present as The Moonstone?” (54). Despite being presented as potentially yielding information about the Colonel, these two questions say more about Lady Verinder and Rachel. The third question has the potential to inform the Colonel’s motivation, but it leaves Blake and Betteredge with conflicting possibilities. For Betteredge, “if he has purposely left a legacy of trouble and danger to his sister, by means of her child, it must be a legacy made conditional on his sister’s being alive to feel the vexation of it” (55). Trusting Rachel would accept what Lady Verinder would reject, the best way to punish

the sister who rejected him is to leave the diamond to her daughter. Blake's answer, "to prove to his sister that he had died forgiving her, and to prove it very prettily by means of a present made to her child" (55). Still following on the premise, one would accept what the other would reject, Blake reads it as a possible sign of contrition on the part of the Colonel. However, both answers rely on the same response to the two prior questions, meaning there is no solution at all, leading to Blake stating, "from all I can see, one interpretation is just as likely to be right as the other" (55).

However, the evidence Blake needs to condemn the colonel is forthcoming: the disruption of the birthday festivities in the wake of the diamond's disappearance and Cuff's unsuccessful investigation. Blake deduces this means that "The Moonstone has served the Colonel's vengeance, Betteredge, by means which the Colonel himself never dreamt of!" (188). Of course, much like how Betteredge must condemn the Colonel else confront his and his lady's own hypocrisy, Blake must condemn the Colonel and be among his victims or else be complicit in the domestic disruption caused by the Diamond. While the notion that the Colonel's revenge is accomplished "by means the Colonel himself never dreamt of" points to how the Colonel could not have been directly involved in the theft, it attributes malicious intent, as if the Colonel's intention caused the loss of the diamond and the poisoning of the family, something possible regardless of the Colonel's intention. It is as if the curse is contingent upon the ill-intent of the Colonel and not from any violence or crime committed in the past. This isn't to suggest Blake is wrong or to exonerate the Colonel, but to emphasize that Blake cannot know or confirm the colonel's guilt or malice: the colonel's intentions are impossible to know. What follows in the novel that follows relies on the disassociation of intentions and

consequences, exploring how the well-intended can go disastrously wrong, and how the well-intended can rationalize their beliefs, values, and intentions. Many characters in the novel imply that because they meant well, there can be no crime, neither harm, nor foul by virtue of their good intentions, a claim the novel disagrees with.

3: Family Ties, Professional Interests, And Criminal Accomplices

The novel's prologue and Blake's instructions to his chroniclers, as described by Betteredge, present the matter of the Moonstone as a "family matter" (21). However, this is hardly only a family matter. Instead, "family history operates as imperial history writ small" (Free, "Dirty Linen" 343). The more one probes the matter of the Moonstone, the less it becomes a family matter. This occurs as the changing of narrators, a sort of changing of the guard around the Victorian middle-class family, begins in the family's professionalized periphery and shifts away from the family itself. For example, the lack of narration from Rachel Verinder and her mother, the victims of the crime and the novel's heroine, and even, as discussed above, the identity of the Prologue's author is a mystery itself. It begs the question: how is this a family matter when the family does not tell it? Instead, the tale is first told through those who are adjacent to the family: the avuncular steward Gabriel Betteredge, the distant evangelical cousin Miss Clack, the family attorney Mr. Bruff, and Franklin Blake, another distant cousin who seeks to marry into the family. It is only a "Family" affair with therefore a loose conglomeration of extended members and those whose connections are servile and professional, especially if we include Rosanna Spearman among the list of narrators. Though she does not receive her own "Narrative" as the others do, Blake includes her written account verbatim in his

own narration. On the one hand it is gracious of Blake not to paraphrase - especially because to do so could call his own reliability into question - even if he is not gracious enough to set this reformed thief and domestic maid on the same plane as the novel's other narrators. This cabal of quasi-familial and family-adjacent narrators eventually gives way to those with more professional interests, eventually including Ezra Jennings, Sergeant Cuff and "his man", Mr. Candy, and Mr. Murthwaite. The inclusion of a second narrative from Gabriel Betteredge, informing the reader of Blake and Rachel's wedding and her pregnancy reinforces the family-adjacent nature of the narrations because it is Betteredge, who shares news of the marriage and pregnancy, complete with an example of Betteredge's continued prophetic reliance on *Robinson Crusoe* as he cites his randomly opening *Robinson Crusoe* to Crusoe's own reference to his marriage and child, predicting the forthcoming news of Rachel's pregnancy.

The story is therefore told by those who have professional interests in the family. While this may call attention to Victorian anxieties about domestic servants and the propensity towards gossip, the exposure of secrets, and even of blackmail, such as discussed by McCuskey and Trodd (1987), this is not the type of labor undertaken here. As discussed by Fernandez (22, 90) and Gooch (126), this is a matter of labor done on behalf of the family, for a price, and at the behest of an employer. The result is a division of labor, each participant a representative from a different sphere of English life: family, religion, service, domesticity, finance, and medicine. Not only does each narrator approach the matter from a difference sphere, but each asserts their own superiority over their fellow narrators despite being at the whim and mercy of those around them. For example, before Betteredge concludes his initial portion, he advises the reader to distrust

anything Clack may say of him (195); Bruff begins his narrative by stating he must “throw the necessary light on certain points of interest which have thus far been left in the dark” (272), and early in Blake’s narrative, he states “The picture presented of me, by my old friend Betteredge, at the time of my departure from England, is (as I think) a little overdrawn” (296). These disagreements are not just from a narrative perspective but personal belief and experience. For example, Betteredge and Lady Verinder are reluctant to defer to Cuff’s conclusions, insisting their knowledge of Rachel’s character contradicts Cuff’s accusations, not unlike Clack’s disdain for Lady Verinder’s insistence on following medical advice rather the presumed healing power of her spiritual tracts. These examples show how those close to the family presume to know better than one another and those in the family and relies on a combination of their own experiences and beliefs to supersede the expertise of another to prescribe the right course of action to protect the family.

These many facets of the narration - performed by servants, for a price, on behalf of Blake, to protect the family - complicates a common assessment of the novel’s narrative style: each account is from a witness, offering testamentary contribution relevant to the disappearance of the diamond, and while no witness account may provide the truth, the truth may be achieved through the compilation of these witness accounts (M. Clarke 8-9). However, the familial connections of these witnesses, the first three in particular (Betteredge, Clack, and Bruff), complicate their reliability. Their interests in the family means they are keen to protect the family and its members while justifying their own involvement, participation, and the values and beliefs they possess that shape their actions and decisions. These are not witnesses put on trial before a judge and jury,

but a group who is eager to shape the story to their advantage even as they must correspond with others and whatever official account a third party (such as Cuff) may produce. Their reliability and familial interests are further complicated in how they each take different approaches to the nature of truth and its discovery. Their devotion to certain modes and methods of truth are external to the family but can be harmful or misguided. Possible exceptions to this - Cuff and Murthwaite - do not discuss the family but the fate of the diamond. The other narrators may be presented as witnesses, but it may be better to think of them as accomplices or co-conspirators – guilty parties eager to justify their actions consequences - much like how Seegrave and Cuff both suspect members of the household to have colluded with others to acquire and abscond with the diamond. Each account functions much like the Prologue: To show how they introduced various forms of discovering truth so they may act as familial safeguards against nefarious external forces despite engaging in or associating with questionable and potentially harmful practices. To explore this, I will focus on Betteredge, Clack, and Bruff, the first three narrators and those with the closest investments in the family.

For Gabriel Betteredge, truth comes from *Robinson Crusoe*. Betteredge treats DeFoe's novel as a form of divination, granting access to profound truths from which he may derive peace and comfort and from which others may do the same. Betteredge does not deny Christianity, and even quotes the Bible at one point (doing one better than Clack), specifically 1 Corinthians 13:12: "in a glass darkly", though this is more a literary allusion than a religious or spiritual insight, to describe his inability to understand Cuff. Nevertheless, Betteredge carries his devotion to *Robinson Crusoe* with a missionary zeal, boldly declaring it to reader and associate alike. This is apparent through the disdain he

shows when he learns Ezra Jennings has not read *Robinson Crusoe* since his youth and does not share Betteredge's veneration. It is as if Betteredge believes his own veneration is commonplace, with every English household having their own copy to procure whenever there is a challenging moment. Of course, the novel never suggests anyone else shares Betteredge's opinion, yet Betteredge acts as if Jennings is the peculiarity. Betteredge's reliance on *Crusoe*, however, is ultimately nothing more than a convenient horoscope, or what Mehta describes as "a kind of combination Bible and Ouija board" (622), with Betteredge himself stating he was "firmly persuaded some explanation might have been found, if we had only searched long enough for it" (180).

In finding truth in *Robinson Crusoe*, Betteredge makes connections between platitudes in the novel and whatever in his life perplexes him. He does so without much consideration about the narrative of *Robinson Crusoe* itself, which itself is a story of a man coming to rely on the Bible. While his use of *Crusoe* is presented as comical, it has its own deluding effect on him. In it Betteredge finds whatever he needs to satisfy momentary anxieties (Krienke 92) but not to find a significant life philosophy or proper religion, implying Betteredge misses the entire point of the two novels in question - both the one he is in and the one from which he derives truth. The problem with Betteredge's use of *Robinson Crusoe* is in how it screens against the deeper issues in the novel.

McKelvy remarks

Collins uses Betteredge's blind faith in *Robinson Crusoe* to characterize a jingoistic house steward who summarizes the novel's central conflict on terms that are oblivious to its roots in the British intrusion into India. All Betteredge can see are the disturbing elements of a foreign invasion of an England which is home to God's chosen people" (505)

Mehta draws similar comparisons between the Indians' oracular use of their fair-haired

child and the bottle of ink and the ink on the pages of *Robinson Crusoe* (631), and Gooch considers how this has caused Betteredge “to confuse the literal and the figurative” as many at the time of *Robinson Crusoe* believed the novel to be a genuine account, as opposed to a work of fiction (132). Betteredge’s use of *Robinson Crusoe* works like the opiates taken by Jennings, Herncastle, and administered to Blake by Mr. Candy: they pacify but do not provide resolution. As McKelvy discusses, Betteredge’s reading is almost always accompanied by smoking, eating, or drinking (504), much like how Krienke compares his reading to masculine forms of leisure (83). The platitudes Betteredge extracts provide a stupefying effect, allowing him to overlook much of what is going on before him, but not solutions: it pacifies rather than inspires. For example, *Robinson Crusoe* does not come to his rescue when confronted with the possibility Rachel may be the thief or regarding Rosanna Spearman’s infatuation with Franklin Blake.

The passages Betteredge quotes elsewhere are more about bringing his mind and will in line with those of his social betters and employers. These include the first quote he provides, about “the Folly of beginning a Work before we count the Cost” regarding Franklin Blake’s request for him to contribute to the narrative, and later, when Lady Verinder bribes him with a waistcoat to move from farm-bailiff to house-steward, he quotes “Today we love, what tomorrow we hate.” Third, in response to Murthwaite’s joking about the Indians’ needing umbrellas, Betteredge recites “Fear of Danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger itself” (86). *Robinson Crusoe* is a peculiar prophet for a self-identified Christian such as Gabriel Betteredge. The standard practice of Biblical Prophets was to provide warning and call people and nations to repentance:

their role is to discomfort a sinful status quo and promote righteous change while enduring persecution. It was on this basis that Jonah, the Biblical prophet whose story most closely follows Crusoe's, fled from his prophetic call (which also makes the Jonah tale unique, as the people of Nineveh did repent). But Betteredge uses *Robinson Crusoe* to reinforce the social norms and expectations in the face of change, variation, and challenge, and to work to ensure the propriety of the Verinder family and household. Examples include his unsolicited advice to Lady Verinder to maintain a civil tone when discussing John Herncastle and his rejection of Penelope's perception that Rosanna is enamored with Blake, as well as when, to deter the Indians from invading the home, he releases the two dogs to patrol the grounds.

Betteredge's treatment of *Robinson Crusoe* mirrors Crusoe's treatment of the Bible. Lynne Walhout Hinojosa, in her essay "Reading the Self, Reading the Bible (or is it a Novel?): The Differing Typological Hermeneutics of Augustine's *Confessions* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*" describes Crusoe's relationship with the Bible as a text and not a history:

Crusoe has no sense of the wider scope of God's action in history or in creation. Crusoe never reflects on God literally forming Israel as a people in the Old Testament or the church in the New Testament, and as a consequence, he never sees himself as part of God's larger people. He does reflect once on God the Creator right before his conversion (651)

but he never sustains a constant reflection on himself as created by God, as Augustine does. In these ways, Crusoe's literal interpretation of Scripture never has ramifications beyond his own needs and situations" (651). For Hinojosa, Crusoe places a biblical narrative inside himself unlike earlier interpretations of scripture in which the individual was subsumed by the biblical narrative: he may be God's chosen, but he is not one of

God's people. For this reason, Hinojosa contends "Crusoe displays no desire... to carry out the mission of the church or to be reunited with society in order to participate in God's plan for human history" (652). The same can be said of Gabriel Betteredge. He plies the pages of *Robinson Crusoe* for personal, spiritual, and emotional release, as well as for wisdom and insight, but the paratextual and historical aspects of *Robinson Crusoe* are largely absent from his reading, interpretation, and use.

Betteredge presents himself as a protector who has the family's best interests at heart, but without considering the larger implications of what he is doing and who he is engaging with because he has *Robinson Crusoe's* palliative effect. This raises the question about whether or not his position affords him any sort of protective role or what his responsibilities are. He is a servant, but has been one his entire life, and has gradually moved into the family circle. This means his working alongside Cuff given Cuff's accusation of Rachel is a potential betrayal against a family that is practically his own. This helps explain Betteredge's rambling opening chapters as they provide him an opportunity to explore his character and relationship to the family. As the avuncular house steward, he has certain privileges and responsibilities about the care and maintenance of the grounds, manor, and family. Notable in his overview of his family history is his changing status as a servant. All Betteredge says of his life before his employment to the Verinder family is that he "was a small farmer's seventh son" (24). He begins working under the farm-bailiff, only to be promoted to being the farm-bailiff himself, and in his advancing years is promoted to house steward. Betteredge's life has been devoted service to the Verinder family and has gradually moved closer and closer to the family with more familial, domestic, responsibilities. In his devotions to the family

and *Robinson Crusoe*, Betteredge blurs the lines between service, family, and religion. For example, Betteredge's decision to marry has more to do with getting out of paying room and board than with affection.

Betteredge's comments about Cuff and Crusoe's Man Friday are delivered with subtle irony. After Cuff accuses Rachel, Betteredge narrates "if Sergeant Cuff had found himself, at that moment, transported to a desert island, without a man Friday to keep him company, or a ship to take him off—he would have found himself exactly where I wished him to be!" (173). The irony is, first, that Betteredge has been Man Friday to the Verinder household: a close and trusted associate who is considered part of the family and household (Fernandez 91, Mehta 623) and, second, because Betteredge's "detective fever" made him Cuff's Man Friday. After Cuff delivers his evidence against Rachel and states he has "kept the family secret within the family circle. I am the only outsider who knows it—and my professional existence depends on holding my tongue," Betteredge narrates "Here I felt that my professional existence depended on not holding my tongue. To be held up before my mistress, in my old age, as a sort of deputy-policeman, was, once again, more than my Christianity was strong enough to bear" and states "I beg to inform your ladyship...that I never, to my knowledge, helped this abominable detective business, in any way, from first to last; and I summon Sergeant Cuff to contradict me, if he dares!" Betteredge reads the detective's business in professional terms and sees his possible complicity in a similar light: if it is Cuff's business to accuse Miss Rachel, then it is Betteredge's to deny any involvement in it. Of course, Betteredge was certainly involved and accompanied Cuff through much of his investigation. Considering Betteredge's assumed role as protector, he has possibly failed not only in not protecting

Rachel from suspicion, but also in assisting Sergeant Cuff in reaching this conclusion. By relying on *Robinson Crusoe*'s palliative platitudes, Betteredge leaves his own defenses down and is unable to properly assess the situations before him. This begins with his handling of his marriage to Selina Goby, and proceeds with Rosanna Spearman and Sergeant Cuff, and even eventually with Ezra Jennings (discussed more below). Of the first two, there is little to suggest Selina Goby enjoyed marriage with Betteredge, even from his own account, and Rosanna's suicide points to his inability to protect those of the household or who were, like him, employed by the Verinder family. Betteredge's reliance on that English prophet may ease his mind but does not prepare him for the future or provide warning.

Curiously, Betteredge finds a more reliable prophet in the fever-inducing Sergeant Cuff. During their last interaction, Cuff shares three prophecies, even stating "I'll only turn prophet, for once in a way, and for your sake. I have warned you already that you haven't done with the Moonstone yet" (185). First, Cuff prophecies that Betteredge will hear from the Yollands (friends of the late Rosanna). Second, they will hear of the three Indians again and in proximity to Rachel wherever she goes. Third, they will hear of Septimus Luker, the money lender. These prophecies contrast with the palliative platitudes pulled from *Robinson Crusoe*. The final chapter of Betteredge's narrative may end with a characteristic quote from *Robinson Crusoe*, but its main concern is the fulfilment of Cuff's prophecies, with Betteredge himself remarking he will not fault his reader if they side with Cuff and believe Rachel and Septimus Luker to be working together, as well as a reminder he was acting under orders in composing this narrative.

Miss Drusilla Clack's narrative begins like Betteredge's, if not quite so

prolonged. She provides background of her being a cousin, connected through Colonel Herncastle, she was raised to be habitual and regular, which leads to her willingness to be of service to Blake, and she currently resides in Brittany. Of course, her summary of events is flavored by her pious descriptions. In her account, she presents herself as a zealous Christian missionary (though no one uses this term). However, her zeal contrasts Betteredge's efforts to protect the family and maintain a Victorian domestic status quo: the protection Clack offers is not to maintain, but to convert as she sees her relatives in need of her uplifting spiritual advice and guidance. Where *Robinson Crusoe* lulls Betteredge into palliative complacency, Clack's evangelism spurs her to (self)righteous action. She compares her being in Brittany to Patmos, where the exiled St. John received his Revelation, and she expresses concern Blake may "suppress what may not prove to be sufficiently flattering in these pages to the person chiefly concerned in them," to which Blake annotates "Nothing will be added, altered or removed, in her manuscript, or in any of the other manuscripts which pass through my hands" (202). Of course, Blake need not do so: Clack is able to make a fool of herself on her own and she does so without realizing the harm and difficulties she throws up in the ways of others.

Clack locates truth in her abrasive evangelism, with a Christianity that has forgotten Christ and the Bible. She has at her disposal an unspecified and indeterminable number of books, pamphlets, extracts, and even fellow believers who (she assumes) will turn their hands to writing letters and copying passages to be delivered to Lady Verinder in her waning health. And while Miss Clack makes many references to "Christians" she makes no reference to the figure of Christ or the Bible, prioritizing these many indeterminable and interminable extra-Biblical texts over any other consideration,

implicitly even the Bible itself as she never turns to the Biblical canon in a way comparable to Betteredge's use of *Robinson Crusoe*. While Betteredge may be disdainful of those who do not share his veneration, he is more willing to shake his head, pity the non-believer, and continue with his life and even to provide assistance and support. Miss Clack instead weaponizes her tracts and her devotion. When her prescriptions of ecclesiastical reading are contradicted by Lady Julia Verinder and her doctor, Miss Clack moves like a saboteur as she deposits tracts, books, and pamphlets around Lady Verinder's London house like ensnaring traps. Clack means well, but it is unsolicited and in defiance to medical advice, which Collins implicitly values more. That there is reason to be apprehensive of Miss Clack is shown when Lady Julia's servant nervously returns her tracts: she invokes trepidation, not conversion.

Clack's books are part of Collins' fiction, and she never succeeds in quoting any material beyond their titles. These include works such as *The Serpent in the Home*, complete with multiples sections beginning with "Satan in...", "A Word With You On Your Cap-Ribbons", and her favorite, *The Life, Letters, and Labours of Miss Jane Ann Stamper*. Unlike Betteredge, who can divine whatever he needs from a single book, Miss Clack is armed with her extensive collection. Clack's collection could be compared to the Bible itself as a collection of books, letters, historical accounts, admonitions, and prophecies all gathered into a single canon. The problem this creates is that Miss Clack will always, in her mind at least, be in the right because she has an inexhaustible supply of works at her disposal. The selection she attempts to recite to Mr. Ablewhite, Sr., is the one thousand and first letter of the forty-fourth edition of *The Life, Letters, and Labours of Miss Jane Ann Stamper*. In introducing this work, she describes it as "Manna in the

wilderness, Mr. Ablewhite! Dew on the parched earth! Words of comfort, words of wisdom, words of love—the blessed, blessed, blessed words of Miss Jane Ann Stamper!” (266). Though her description is Biblical, it is still extra-Biblical works, and not even Betteredge describes *Robinson Crusoe* in such aggrandizing language. That Collins, who described himself as a Christian but did not affiliate with a specific denomination,²⁶ would create fictional tracts after his extensive use of *Robinson Crusoe* by Betteredge suggests he wanted to emphasize the baselessness of Clack’s Christianity. It is humorous (if potentially dangerous) that Betteredge would rely on a fictional character, but *Robinson Crusoe* is at least a genuine book from which he can quote. Though Collins does provide titles, Clack never quotes from them, further emphasizing their fictional, ephemeral nature. To apply a quote from Sue Lonoff about *The Woman in White*, “though truth itself may be beyond dispute, those who proclaim it are fallible” (148). Similarly, Levy states Clack “is able to disguise - even to herself - her self-serving intrusions into others’ lives as manifestations of ‘the solemn duty of interfering’” (289). But, in the context of the novel, her manipulative motives, though “self-supported by conscience” (272), are no more worthy than those of the Godfrey Ablewhite - the man she admires as ‘the Christian Hero’” (239).

The passage of Clack’s which Levy here quotes, regarding her “self-supported conscience,” in its entirety states

Once self-supported by conscience, once embarked on a career of manifest usefulness, the true Christian never yields. Neither public nor private influences produce the slightest effect on us, when we have once got our

²⁶ In a letter to Edward Piggott, Collins wrote, “I make no claim to orthodoxy. I am neither a protestant, a catholic nor a dissenter. I do not desire to discuss this or that particular creed but I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God,” cited in W. Clarke 62.

mission. Taxation may be the consequence of a mission; riots may be the consequence of a mission; wars may be the consequence of a mission: we go on with our work, irrespective of every human consideration which moves the world outside us. We are above reason; we are beyond ridicule; we see with nobody's eyes, we hear with nobody's ears, we feel with nobody's hearts, but our own. Glorious, glorious privilege! And how is it earned? Ah, my friends, you may spare yourselves the useless inquiry! We are the only people who can earn it—for we are the only people who are always right. (236)

I quote this passage in its entirety because it presents Clack's reckless disregard for potential consequences. There is a hint of Matthew 10:34 herein, wherein Christ says to his apostles "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword." However, Clack singles herself out, making herself and those like her into martyrs who will suffer for the Christian good, and because they "are always right" she calls any interest into earning it "a useless inquiry" implying she and her associates are a sort of infallible Christian elect, a group closed off to others, potentially turning her zeal into a cudgel rather than a comfort to those who may be in need. For example, the chapters from *The Serpent at Home*, which places "Satan in the Hair Brush...behind the Looking Glass...under the Tea Table...[and] out of the Window" show how her approach to Christianity is Pharisaical. As represented in the New Testament, the Pharisees were obsessed with their own righteous superiority over others through strict observance to the Law of Moses and other extra-scriptural requirements, all of which Christ frequently condemns. It is therefore little wonder she fails to accept the hypocrisy in Godfrey Ablewhite as she cannot see it in herself.

Because Clack's truth and her familial interests are rooted in her own conception of Christianity, it relocates her familial interests away from the sort of professionalized, middle-class interest demonstrated by Betteredge and Bruff. Her interpretations of

actions (her own and those around her) inevitably point to one of two ends: Heaven or Hell. This binary introduces the impossibility of change or repentance after death, which means her interest in truth and protecting the family is not from scandal or thievery but damnation. This proves her downfall when, near the end of her narrative and in front of Rachel, Bruff, and Mr. Ablewhite, Sr., among others, Miss Clack declares to Rachel, “Haven’t you seen yet, that my heart yearns to make a Christian of you? Has no inner voice told you that I am trying to do for you, what I was trying to do for your dear mother when death snatched her out of my hands?” (269). What preparation Lady Verinder required, Miss Clack does not specify, but her opinion of Lady Verinder’s salvation conflicts with the beliefs of those present. Rachel, astonished at Clack’s doctrine, declares “You were at the funeral, Mr. Bruff; you saw how everybody loved her; you saw the poor helpless people crying at her grave over the loss of their best friend. And that wretch stands there, and tries to make me doubt that my mother, who was an angel on earth, is an angel in heaven now!” (270). Doctrine aside, this condemnation of Lady Julia results in Clack being left alone. Her tale of persecution, making herself out to be a messianic martyr and savior (Lady Julia was snatched from *her* hands, not Christ’s) rejected and reviled by the Verinder and Ablewhite families, shows her interests are spiritual in nature and her own sense of Christian superiority. She may not be cajoling Blake or others to re-introduce her into the family, but her narrative design suggests she had others’ best spiritual interests and Christian salvation in mind. Her narrative is a justification of her own actions and intentions, in particular her own unwillingness to adjust or adapt or consider a more tactful approach that could prove more productive and efficacious in her evangelizing efforts.

Her narrative goal is to flaunt her own martyrdom and righteous example. As she states at the end of her narrative, “Is there more to be added to this plain statement of facts—to this touching picture of a Christian persecuted by the world? No!” (271). In doing so, she attempts to override Blake’s own intentions and motives in assembling this collection. Clack is not interested in the reputation of the family, and arguably not even in the salvation of their souls, but rather in demonstrating her own superiority to them and what they have lost in rejecting her. Consider her description of her exile in Brittany as “a Patmos amid the howling ocean of popery that surrounds us” (201). Not only does she see her being in Brittany as a religious exile in and of itself, but she plays the victim at every opportunity, while simultaneously presuming to know others’ spiritual needs, as shown by her offering a tract, “A Word With You On Your Cap-Ribbons” to Penelope Betteredge, and when Penelope rejects it, remarks, “We must sow the good seed somehow. I waited till the door was shut on me, and slipped the tract into the letter-box. When I had dropped another tract through the area railings, I felt relieved, in some small degree, of a heavy responsibility towards others” (203). She refuses to take “no” for an answer, taking her personal convictions as reason enough to override the will or wishes of anyone else in the name of sewing evangelizing seeds. Her good intentions lead to actions and behaviors that frustrate, annoy, harass, and impede, and keep her from accepting the failures and follies of those whom she admires, evidenced by her persistent regard for Godfrey Ablewhite. Considering her account was written after Ablewhite’s death and presumably even after Cuff’s own investigations, she refuses to believe she has been mistaken, that her devotions to her Christian Hero could be misplaced because to do so would run counter to her own beliefs, not unlike Betteredge’s trust in lady Verinder’s

Christianity. Ablewhite's death at the hands of those whom Clack would consider heathens would likely elevate him to the status of martyr in her estimation.

Compared to Betteredge and Clack, Matthew Bruff, Solicitor, is a welcome shift in style and presentation. He does not have a distorted and distorting devotional perspective, no quasi- or pseudo-scriptural text to contrast with Betteredge's *Robinson Crusoe* and Clack's tracts and books. As a lawyer, Bruff's approach to discovering truth is most in line with that of the novel: the accumulation of information from multiple sources. The nature of his relationship also differs and in important ways. He is not a member of the family but is considered part of the household (Narayan 292, note 3), close enough to merit an invitation to Rachel's birthday, something Miss Clack was not granted. Next, though Bruff's narrative is the shortest up to this point in the novel, he claims to be and justifies being the most connected with the diamond, citing his having written up Colonel Herncastle's will and encouraged Blake to fulfill its stipulations (283). He likewise assumes an investigative approach, detailing what he witnesses and gains from it, providing important information relative to Rachel's engagement to Ablewhite and the Indians' interest in the diamond, with Mr. Murthwaite acting as an expert whose experience reinforces the Indians' designs, with him establishing the date the Indians would act to reclaim the diamond. Bruff's brief narration signals a shift in the novel, moving away from accounts and descriptions of related events and into more investigative work: the scrutiny of evidence, pursuit of criminals and their associates, and plans for what to follow, projecting when the Indians would make their move on the diamond.

What Bruff provides to the investigation, however, does not overshadow any

potential shortcomings on his part. He is quite taken in by the Indian who visits his office, an event contrasted with Septimus Luker's visit the next day. Bruff acknowledges the Indian's respect of his time and his gentlemanly bearing, a model of professional interactions. Once Bruff shares this and other information with Murthwaite, he determines the date the Indians will again pursue the diamond because that is when it will be removed from the bank where it has been pledged. What Bruff does not dwell on is how he provided the information to the Indians. Just as he gains information about the Indians, they gain information from him, letting them know when the diamond will be removed from its vault. Bruff presents this as gaining evidence of their intentions and motives, applying their queries about loans to the experience of Septimus Luker and his bank receipt having been stolen. Bruff, aided by Murthwaite, deduces correctly. Nevertheless, by being taken in by the Indian's good nature, Bruff is deceived into revealing information he and his clients would have been better left not being shared and sets the Indians on the right track. He may not enable an immediate threat against the Verinder family, but he enables the Indians in their own investigation. What's more, it is only with Mr. Murthwaite's aid that Bruff deduces the Indians would return near the end of June to reclaim the diamond. He may not betray the professional and familial confidence the Verinder family has in him, but he must situate himself as working for his clients' benefit and rectify any harm that may befall them from his own indiscretion.

While Bruff's own motivations in protecting his clients become clear, they confuse his relationship with the Verinder family. His relationship is based on professional grounds, like Betteredge, but he is not a quasi-serf servant tied directly to the family and by extension their property. Nevertheless, when discussing Rachel and her

potential marriage to Godfrey Ablewhite, Bruff narrates, “But would you think of it quite as lightly as you do, if the thing was done (let us say) with your own sister?” (276). He may not claim to be a paternal figure for Rachel (V. Morris 118), but in the absence of mother and father and with a bad match on the horizon, he assumes the role of Guardian. He is also the only one of the three narrators up this point to (claim to) assume the worst of Godfrey Ablewhite, whom Bruff has “had always believed to be a smooth-tongued impostor—justifying the very worst that I had thought of him, and plainly revealing the mercenary object of the marriage, on his side!” (276). Coupled with how Bruff’s narrative is both the shortest and most direct, even the most detective-like of the three so far, he offers a respite of clarity and specificity not afforded by Betteredge’s rambling, tangents, and misguided assumptions and Clack’s obnoxious piety.

Bruff, however, is hardly a saint. While he is a welcome guest in the Verinder household and serves as a guardian and protector to Rachel, especially after the fallout with the Ablewhite family, he is willing to compromise his professional status for the sake of his clients and even at the expense of his clerks and employees. When he learns how “Messrs. Skipp and Smalley had found it necessary to examine Lady Verinder’s will” (275) and meets with Smalley about the matter, Bruff pressures his fellow solicitor into identifying his client. In doing so, Bruff, much like the novel’s other narrators hereto, juxtaposes his good intentions with unscrupulous, unsupportable practices. Bruff at least has the self-awareness to own up to it. In response to Smalley’s query “whether it would not be a breach of professional confidence on his part to say more” about his client’s identity, Bruff assumes the role of a self-described tyrant:

We had a smart discussion upon that. He was right, no doubt; and I was

wrong. The truth is, I was angry and suspicious—and I insisted on knowing more. Worse still, I declined to consider any additional information offered me, as a secret placed in my keeping: I claimed perfect freedom to use my own discretion. Worse even than that, I took an unwarrantable advantage of my position. ‘Choose, sir,’ I said to Mr. Smalley, ‘between the risk of losing your client’s business and the risk of losing Mine.’ Quite indefensible, I admit—an act of tyranny, and nothing less. Like other tyrants, I carried my point. Mr. Smalley chose his alternative, without a moment’s hesitation. (276)

Bruff herein weaponizes his superior position in defiance of good legal practice and conduct, placing Smalley, who had benefited from Bruff’s patronage, picking up smaller cases Bruff had not taken on.

Bruff’s willingness to be a tyrant, to compromise his professional ethics, and force his fellow solicitors into giving up privileged information, as well as not being willing to keep the matter privileged, shows where his devotions lie: not to any legal, professional, or religious obligation, but to his clients. On the one hand, this is the job of a solicitor. Bruff therein is more like Archibald Carlyle of *East Lynne* than the nefarious blackmailing, manipulating Mr. Tulkinghorn of *Bleak House*. Nevertheless, in his tyranny and disregard for others, there is a hint of Tulkinghorn in Bruff. He cajoles Smalley to cooperate, compromising his own professional standards to force another to compromise his own, on behalf of his own client, not unlike how Tulkinghorn was willing to investigate and blackmail Lady Dedlock ostensibly to protect her husband and his client. A “breach of professional confidence”, to sacrifice the privileges that make legal representation practicable, are not as important as his clients. Nevertheless, Bruff’s presentation of his professional failings and compromises are presented as beneficial to Rachel, even if it is effectively him meddling in her love life. Of course, Bruff does have a professional interest in her love life. As a single woman in Victorian England, and

according to the stipulations in her mother's will, Rachel would be subject to coverture when married: she would be legally absorbed by her husband, and so Bruff may risk losing not just a place in the family but a client as well. In doing so, Bruff confuses the Victorian boundaries between professional and domestic, servant and family – not unlike Betteredge. It becomes difficult to disentangle what Bruff considers good for himself and good for Rachel, if he sees her as family or client. For Bruff's sake (and in contrast to the ostracized Miss Clack), he is right about Ablewhite and successful in deterring Rachel from the match, even if Rachel convinces Bruff - on the strength of her word alone and without evidence - of Ablewhite's innocence regarding the diamond. Because Bruff is ultimately right about Ablewhite and works to protect Rachel, treating her like a damsel in distress, we are encouraged to overlook a few professional indiscretions, including setting the Indians on the right track.

Perhaps most damning of these three narrators is how their efforts to act as safeguards for the family do harm to the one they are most interested in protecting: Rachel Verinder. Bruff explains how Rachel's mother, Lady Julia, had already taken measures to ensure for her daughter's wellbeing and how she protected Rachel and her inheritance from an unscrupulous husband by preventing them from raising any money from the property (276). However, as Tim Dolin discusses, once Rachel inherits the diamond, these protections are challenged:

The arrival of the Moonstone on the eve of Rachel's coming-of-age represents to Lady Verinder a serious threat to the legal custody she and Bruff had so carefully organized for her. Her renewed vulnerability to fortune hunters unsettles her mother, who perceives in the stone a renewed threat to the estate itself. From the moment the diamond arrives, cleverly smuggled in by Franklin, the household is obsessed with security — with banks and strong rooms, and ways of and ways of ensuring that property is

made safe and fast, ostensibly for the sake of the Moonstone, but more urgently because of the accompanying threat to the Verinder estate. (78)

In each narrative, they take steps to protect Rachel - Betteredge to protect her from accusation; Clack from damnation; and Bruff from a bad, exploitative marriage to Ablewhite - but in doing so deny her the opportunity to represent or protect herself. She becomes someone in need of delicate care and handling, others to stand up for her while she remains silent in the background. This approach to Rachel contrasts with Betteredge's earlier description of her as having one flaw, and something that would have been an asset had she been born a man: her independence. What this means is Rachel suffers a similar fate to the one the diamond and the Verinder estate face. Colonel Herncastle stipulated that if he died violently or under dubious circumstances that the diamond was to be sent to Amsterdam where it would be cut up into multiple perfect brilliants. Doing so would excise the diamond's lone flaw as well as destroy its identity, making it worthless to the Indians pursuing it. Likewise, had Lady Julia and Matthew Bruff not taken steps to protect the property Rachel would inherit, it too could have been divided up.

While the diamond and the estate escape this fate, Rachel does not. In this story about a family matter and a theft, the central member of the family and the victim of the crime never has the opportunity to share her story. Instead, her story is cut up into 10 different narratives with about as many narrators (depending on how one defines a narrator, i.e., should Rosanna Spearman be considered one). Much like Betteredge, Clack, and Bruff, they all tell a different part of the story, and in doing so, represent only one facet of Rachel Verinder. She is reduced from an independent individual to a

participant in her own story, shunted to the side where she may be placed on various pedestals to be admired while others do the work of investigation, marriage brokering, and salvation on her behalf. That Blake's removal of the diamond has sexual overtones has been thoroughly discussed by scholars and critics, but in a more general sense it is also her loss of innocence: the removal of the diamond signals a forced removal from a state where she may be independent to where she must fulfill the domestic, marital, and maternal roles dictated by society, culture, and those around her (Swartz 162-163). As an upper-class Victorian woman, this means forgoing her independence and accepting the realities of Victorian marriage and coverture: to forfeit her independence and be legally absorbed by her husband so she may become wife and mother. These three narrators play an important role in taming and tempering the independent Rachel Verinder in preparation for the sensational Franklin Blake.

4: Inheritance and Complicity

Inheritance plays an important role in *The Moonstone*, but it is notoriously infelicitous and unsuccessful: the things left from one generation to another are contested, given with malice, or never achieved, beginning with Franklin Blake's father's unsuccessful Chancery case wherein he claims to be the rightful inheritor of a title and its accompanying provisions. Blake's own European education is presented as his father's effort to deny the country he believed wronged him the opportunity to educate his son. And even Drusilla Clack is told she will inherit something from Lady Verinder, which is neither specified nor claimed. The novel is apprehensive about what and how things pass from one generation to another. Blake and Betteredge's discussion of Herncastle's

motives is part of this: the questionable inheritance requires certain action and their potential complicity. Even when Blake receives his father's legacy, Rachel Verinder uses this as evidence against him when he confronts her about the diamond. Of course, inheritances are not limited to material things left in wills. As Gabriel Betteredge remarks of his daughter Penelope, she "inherits my superiority to reason—and, in respect to that accomplishment, has got a long way ahead of her own father" (189). Even Rachel's inheritance of the diamond and Blake's inheritance of his father's fortune (and his inability to prove his claim to the title), as well as his European education, are juxtaposed with the sad story of Rosanna Spearman. Rather than receive jewels or money, she endures the consequences of her parents' actions: an inheritance of poverty and crime (prior to her reformation). In her account discovered by Blake, Rosanna recounts how she became a thief because her "mother went on the streets when I was quite a little girl" which happened because her gentleman father had abandoned them both (317).

The juxtaposition of Rachel and Rosanna is a compelling one as these are two women who, due to the conditions of their birth and how they are (or are not) provided for and expected to behave, suffer under knowledge about the possible criminality of a man whom they love. Despite their differences, Rachel and Rosanna are united in being the victims of cultural expectations about class, gender, and romance. Like a blackmail victim, their knowledge of damning events compromises their positions and wellbeing to the point where they would rather suffer - and in the case of Rosanna, die - than expose what they know to Franklin Blake's detriment. Though there is no Tulkinghorn or Milverton safeguarding scandalous letters and demanding a fee, the force of social expectations, cultural conditioning, and romantic affection are enough to make them

suffer for Blake's benefit. This is complicated by their both believing Blake to be guilty. They do not protect Blake from misrepresentation and defend his innocence (what Blake began the collection to do) but because their evidence would implicate him in the crime he works to uncover. Blake's concern when faced with his potential guilt is to consider the "abominable impossibility" (315) that he is the thief, but in doing so, overlooks the position Rachel and Rosanna found themselves in: protect him unto suffering and even dying on his behalf and without his knowledge. Blake's criminality is not just in the possibility of having stolen the diamond, but that he has been responsible, even if indirectly, for the prolonged suffering of others, specifically those who loved him. This is not a point Blake dwells on because, I would suggest, to do so would be to further implicate and criminalize him. This raises the possibility that Blake, commonly perceived to be novel's heroic amateur detective who curates the collection of narratives, gathers information, finds love, and establishes a family, and is even cleared of accusations of criminal wrongdoing, is the novel's villain.

Let's not mince words about this. *The Moonstone* is a novel about how Franklin Blake (a white, heteronormative, gentrified, cosmopolitan, internationally educated man who lives a privileged, relaxing life sustained by borrowed and inherited money) benefits (personally, socially, legally, economically, and criminally) from the intervention of two women (who protect his reputation and wellbeing at the expense of their own and who act out of a combination of love and cultural conditioning, and do so without his knowledge or consent, to their own detriment and, in one case, death). Blake is not a villain in the mustache-twirling, scheming, selfish sense of Tulkinghorn or Cornelia Carlyle, but he nevertheless embodies many of the social problems Collins highlights and

his relationship with the women in his life cement this. Even if Blake is not guilty of any crimes, he is guilty of endorsing, perpetuating, and benefiting from these ills of English society and culture. In the novel, Blake is accused of two crimes: Rachel Verinder accuses him of stealing the Moonstone, and Limping Lucy refers to him as a murderer and accuses him of having driven Rosanna Spearman's death to suicide. These accusations are never made public (outside of the novel itself), and each bespeaks the relationships Blake has with these women. This line of reasoning, however, conflicts with how Franklin Blake is not guilty of stealing the diamond because he was well-intended, even if he was in an opium-induced state of mind at the time. This raises questions about the interaction of intentions, consequences, culpability, complicity, and the perpetuation of crimes and wrongdoings. Not only is it Franklin Blake that uses the events following the diamond's disappearance as evidence of Herncastle's malicious motives, but in making this accusation, Blake exonerates himself from being complicit in his motives and perpetuating the crimes of the past. Consider that Blake's delivery and removal of the diamond sets off the conflict of the novel, the case could be made that he is complicit in Colonel Herncastle's villainy, with Blake becoming another in the long line of those who stole the diamond for selfish means.

In addition to the sexual and national overtones of Blake's transgression, the diamond's removal also points to Blake's assumed role of protector and potential husband of Rachel Verinder, and the cult of domesticity. While the novel may not foreground the cult of domesticity as *Bleak House* and *East Lynne*, it plays into the novel's subtle critiques of English society and the parallels it draws. The novel's handling of the cult of domesticity and its representation of Rachel Verinder include not just the

ideologically side of the Angel in the Home, but also the legal aspects and how principles of Coverture would empower her husband to be responsible for her and legally absorb her and her possessions into his own legal identity, as discussed by scholars such as Swartz and Dolin. The novel supplies a metaphor for Coverture in the form of the infamous door and its veneer. As a protector, Blake oversees Rosanna's work as she decorates and provides the means of keeping them safe with the veneer, a putrid, stinking concoction of his own design. It therefore is appropriate that Blake himself would be the one to accidentally smear the veneer and then not be associated with it. Blake's masculine protection of Rachel is marred by his own actions and decisions, and yet it is willfully covered up by those who are both subject to and suffer under it: Rachel and Rosanna. The protection Blake implicitly promises both stinks and is blemished by his own actions and the blame is readily applied to others first: Seegrave assumes one of the maids marred the door, and while Cuff is willing to expand his search, Rosanna takes her silence to the grave. The question of protection is only further complicated when considering how Rachel and Rosanna both effectively incriminate themselves and deal with their own guilt on his behalf as they keep his secret (Gruner, "Family Secrets" 131). Their knowledge is based on incomplete information, but to share it would be to incriminate Blake and potentially themselves, even moreso as time goes on and Blake's role as protector is likewise called into question because Rachel and Rosanna both must be silent for him to maintain it. The protector needs to be protected by the very ones he should be protecting. He requires their consent, but their positions prevent them from withholding it. This calls into question his very ability to function in his socially prescribed role as potential patriarch and gentleman.

The presence of possible crimes is not Blake's only failing. When first describing his youth and their reports of him from Europe, Betteredge suggests Blake is a spendthrift and womanizer. Betteredge is limited to his own experience and the letters Blake sent to the Verinder family but cites two recurring themes: requests for money, from Lady Verinder and himself (a practice carried over from his youth) and his two delayed attempted returns due to problems with women. Blake and Betteredge are both sparse on the details, though nothing criminal or immoral is implied (I.e., Blake is neither committing fraud nor scattering natural children across Europe). Nevertheless, this questions his moral constitution, especially in contrast to the seemingly upright, healthy, and able Godfrey Ablewhite. Such accounts could compromise Blake's reputation, the very thing he has designed this collection to protect. That Blake recalls the seven-and-sixpence he borrowed from Betteredge before being sent to Europe shows Blake is not forgetful, but neither does he repay his debt. As Betteredge remarks of the borrowed money, "the colour of which last I have not seen, and never expect to see again" (28), coupled with his assumption that Blake lived well in Europe by "borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me" (29). If Blake employed the same borrowing habits in Europe as he did with Betteredge, then his European creditors should "never expect to see again" their loans. Considered in isolation, Betteredge's description of Blake makes him appear a potential scoundrel and conman, especially with descriptions such as "Wherever he went, the lively, easy way of him made him welcome" (29). However, before providing these disparaging descriptions, Betteredge describes him as "the innocent means of bringing that unlucky jewel into the house", as "our nice boy," and closes his description of Blake stating, "He came of good blood; he had a high

courage” (28-29). Betteredge’s assessment does not criminalize or disparage Blake: he is a welcome addition to the Verinder household, but there is a troubling implication from such a description, presenting Blake as “our nice boy” who doesn’t repay what are assumed to be mounting debts and has significant problems with women: Blake can get away with whatever he wants.

Franklin Blake thereby has more in common with villains who maintain their pretenses of innocence, especially those of Sensation fiction. Because he is so amiable, well connected, and well intentioned there is no means by which anyone can hold him responsible. He may be spared by not having committed any grievous offenses, but he bears too much a resemblance of the men from Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Aurora Floyd* (James Conyers) and *Lady Audley’s Secret* (Robert Audley and George Talboys) to be given an easy pass. Like James Conyers, he has lived a possibly less than reputable and dissolute life abroad and seeks to live a more relaxed life at another’s expense. Like Robert Audley, he has sufficient access to money, so he need not exert himself and can live comfortably, and like George Talboys, he leaves (or is sent) away from England in the hopes of finding greater opportunities abroad. To be fair, these comparisons do not make him out to be the same type of character, and Robert Audley and George Talboys are only the villains of their novels from certain perspectives: Audley is the detective of his novel, and Talboys left to toil in the Australian outback searching for gold, while Blake, as a child, was sent to gain an education. Likewise, though not presumed dead and not previously married, Blake returns to England from a possible disreputable life abroad, and promptly ingratiates himself with those of his current residence. Similarly, much like Francis Levison of *East Lynne*, he is constantly in debt until he inherits from the death of

wealthy relative (for Blake, his father; for Levison, his uncle) and further secures his social and financial security by marrying well. These comparisons are not enough to make Blake out to be an outright villain, but he still exhibits many of the same negative tendencies, if to lesser degrees, namely his persistent borrowing of money, his casual lifestyle, and of course, his unspecified problems with women in Europe. He is not bad enough to alienate himself from others or to make his presence unendurable. He remains good natured and well meaning, but his good nature empowers him to escape the consequences of his actions. Much like Harold Skimpole, the phrase “boys will be boys” could be said of Franklin Blake, and likewise demonstrates such mentalities may be used to cover and excuse any number of grievances, sins, and crimes.

While Blake may not be a seducer like Francis Levison, he does ingratiate himself with Rachel Verinder, and the mere sight of him is enough for Rosanna Spearman to swoon. Much has been said regarding these relationships, especially as Blake pierces the spaces and secrets of both women: Rachel’s Indian cupboard and the removal of the diamond and Rosanna’s japanned tin. Blake means well when it comes to Rachel; in contrast to Godfrey Ablewhite, their attachment seems genuine and Blake’s interest in her is romantic and affectionate rather than mercenary, but he still benefits financially and socially through his marriage to her. For example, though Franklin Blake is the son of the wealthy and illustrious Mr. Blake, very little is said about Mr. Blake’s domestic condition or Franklin Blake’s relationship to it. Franklin’s primary English domicile seems to be the Verinder estate rather than any apartment in London or estate elsewhere in Britain. Otherwise, he maintains a peripatetic life in Europe after leaving Frizinghall. What aligns his romantic and sexual relationships with his fellow Sensational villains is

how, by virtue of their connection with him, Rachel and Rosanna are themselves both incriminated and become suffering victims. Much like Aurora Floyd around James Conyers, Rachel and Rosanna are required to remain silent, as discussed above. Blake therefore does not need to be the dastardly rake who wields his sexual, romantic, or marital power over the women in his life: social expectation does it for him. Blake is allowed to get away with incriminating them, even if he does so unconsciously. Much of this rests on a single point: Rachel and Rosanna both believe Blake stole the diamond consciously, and so they are party to his crime, Rosanna in particular given her disposal and replacement of the nightgown. By virtue (to use the expression with some irony) of his privileged position as an object of romantic desire, setting them up to act like blackmail victims, and this despite their better judgment and appearances to the contrary. They may be in the wrong if they were to publicly accuse and incriminate Blake, but they do not know this.

Between Blake's pseudo-criminality and his proximity to Sensational villains, it becomes clear Blake's nominal masculine and patriarchal role is a faulty social construction maintained not by his own acumen or prowess and instead by an amiable facade and the efforts of others. This also brings his notable role as the novel's amateur detective into question. He is the primary collector of these documents, but when he works alone (or with Betteredge) his endeavors are fruitless, even counterproductive. When left on his own, he alienates Rachel and Rosanna, worsening their situations despite his intentions. It could be said he simply did not know better, but when his efforts are coupled with Ezra Jennings and Sergeant Cuff, successful inquiries are achieved. This in turn contrasts with the earlier investigation of the novel where Betteredge is Watson to

Blake's Sherlock Holmes, and Blake later becomes Watson to Cuff and Jennings. This is especially notable considering a study of Sherlock Holmes made by James Krasner, aptly entitled "Watson Falls Asleep." Krasner observes that Watson frequently falls asleep while Holmes is engaging in his mental labors (431). Similarly, Franklin Blake, the supposed amateur detective and hero of the novel is literally of more use drugged and asleep than awake to the resolution of the mystery.²⁷ Blake isn't an active agent in the investigation: he's a bizarre amalgamation of thief, witness, and victim from which evidence must be gained, and for it to be gained, he must be unconscious and mentally transported back to the crime itself. Hardly the work of a heroic detective.

This raises a significant question: should Blake be considered guilty of theft or murder, as accused by Rachel and Limping Lucy? The superficial narrative and the characters of the novel would suggest he is innocent because he did not act with malicious intent to deprive Rachel of the diamond or Rosanna Spearman of her life. Nevertheless, the consequences of Blake's actions and decisions beget these outcomes. Though Blake is initially indifferent to Rosanna, in a way Betteredge and Blake do not problematize, when Blake is confronted with the possibility he led Rosanna along, he coldly denies it and rejects Rosanna, which directly leads to her suicide. Even the initial drugging performed by Mr. Candy derives from Blake's demeaning comments: Candy does not drug Blake because Blake complained of poor sleep, but because he complained of poor sleep *and* disparaged the medical profession. This question of guilt is important for the novel due to its imperial overtones and questions about the complicity of

²⁷ Which is itself another interesting contrast to Holmes who turns to drugs when he does not have a puzzle to occupy himself, though this is a habit Watson helps relieve him of.

inheritances and consequences that stem from them. It is difficult to condemn Blake because, despite his cold response to Rosanna, he did not mean her harm. Nevertheless, Blake's treatment of Rosanna creates significant parallels to others in the novel and other literature as well. Dickens does not suggest Tulkinghorn meant for Gridley or Jo to die, but the suffering he inflicted directly leads to their deaths. The same for many of the primary characters of *East Lynne*: Lord William Vane, Archibald and Cornelia Carlyle did not intend to drive Lady Isabel to seek comfort in the arms of an adulterous relationship, and they alongside Levison himself did not intend for her to suffer and die as she did. Nevertheless, the novel is keen to condemn and, for Archibald and Cornelia at least, provide some means towards forgiveness and redemption. But there is no such critique or condemnation for Blake regarding Rosanna Spearman.

The lack of critique stems from a few places. First, Blake does not exhibit the same level of neglect or malice attributed to many of these other characters, and even if his cool indifference could be compared to Archibald Carlyle's neglect of Lady Isabel, the difference in class and relationship disrupts this comparison: one does not treat a maid as one treats one's own wife, even if excluding differences in class and profession. Second is that Rosanna's death came by her own hand. There is no suicide in *East Lynne* for comparison. *Bleak House* provides three comparisons: Captain Hawdon, a.k.a. Nemo; Tom Jarndyce; and Lady Dedlock. It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding Captain Hawdon, even if the inquest concludes it to have been "a case of accidental death" (177). As for Lady Dedlock, Bucket suggested she meant to commit suicide, based on a letter left behind (863). Tom Jarndyce's death is a deliberate suicide, driven to it by the state of the Chancery case. Though these suicides have some ambiguity about them, *Bleak House*

is keen to make connections between them and to Chancery Court, similar to Gridley and Jo, meaning the novel wants these deaths, though being caused by overdose, disease, exposure, accident, and one's own hand, to be directly related to the evils of Chancery and those who work within its monstrous systems. Limping Lucy takes the same approach with Rosanna Spearman. Though Rosanna died by rushing into the Shivering Sands, Limping Lucy attributes her death to Franklin Blake's carelessness. In making this accusation, Limping Lucy draws a parallel between the Shivering Sands and the novel's metaphoric nature: Not far from a quaint English manor, just outside of view and somewhere we'd rather not go, lurks the unsavory truth and abominable impossibility that we are complicit and culpable in the suffering of those we mean to treat well and support.

Nevertheless, the accusation of murder is forestalled due to its own narrative structure. This is in large part because none of its homodiegetic, ingratiating narrators make such a claim, especially because Blake himself is the compiler of the record and, through marriage to Rachel, the *de facto* head of the family, as well as the fact that, as stated by Betteredge, the purpose of gathering these records is to clear possibly damaged reputations. It would run counter to Blake's purposes for the very document intended to clear him of the crime of thievery to turn around and show him to be guilty of a more grievous crime, murder. While it is difficult to declare Rosanna Blake's victim, she is a victim of the very social problems Blake represents and the novel critiques. Her own story, as she tells it, reads like a Sensational novel. Her father was a gentleman who abandoned her and her mother, echoing Blake's own difficulty with women in Europe; despite her reformed life, she is hounded by her criminal past, both in her own mind and

memory and by Bucket's assumption she is a recidivist. She likewise never stands a chance of a relationship with Blake by combination of her plain face and her enlarged shoulder, let alone the differences in class. And yet, despite Blake being romantically inaccessible to her, he actively benefits from her interventions. Even her suicide benefits him. Not only does she hide her secret, where he may find it later, but it also removes the potential threat of having a mistress when Blake is married to Rachel. Rosanna's infatuation quickly becomes an open secret, with Blake and Betteredge blind to it because of the difference in class and their misinterpretations of her words and actions, though it becomes more apparent to them as the novel progresses. Class and service aside, for her to remain at the Verinder Estate would threaten Blake and Rachel's marriage, in ways Collins himself would explore later in his 1885 novel, *The Evil Genius*.

Of course, if we are to read Blake as the novel's villain then what of Godfrey Ablewhite? Despite Blake and Ablewhite being presented as foils, there is much they have in common as the novel's villain and criminal. Making Ablewhite the duplicitous criminal does the following: First and foremost, it introduces the possibility that unsavory practices similar to his own linger behind others, such as his embezzlement. By darkening his skin, Ablewhite suggests the traits that make the Indians "inferior" are borne out by the white English population (also a continuation of his father's violent temperament). Second, he demonstrates the general short-term memory of the novel by overlooking the diamond's more complicated history (this occurs with Cuff's return, but his initial investigation as well). Third, he raises questions about complicity and intention because his reception of the Moonstone exists in a gray area as Blake gives it to him with good, if drug-addled, intentions and Ablewhite consciously uses the diamond to further

cover up his embezzlement. His reception of the diamond combined with his relationship and transaction with Septimus Luker is itself highly suspicious, especially as Luker is initially hesitant to engage in the transaction. Ablewhite cannot be considered complicit in any crime on Franklin's part because he does not do what Franklin requested and thereby is not complicit in the prior crimes because he receives it under questionable circumstances and because he doesn't want the diamond for himself, but as a means towards getting out of debt (see Gooch, esp. 124). With Godfrey Ablewhite as the criminal, the novel can explore the impacts of a socially sanctioned facade while both allowing for and perpetuating unacceptable behaviors and practices and hiding displeasing, unsettling, or unacceptable characteristics. This establishes the possibility that those around us who appear to be good are dangerous. Examples from Sensation fiction include the likes of Aurora Floyd, Lady Audley, Percival Glyde of Collins' own *The Woman in White* and Miss Aldclyffe of Hardy's *Desperate Remedies*. Ablewhite therefore is typical of the villains in the period as he introduces the possibility that danger could lurk among us. Indeed, during Cuff and Seegrave's investigations, Ablewhite is never suspected of the theft, much like Franklin Blake. Ablewhite even, if conveniently, confirms the conviction of the unnamed cousin Herncastle in the prologue "that crime brings its own fatality with it" as his theft of the diamond is not an isolated incident but something done to protect against his embezzlements being discovered and show how the well-intentioned can be exploited (16).

What sets Ablewhite apart is that he is aware of his criminality. This makes Ablewhite the perfect villain for the novel as it contrasts his bad intentions and duplicitous lifestyle with the rest of the characters who live in denial. As philanthropist,

philanderer, and embezzler, stealing the diamond and trying to marry Rachel to cover his own debts, he is seeing what he can get away with - not unlike Blake himself. The differences between Ablewhite and Blake - especially if they are to be read as exploitative villains – are therefore largely superficial. The main difference is that Ablewhite commits his crimes and villainies consciously, while Blake and the rest of the novel’s cast are either ignorant or in denial of their complicity. Unlike so many others, Ablewhite does not take his social position and relationships for granted: he must adopt a duplicitous lifestyle to appear genuine and respectable, conscious his friends and associates would likely reject him if they knew the truth (though Clack does not). Of course, being conscious of his crimes does not exonerate him, but it does suggest he is the least self-denying character in the novel, the most aware of his duplicity while the rest live their lives taking their positions, relationships, inheritances, beliefs, and values for granted. Much like Gabriel Betteredge preening over *Robinson Crusoe*, they accept their truth as a good truth, denying any possible negativity that could stem from it.

Perhaps most of all, however, is in how Ablewhite shares in the same crime as those who have kept the diamond from its ancestral keep: his use of the diamond degrades it. The diamond itself exists in a perpetual state of ambiguity regarding the conditions of its ownership, and each time it changes hands its condition and the nature of its ambiguity change with it. This is itself represented by the diamond’s changing from precious stone to a blessed religious artifact, to the spoils of war, to the handle of a dagger, to a broach, and, for Ablewhite, a potentiality liquid asset to alleviate his debt, “implying that the Stone promotes enlightening redemption as well as estranging retribution” (Hennelley 46). With every transition it loses value until it becomes

something only of value in exchange and to alleviate the ill-effects of previously committed crimes. It is only with its return to India that it can regain its original, and greatest, value. Of course, securing Ablewhite does not mean the return of the diamond. Instead, it shifts Cuff's investigation onto the original suspects: the Indians. In doing so, the novel juxtaposes the Indians and Ablewhite and their respective claims to and relationships with the diamond. Foremost here is how Ablewhite acts out of selfish motives while the Indians act for the good of their community, which leads to their own sacrifice of caste and expulsion from their community. The three unnamed Indians at the novel's close contrast the novel's various heroes, villains, detectives, and criminals. Their convictions are such that they are willing to give up where others shelter, enshrine, and protect themselves.²⁸

5: Collaboration and Hybridity

In *Communities of Care*, Schaffer considers the diversity of carers needed to populate a Victorian novel, with individuals ranging across class and professional boundaries (62), as discussed earlier in the chapter on *The Moonstone*. The earlier events of *the Moonstone* and the acts of ingratiating and criminalizing narration raise the specter of the opposite: diversity can be the means to disruption and dissolution rather than unity and mutually beneficial interactions. This is especially apparent when the novel's narrators are themselves instrumental in this disruption: Betteredge is duped by Cuff to

²⁸ This is a romanticized and even narrow view presented in the novel echoes Chinua Achebe's critiques of *Heart of Darkness*, namely that it is possible to critique empire and sympathize with the colonized not-white populations and still be racist about it.

facilitating the investigation and incriminating Rachel, while Bruff intercedes and ends Rachel's engagement with Godfrey Ablewhite, which leads to Clack's exile and the separation of the Verinder and Ablewhite clans. And there is the novel's approximation of a sensational villain, Franklin Blake, as the one who removed the diamond in the first place, and Ablewhite's absconding with it points to the failure of those formally in positions of responsibility to meet these obligations to protect the diamond and others (Blake harms Rachel and Rosanna and Ablewhite's embezzlement and mercenary proposal). If the novel's villain and criminal both embody the shortcomings and failures of Victorian social and cultural values, then it stands to reason the one who will set matters right and reestablish care and community is one who represents what they do not: Ezra Jennings.

Much has been said by scholars and critics regarding Ezra Jennings' multifaceted nature and how it contrasts the values espoused by Victorian culture. Despite his previously being engaged and instrumental in the reunion of Blake and Rachel, Jennings' Otherness enabling him to accomplish what others cannot because he "see[s] beyond the facades of 'normal' and 'reality' and instead perceive[s] less conventional underlying truths" (Haefele-Thomas 12). Jennings' racial ambiguity has been used to discuss the uncomfortable realities of British imperialism and the consequences thereof. For example, Willey described how "Collins relies upon mixed-race characters to complicate his readers' assumptions of British national superiority" (229). Even Jennings' professional status contrasts with the aristocratic lives of Blake and Ablewhite and his reputation and racial ambiguities engender repulsion in others as opposed to ingratiation, as expressed by Blake and Betteredge. For all his differences and disparities from

Victorian ideals of Englishness, one thing must be said of Ezra Jennings: *he gets the job done*. Of course, he does not do it alone.

As discussed above, there are some problems with describing Franklin Blake as the novel's detective: he is too closely connected to the events, especially when his own reputation is among those he wishes to protect through this collection, and his ability to detect is lacking given his inability to separate his own motives from those of Colonel Herncastle and makes decisions based on what is beneficial for him. Though the detective story's long tradition features examples where the detective does become personally involved in the mystery, the standard established by Bucket (and even Cuff) and popularized by Sherlock Holmes is of the external observer who can make objective judgments and deductions because of their training and acumen as well as their independence from the mystery at hand. Blake's inability to fit this role is demonstrated by the infamous scene when he sees "[HIS] OWN NAME" on the nightgown in Rosanna's cache (314). Rather than tackle the problem, Blake is stupefied, unable to process what he has encountered to the point where Betteredge must assist him in returning to the Verinder estate. To call Franklin Blake the novel's detective is to over-aggrandize him. This is not to deny Blake any position of value. Indeed, his working alongside Jennings, even submitting himself to Jennings' "bold experiment," helps exonerate Blake from his criminality and sensational villainy (388). Though he does eventually fulfill the role of Victorian domestic patriarch and oversees the formation of this narrative, his willingness to go along with Jennings shows the value in hybridity, collaboration, and care. Jennings brings to the investigation the unique perspective we have come to expect from a fictional detective such as Sherlock Holmes because of his

status as an outsider and his familiarity with the unusual (Free, "Freaks That Matter" 261). While it can be said that Jennings can get the job done (as opposed to Ablewhite, Blake and others getting away with something), he cannot get it done on his own: he needs Blake, Betteredge, and even Bruff and Rachel to participate in his experiment.

Jennings is not the first in the novel to propose a "bold experiment": he shares that privilege with Sergeant Cuff. Cuff's experiment is an act of "surprise interrogation" (Ronald) and fails to elicit the desired confession from Rachel. In response to this, Thomas Ronald suggests that "the second bold experiment echoes the failed one performed by the master detective; but it succeeds where the other failed because this experiment is sanctioned by a science focused on the body of the suspect as a text to be read". Ronald's suggestion about the legibility of Blake's body points to another aspect wherein Cuff and Jennings differ and in how Jennings establishes a system that is not only scientific but promises better outcomes: Cuff aims his experiment at a single explanation, to confirm a suspicion. Jennings' scientific approach is more interested in discovery than confirmation. Ezra Jennings' scientific approach overrides the individualized and biased perspectives of others. It purports to get to the heart of the matter and reveal Blake's true character (and redeeming him and saving the novel's marriage plot) through experimental forensic science and not just observation and deduction. The investigative and scientific approaches are not just important or comparable to one another just because they solve mysteries or answer questions, but because they rely on witnesses and the ability to replicate based on previous evidence.

Of particular importance to both Ezra Jennings' investigation and his own character arc is the overcoming of prejudice. The main witnesses to the investigation are

Betteredge and Bruff, two of the novels' first two narrators, who, as previously discussed, have their own biases and prejudices which makes them reluctant to accept Ezra Jennings' proposed experiment.²⁹ However, as the opium takes effect and Blake begins to sleepwalk, they become absorbed and put aside their biases to accompany, corroborated by Ezra Jennings' own diary and their commentary afterwards. Their initial reluctance to participate in the experiment and their different social positions - House Steward and family Solicitor - point back to their positions relative to the family. The very things that make them peculiar and potentially unreliable narrators for "this strange family story" become assets for Ezra Jennings as individuals who have the trust of the family (even prior to their narrative endeavors) and so if they may be convinced by Ezra's bold experiment, then others may be as well, showing it to be more than "a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like" (402). The felicitous result of Jennings' experiment is, as has been noted by many, the reunion of the novel's heteronormative lovers, Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder. In conducting his experiment, Jennings mends what was broken: where in the wake of the investigation, the manor was shut up and its members dispersed, they may now return, free from the mystery. Melissa Free even suggests "that the most significant moment in Blake's quest is not his reunion with Rachel but his union with Jennings, a decisive act of communion from which all the rest proceeds" ("Freaks That Matter" 266). Nevertheless, Jennings

²⁹ Though Dolin does not discuss this scene, his commentary explains why Clack is not present, despite being one of the principal early narrators. Dolin discusses how much of the interest in Rachel's wellbeing is tied to the estate and protecting her from suitors who would steal her inheritance, and Betteredge and Bruff are deeply invested in this. Clack, on the other hand, is concerned with Rachel's spiritual wellbeing, so her interests do not align with those of Bruff and Betteredge.

himself is virtually forgotten, save for his contribution to the investigation as he is, per his request, buried in an unmarked grave.

Jennings' position in the novel, central to this community of narrators aimed at solving a mystery and a crime, is a bitter irony and tragedy, and one comparable to Rachel and Rosanna. Much like them, Jennings suffers and is even ostracized, and much like Rosanna, he must leave behind his past because it will not allow him to move on, and so he dies because there is no place in Victorian society for someone like him. Jennings' inherited racial Otherness is comparable to Rosanna's own mixed parentage: she identifies her father as a gentleman but does not give her mother any class or rank, and the fact of the desertion suggests a disparity in class. This is apparent when considering Rosanna and Sergeant Cuff: her reformation is worthless if society will only see her as a recidivist. Jennings' death and his inclusion in the investigation are to be read as a rebuke against English society: the problems the culture inherits can be remedied through a greater acceptance and recognition of that which follows in its wake. Jennings own character is marked with this - not just his dark complexion and piebald hair, but his also his reliance on opium, which Zeiger describes as paradoxical, and one Collins knew through his own use of the drug, because of "the immense relief with which it could dispel physical suffering, and the frustration of becoming helplessly dependent upon it" (211). In addition, the opium is much like the detectives in these novels as it offers palliative treatment but does not address or resolve the actual issues at hand, even if Jennings' experience with the drug enables his insight into Blake's situation (Willey 231). As the ostracized product of empire, Jennings is tormented by both the society that gave rise to empire, a body that is a product of empire, and the drug whose history and

trade are tied up with empire. While Ezra Jennings' death may be read as a convenience, to keep the unsavory reminder of empire away, much like how Colonel Herncastle and Rosanna Spearman are treated, it is not until Jennings is given an opportunity Herncastle, Rachel, and Rosanna are denied: atonement from those around him for the way English society has treated him, even if it is from a small portion of the society that has ostracized him (Dolin 79).

While Jennings is instrumental in determining Blake's presumed motive as to why he retrieved the diamond, Jennings is not the novel's Sherlock Holmes. While Jennings' eccentricities predict the eccentric Great Detective, his contribution to the investigation does little beyond identify how Blake came to remove the diamond and clear his name from suspicion of malicious intent, but not the fate of the diamond itself. Jennings hypothesizes Blake hid the diamond in his opium induced trance, but there is doubt about this, whereas Cuff, aided by Mr. Bruff, discovers the diamond's fate from Mr. Luker as reported to him by Godfrey Ablewhite. Though paraphrased by Cuff, he reports that:

You [Blake] looked at him [Ablewhite] in a dull sleepy way. You put the Diamond into his hand. You said to him, "Take it back, Godfrey, to your father's bank. It's safe there—it's not safe here." You turned away unsteadily, and put on your dressing-gown. You sat down in the large arm-chair in your room. You said, "I can't take it back to the bank. My head's like lead—and I can't feel my feet under me." Your head sank on the back of the chair—you heaved a heavy sigh—and you fell asleep (456).

Jennings solves the mystery of the diamond, but Cuff solves the crime.

It is therefore worth considering the differences between Cuff and Jennings, especially because Cuff assumes two different demeanors in his appearances in the novel. Cuff's first appearance is marked by confidence. He is renowned and respected for his

skills as a detective, to the point where he will deceive Betteredge into working alongside him as his assistant and dismissing his fellow officer Seegrave's endeavors as insufficient and inaccurate. In doing so, Cuff sits firmly within the generic ideal of the fictional detective: the lone expert or genius who can penetrate mysteries and see what others cannot, and sometimes even leaving those around him in the dark and confused until he can deliver his astute conclusions. In this manner, Cuff makes his accusation of Rachel upon incomplete information and contributes to the disruption of the domestic space. That Cuff may be wary of collaborations is borne out by the suspicion he has (and Seegrave shares) that the theft of the diamond was accomplished by some conspiracy. Seegrave suspects the Indians enlisted a servant to steal and deliver the diamond to them, and Cuff suspects Rachel of having colluded with Rosanna, assuming Rosanna could fence the diamond. However, Cuff alone cannot bear the blame for this disruption. Cuff's accusation of fraud is well within reason, but so is Betteredge and Lady Julia's defense of Rachel. While there is bias in each of their claims, they are not without evidence. Cuff simply embodies the problem: there is an unwillingness to collaborate and work together, to consider different possibilities. Much like how Cuff is reluctant to believe Rachel is as good-hearted as Betteredge and Lady Julia insist, so are they reluctant to accept his hypothesis of fraud. Blake himself falls into a similar situation with his nightgown: his own reluctance to accept the possibility that he stole (or at least removed) the diamond against his own memory, leads to his stupor.

Cuff returned, however, is Cuff contrite. He concedes his earlier error and while he does not promptly reveal his suspect's identity, he provides Blake with his hypothesis

in a sealed envelope.³⁰ Cuff herein takes a different approach to his investigation: he works alongside Blake, Bruff, and the wide-eyed Gooseberry, and does not actively withhold information from them, apart from his suspect's identity, with each fulfilling different roles along the way in a complementary manner. Where before Cuff was prompt to demean and disprove his counterpart Seegrave's conclusions, he is later willing to work alongside others, and those who are not themselves police or detectives, though tangentially related. The result is that confirmation of his suspicions comes through collaboration: Blake records the events, Bruff witnesses and legal counsel, and Gooseberry pursues and sees what others may miss. Working together, the four accomplish what one alone could not - much like how, as stated above, Jennings can solve the mystery where Cuff will solve the crime.

Any discussion of how collaboration brings about the novel's resolution requires some consideration of the original conspiracy in the novel: the Brahmin priests. According to Gooch, "The Indians have created and maintained a corporate organization that allows them to command resources across time and space with changing personnel, even if the purpose of this organization is to return the Moonstone to its status as a religious fetish" (130) and Narayan discusses how by the time Cuff unmasks Godfrey Ablewhite, the priests have already solved the crime and killed the criminal (797, note 5). The priests' experience lingers in the background, with only glimpses of it provided by Betteredge, Bruff, and Cuff. Nevertheless, they belong to a larger organization devoted,

³⁰ It is also worth noting that while the novel presents Cuff's identification of Ablewhite as the thief as an impressive feat, it is less impressive considering how most everyone else who could have stolen the diamond had been accused, investigated, and cleared of the offense.

and nor do the Indians work in isolation. They employ the fair haired child, seen by Betteredge, if the conditions of his service are dubious (they give him the option to return to his previous - and inferior - life), send one of their own to meet with Bruff to gain information, and employ others to assist them in committing a clever scheme to entrap Septimus Luker and Godfrey Ablewhite. Where Cuff identifies Ablewhite mainly through the process of elimination, the Indians never seem to lose track of him as the new carrier of the diamond. The closing chapters of the novel and Murthwaite's account point to the priests' ability to do what the English cannot: find, retain, and return the diamond to its rightful place. It is especially notable that the three Brahmin priests depart individually, as, according to Murthwaite, penance for breaking their caste. Murthwaite likewise discusses the grandeur of their sacrifice. It is here we find a curious and even exonerating parallel between the Indians and Franklin Blake: the four of them take the diamond so it may be delivered somewhere of safe keeping - on behalf of others rather than for themselves. The irony of this comparison is Blake meant to keep the diamond safe from the Brahmin Priests and would have the diamond sequestered away in a bank vault to do so - further reducing its value to little more than the carbon that Candy and Ablewhite describe it as being. The Brahmin priests seek to reinstate it at the shrine, where it can continue to be a religious relic, available for public devotion, in direct contrast to the selfishness inherit in the imperial endeavors.

5: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I explored how Victorian Realist and Sensation Literature in the 1850's and 1860's used the structure of detective stories (decades before the genre was formalized) to then subvert the moral and ethical simplicity and clarity promised in this formula. The formula itself, defined by John G. Cawelti, is that detective fiction has 4 distinct character groups: the detective, the victim, the criminal, and the rest of the cast who cannot solve the crime (147). Victorian literature uses and subverts this plot structure by showing how there are villains who go unpunished and how criminals are sometimes victims who are denied redress because their abusers act within socially, legally, and institutionally sanctioned ways. To explore the nuances and complexities of these character roles and relations, I settled on questions about whether a character or action helps or harms another, their motivation for doing so, and the extent or ways in which their actions were sanctioned. The novels thereby become explorations of how those in positions of authority and responsibility - be they lawyers, philanthropists, aristocrats, lawyers, parents, spouses, in-laws, servants, and soldiers - enable and perpetuate recognizable forms of criminality and injustice through socially approved or legal mechanisms and those who suffer under them are left with few recourses but to turn to crime. The literature responds with the establishment of care communities, as described by Talia Schaffer in *Communities of Care*. These are alternative social organizations, distinct from the corruptible and exploitative social institutions, that can act as havens for those who may have been victimized.

At the conclusion of this dissertation, there are three points I wish to explore

regarding the conclusions and implications of this study. Broadly speaking, these are methodological, moral, historical-practical:

1. Methodological: A brief discussion of possible concerns about the rigidity that can come from relying on semiotic and formulaic approaches to literature and how and why this study endorses more flexible, nuanced ways of using such approaches.

2. Moral: Victorian Realist and Sensational fiction had a shared interest in how social and cultural conventions impact peoples' ability to judge and assess our social connections and impacts.

3. Historical-Practical: I would suggest that the historical study of crime and detective fiction as a genre has much to gain by looking more closely at its multifaceted Victorian forebearers - and that we run a risk of demeaning Victorian literature when we force it into formulas we have learned to expect in the last century and a half.

1: Methodological Considerations

While this dissertation's main interests are in detective fiction and care, the methodology is concerned with semiotics and literary formulas. First, it is semiotic because the argument for this dissertation is predicated on the idea that Realist and Sensation fiction used detective plots for instructional purposes, that as the detective identifies victims and criminals, we can take the ideas behind the investigation about helping, harming, motivations, and approved actions and behaviors, and then juxtapose the detective's conclusions with the rest of the novel, and better see social and cultural inconsistencies, hypocrisies, and injustices. The subsequent juxtaposition of detection and care signals efforts intended and designed to improve conditions, reflecting Victorian

interests in social reform and improvement. This in turn led to the questions raised in the introduction and influential throughout: does an action help or harm? What are the motivations behind the action? To what extent or in what way is the action sanctioned approved? And the second follows on the first: literary formulas are important because the main language at play is that of detective fiction. For this I relied on a modified version of Cawelti's formula for classic detective fiction, i.e., that detective stories rely on four character groups: the detective, the victim, the criminal, and those unable to solve the crime (147). My analysis relies on two modifications. First, the inclusion of villains and heroes. Villains are character who resembles the but without breaking the law so they can get away with the injustices they cause and perpetuate; Heroes are those who do good and support others, usually within the context of a care community. The second modification is to consider how one character can fill multiple roles depending on the perspective of a subplot; the most frequent examples of this are characters who are both victims and either criminals or villains: a victimized character turns to crime, and their villain is their victim. Part of my goal in this dissertation is to show that while such clear distinctions can be useful and broadly applicable, that their fruitfulness is most apparent when considering the complex nuances that can emerge from them. To discuss this, I wish to address three potential concerns with my methodology. First is the possibility of my relying on a simplistic binary; second is the possibility of the distinctions I rely on being mutually exclusive; and third the potential rigidity of using formulas in literary analysis.

The first concern I wish to discuss here is the possibility of reducing these elements to simple, potentially deconstructionist binaries: help/harm; good/ill intentions;

and approved/unapproved. My response to this concern is that to treat these as rigid binaries would be an oversimplification and that their analytical power stems from the nuances and variations that can emerge from them, whether individually or in combination with one another, as well as how these are informed by and influence the socio-cultural contexts in which they exist. To provide a real-life example, I would like to share some parenting advice from a personal friend of mine. When denying his children something they wanted but that he recognized would be detrimental, he responded “I would rather watch you cry for an hour than watch you ruin your life.” This sets up at least two perspectives: one from the child (who may feel wronged or denied in the moment, and whose feelings may be supported by their peers) and the parent (who relies on their expertise and parental responsibilities to provide for and teach their children). The child may feel the sting of the denial, but the long-term benefits outweigh immediate pleasures. This example gains increased nuance when considering how such approaches could be used to justify abusive practices: a child who throws a tantrum because they can’t go to a party is in a different situation from one who cowers in fear from an abuser.

Victorian Realist and Sensation novels provides ample ground for such explorations and nuances. The multiplot novel is useful because the work itself can juxtapose different cultural contexts against which different systems of morality can be juxtaposed. For example, in *Bleak House*, Pardiggle compares her own philanthropic and parenting styles against Jellyby’s, suggesting that her own approaches are superior given her more active approach and her attentiveness to her children. The novel then reframes both perspectives and finds them lacking and hypocritical through Esther and the Bleak House community’s different approaches and critiques of them. Of course, other

comparisons can be made based on characters providing or depriving charity or support of different kinds to others. Broadly speaking, this includes the Court of Chancery, but also Skimpole, Chadband, Allen Woodcourt, and, of course, Inspector Bucket. To insist on helping and harming as a strict binary is to neglect the many different forms helping and harming can take and the contexts in which they occur. Other notable examples include Gilbert and Gubar's analysis of *Northanger Abbey* (discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation) and the possibility that George Talboys could be the villain of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* because he abandoned her.

The second concern is the possibility of reading helping and harming as mutually exclusive. On the contrary: while there may be some situations that are more clearly examples of one or the other, the reason behind the inclusion of approved actions is because different social spheres will define what is or is not approved or what does or does not help differently and, as the parenting example above shows, harmful actions can be unjustly rationalized. The narrative functions of the detectives themselves point towards this: they operate in one space that would label a character a criminal, but from another perspective, the same criminal may be a victim. This also means that as the detective "helps" the social good by apprehending a criminal, while they may from a different perspective bring "harm" upon someone who is already suffering and in desperate need. A more complicated and insular example would be that of Lord William Mount Severn and Lady Isabel of East Lynne. Lord William did not actively abuse his daughter; he cared for her, but did not educate or provide for her, implying that their relationship is an intermingling of helping and harming, and one that, due to his untimely death, falls more to harm. It is also important to consider that "Help" and "Harm"

themselves are also not universally applicable terms, though I found them helpful in delineating my focus and methodology, but they nevertheless encourage a consideration of whether an action is good or bad, positive or negative, as well as the contexts that they exist within. This correlates with Cawelti's character formula: detectives help; criminals and villains harm; victims are harmed and receive help, etc. Even if it begins as a simple binary, it has the potential to shape and define both character interactions and relationships and how these relationships operate in and across broader social spaces. Other examples would include Morrison's *The Child of the Jago* and how the residents of the Jago would protect one another from police intervention, and the dilemma raised in *The Nether World* about whether Michael Snowdon's treatment of his granddaughter, raising her with a specific philanthropic goal in mind, is or is not an appropriate course of action.

The third concern is about relying on rigid formulas for literary. While "formula" may be something of a byword in literary analysis, literary analysis nevertheless relies on the identification of patterns. Considering this, I would suggest that the peril is not so much in using literary formulas, whether for creative or scholarly use, as it is in adhering too closely to them: in using them in a prescriptive way rather than a descriptive one. On the one hand, this provides opportunities for variation and surprise, notable examples being 3 novels by Agatha Christie: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (where the narrator and Poirot's assistant in the murderer); *The Murder on the Orient Express* (where almost everyone in the train car participated in the murder) and *Curtain* (where Poirot himself kills the villain). On the other, the formulas provide useful tools through which other comparisons and analyses can be made. For example, I quoted earlier R.F. Stewart's

lamentation about there being no detective in *East Lynne*, to which I would respond that there is a detective - he has a different profession and title, but still does the same work. Semiotically speaking, just as criminals and villains have much in common, so do fictional detectives and fictional lawyers.³¹ Similarly, not every plot in question adheres strictly to this formula, just as not everyone who helps or does good must be a detective. If we only look for detectives, we will be disappointed, but if we look for those who help those around them, we are likely to find a range of similar characters around them, suffering victims, and harmful villains among them. Indeed, my own approach – expanding Cawelti’s formula to be more accommodating to multiplot works points to the type of work I am advocating can be done with formulas: just as authors twist and alternate the formulas, so too can we in our analyses do the same to make new insights.

My methodological and theoretical aim, therefore, is not about applying or discovering a literary formula or to suggest that literary or Victorian studies should preoccupy themselves with literary formulas. Instead, I would suggest that formulas and seemingly simple categories can be useful places to begin analyses but that we should be attentive to variations and adjust as needs be. To discuss this semiotically, I would say that the signs (who is the detective; who is the villain; who helps; who judges; who approves; etc.) can be useful in identifying significant recurring elements, but identification of common signifieds has greater potential in identifying (who engages in detection; what does it mean to help and in what context; how does this change depending on the context; etc.). For example, *The Moonstone* and its well documented

³¹ Interesting, insurance agents also fill the role on a few occasions, namely in Felix’s *The Notting Hill Mystery* and Meade and Eustace’s *The Sorceress of the Strand*.

critiques of empire and my own assertion that the nominal hero Franklin Blake is essentially a well-meaning villain from a Sensation novel points in this direction: the novel actively employs certain signs relating to English domestic (the home and nation) and imperial standards, but introduces signifieds that work to subvert them, such as linking John Herncastle and his cousin in Imperial violence and familial efforts at marginalizing both³². The novel's very interest in textuality, between *Robinson Crusoe*, Clack's tracts, Herncastle's will, and even the very flaws in the diamond and the plot to cut it up to destroy the diamond's meaning and frustrate the Brahmins, points to Collins himself, on some level, being aware of his semiotic efforts and the potential disparities and variations that can emerge between the sign, the signifier, and the signified.

In expanding Cawelti's formula, I also hope to show how it can be applied outside of strictly detective or criminal situations. In other words, the subversion practiced in the novels and explored in this dissertation not only subvert the detective plot, but also larger narratives endorsed by many of those who would see their work as beneficial, legal, or otherwise legitimate. Victorian literature thereby is full of characters who work desperately to control the cultural narratives they engage, interact, and participate with, as if to control the sign is to control what they mean - to dictate the sign is to dictate its corresponding signifieds. Realist and Sensation fiction with their detectives may point to this, but I would suggest that the social criticism that informs much literature of the period relies on this as well: a display of certain signs and a subversion of expectations

³² Though discussed in Chapter 4, I would like to mention Manavalli's "Collins, Colonial Crime, and the Brahmin Sublime," which complicates Collins' anti-Imperialist themes by focusing on how he demonizes Islamic presence in India (72).

through the careful complication of their signifiers, thereby placing individual characters in different contexts and roles. Indeed, to rely on and subvert the very formulaic and semiotic endeavors conventionally used to understand social situations and contexts. At this point I would also point out that while Modernism and Postmodernism would pursue similar lines of analysis and inquiry through disillusionment in social institutions and the artificiality of language and meaning, the Victorians did not go to such lengths. There is still some faith that appears, whether it is in other people (even if it is a domestic angel), relationships, institutions, religion, and even the state, even if they must wade through and uncover the ill-doings of the corrupt.

2: Moral Implications

Questions regarding what constitutes help or harm, social or legal approval, and the consequences therefrom are, of course, more than methodological or interpretive in nature: they carry moral, ethical, legal and social implications as well. This also stems from the interest that Victorian literature, of the Realist and Sensation novel in particular, had in moral and legal issues. As stated above and elsewhere: the detective plot has an instructional function, which the novels themselves actively subvert. This, of course, is not to argue that the literature suggests radical inversions of moral standards but the reevaluation of how different social spaces work, how they determine right and wrong, approved and illicit, and the implications for these decisions. It is not to say that things are wrong or need a radical change, but that they should be assessed carefully for abuses and inconsistencies. The juxtapositions of multiple plots thereby introduce and explore issues of hypocrisy, corruption, and abuse as different social spaces work against the

principles that nominally inform them. Questions of criminals, victims, and villains are forms for assessing how a social space deals with an individual and in contrast with other spaces. For example, as discussed in the chapter on *East Lynne*, significant comparisons can be made between Richard Hare and Lady Isabel Vane, about their domestic, familial, and romantic relationships, and yet while Richard Hare is accused of a crime he did not commit, Lady Isabel clearly violates social, religious and contractual, her adultery may not make her criminal, but it does open the way for divorce) obligations and expectations. The moral conclusions I intend to address, therefore, are more complicated than a simple “it is better to help than harm” or “we should help those in need.” Specifically, these are, first, regarding the possibility of institutional and political corruption. Second, about the need to recognize the complex social conditions of individuals. And third, is to develop an awareness of our own complicity in potentially harmful institutions and cultural practices.

In addressing this first conclusion – about institutional and social corruption – I wish to turn to a work of political science: *The Dictator’s Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*, by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith. To simplify their thesis, Bueno de Mesquita and Smith invert the axiom that “power corrupts” and argue that the corrupt seek out positions of power and will work the system in whatever way they can to ensure they end up in control and will then manipulate the system to the benefit of themselves and those who will keep them in power. As they themselves state: “these are people who value power and recognize how to get it and keep it” (xii). I find their assessment important here because for all the examples of corruption the novels represent and critique, the novels never suggest that the institutions

themselves are corrupting those who benefit from them. There is no suggestion that Tulkinghorn, Vholes, Pardiggle or Jellyby began their legal and philanthropic endeavors with altruistic intentions but that they were corrupted by Chancery and Telescopic Philanthropy. Instead, we are presented with characters who use institutions designed to benefit others for their own gain and self-gratification. The result is to maintain some of that suspicious reading engendered by the detective: those in positions of power have a keen interest in keeping that power and so will not deliberately jeopardize their positions. This is the nature of the villain and therefore implies that real life counterparts exist. It does not matter what the social institution is, whether it is openly philanthropic or the reaches of government: someone who has selfish and corrupt intentions will see these positions of power as a means of securing power for themselves and will do what they must to protect them. Not only do we see this with Chancery in *Bleak House*, but also with Francis Levison's parliamentary campaign in *East Lynne*, and I argue that the very narrative structure of *The Moonstone* is designed with ingratiation in mind.

The second conclusion looks more towards the "care" side of things, as it points to the novels' suggestions that individuals exist in multiple social spheres and that perceiving and understanding them from multiple perspectives can be beneficial. This lends itself to the suggestion that criminals are themselves victims, potentially of the corrupt individuals discussed above or of broader social and institutional hypocrisy (as discussed by Latour, as well as Bueno de Mesquita and Smith). Of course, this does not mean that every person should be treated as a victim or to the same extent or that one role necessarily trumps another. Instead, I mean to suggest that we must carefully navigate such social considerations, especially when we can identify or describe someone in ways

with ethical implications. The primary example of this from this dissertation would be Lady Isabel Vane who occupies each position in question except the detective. She is victim because neglected by her father and husband, and abused by Cornelia; villain because of her adultery; a hero in her example of Christian piety and repentance; and even a criminal because of her violation of her marriage contract. While the novel intends her to be viewed sympathetically, it does not diminish her suffering or suggest that her wrongdoing be overlooked. Each element works in tandem with the others in a dynamic push and pull, especially once she returns to East Lynne as governess to her children. Sympathy may win out, but it neither erases the harm she had done nor exonerates her. And of course, sympathy may not always win out, even when a character is made the victim: Tulkinghorn, again, is the main example of this as a character, though a murder victim, the novel does nothing to render as sympathetic. Nevertheless, recognition that individuals live complex lives that intersect with many different social spaces can help promote more sympathetic concerns and interests. Another example, again from *East Lynne*, is the contrast between how Cornelia and Lady Isabel respond to Mr. Kane's professional and domestic conditions.

The third conclusion stems from a possible personal reaction to the above two, which asks us to turn our own suspicious gaze upon ourselves and consider the ways in which we may be complicit in the worsening of others' conditions. Just as the people we encounter live their lives in different social spaces, so do we, and that just as the detective may not perceive or accurately read everything they encounter, so too must we be attentive to our own possible complicity or culpability in harmful and corrupt systems. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the third, and perhaps the least like the others, of

the three novels used for this study, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, with its startling implication that we ourselves may be the villain, that if we were to look closely at our own lives, we might see "[OUR] OWN NAMES" staring back at us (314). When the literature teaches us to subvert the clarity and simplicity of the detective plot, we need to apply it to ourselves as well. The dream of being an Esther – the one who can take the harm they have suffered and turn it into a protective and healing balm – may appear appealing but is a precarious position to be in; or we may prefer to see ourselves as Lady Isabel's – we may have done wrong but our repentance and changed hearts warrant forgiveness and acceptance – but the more we look, the more we may see Franklin Blake in ourselves – seductive and dangerous rakes in disguise and denial. This, of course, depends on our various positions in different social spaces and consideration of how what may be good in one space may have detriments in others or in the future. Pardiggle and Jellyby offer a curious inversion of how this normally plays out, especially contrasted with Lord William Vane: they are so preoccupied with the values and expectations of one social space that they neglect others that are both closer to home and yet further in the future.

As discussed in the chapter on *The Moonstone*, and bears repeating here, I do not mean to suggest that Victorian literature suggests that one generation is guilty of the crimes or sins of another, nor do I espouse such a doctrine or intend others to extrapolate that conclusion from this dissertation. There is in recent years a noteworthy comparison: the battle over the teaching of Critical Race Theory. Where Critical Race Theory aims to inform and show how racist policies and practices have informed American history and culture, opponents suggest that the theory teaches those of European descent to feel guilty

for the racist actions of the past, and some have even negated, if not denied, the horrors of slavery in the United States and the resulting laws and policies that supported and perpetuated racial inequality. By comparison, Franklin Blake is no more guilty of Colonel Herncastle's murders and theft than any White American is today for their ancestors' owning slaves in the 19th-century. However, Blake and others benefit (and, as exemplified and discussed regarding Rosanna Spearman, suffer) from their inheritances: they may not be guilty but that does not change the imbalances that persist. When Blake takes the Moonstone into his care, he does not take into his hands the blood of three murdered Brahmins or however many other Indians who died by the hands of Colonel Herncastle, his unnamed cousin, or any others. However, Blake has the opportunity to dispose of or reinstate the diamond to the Indians from whom it was stolen. If Blake is guilty of anything, it is not the crimes of his antecedents, but he is guilty of perpetuating what they began and not ameliorating the poor situations of others when he is able to. The greater moral lesson to be taken from these novels, therefore, is not so much "how can I help" or "who is doing harm" but to turn a scrutinizing, moralizing eye upon oneself and consider how one, even if unintentionally or indirectly, is causing, perpetuating, or facilitating harm and suffering in the lives of others.

3: The Historical and Practical

In the literature review of the introductory chapter, I referenced several scholars and works that focus or rely on the history of crime and detective fiction as a formal genre that emerged in the late Victorian period and has remained popular since. In these histories, Victorian and earlier literature usually receive some attention, but almost

always in passing. It may, for example, be a couple of paragraphs that mention Dickens and Collins, *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone*, alongside the Newgate novel as well as Gothic and Sensation fiction, sometimes with references to other examples of crime or literature with some investigative aspect like *Oliver Twist* and *Caleb Williams*. For example, Bradford's *Crime Fiction: A Very A Short Introduction*, has more to say in its "Origins" chapter about Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet* than *Bleak House* on his way to 20th-century literature and the development and proliferation of the genre. While these histories and studies of the genre, and their references to the Victorians and others, are insightful, I hope that this study shows that Victorian literature merits more attention in the history of the genre. Of course, this is not to say that Dickens and Doyle belong in the same category, nor that every study of the history detective fiction should divide itself evenly between 19th- and 20th-centuries (we should also not forget works like Ousby's *Bloodhounds of Heaven*, which is a history of fictional detectives in the 19th-century). But it is to suggest that a greater attention to 19th-century predecessors can help us better appreciate the ways in which a complex and multifaceted genre works. Just as there are significant differences between Dickens and Doyle, there are likewise significant differences between Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, and Agatha Christie. And the main reason I would propose this be the case is rooted in how these authors make use of the formula of the classic detective story and how their doing so reflects different worldviews.

As discussed throughout this dissertation, the classic detective story formula, as identified and described by Cawelti, had more 19th-century examples than has been credited because the formula exists as one narrative component among many in more complex, multiplot novels. This would certainly be the case when looking at Poe's Dupin

stories, Sherlock Holmes, and his predecessors and points to a valuable differentiation in genre. However, this does not counteract the fact that this formula and juxtaposed variations of it appear in Victorian literature, and not just in the relationships between victims and villains, with the primary example of this being how Bucket's investigation into Tulkinghorn's murder is preceded by Lady Dedlock's investigation into her missing lover and Tulkinghorn's investigation into her. Such variations are what give the genre its flexibility and durability. This is itself exemplified by the 20th-century division of the genre into the Golden Age and Hard Boiled traditions. Golden Age detective fiction is typically associated with female British writers, such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham, and Ngaio Marsh, whose mysteries followed closely on the heels of Sherlock Holmes with gentlemanly detectives who make great conclusions from seeming trifles, debonair characters, and romantic elements that linger in the background.³³ Ironically, a classic example of how the Golden Age mystery feels is the revelatory scene is one fabricated for the film adaptation of *The Thin Man*, the final novel of Dashiell Hammett, widely regarded as the greatest of the hard-boiled tradition. The scene is of the detective gathering all interested parties, the heretofore unidentified murderer among them, into a formal dinner party, complete with policemen or official detectives, sometimes in black tie or serving attire, waiting in the wings. The atmosphere of the scene is designed to remind audiences that this is a dignified, even aristocratic group and that someone has violated the law of the land and – perhaps more nefariously –

³³ In *Before Reading*, Rabinowitz recounts how two students of his “used a different point of departure” with Christie’s *The Mystery of the Blue Train* and read the novel as a romance (40-41).

the standards of the community. The detective figure then lays out the evidence - dropped lint, missing gloves, ticket stubs, the precise timing of events down to timetables and maps, the meticulous accumulation of information that only Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot or Lord Peter Wimsey could accomplish, and presented in a way that gives the guilty party ample opportunity to out themselves, confirming their guilt, and in the presence of witnesses and the police.

The hard-boiled tradition, by contrast, is a much grittier affair. Neat stabbings, gunshot wounds, and poisonings are replaced with more brutal, violent murders, and the debonair entrapments of an English country house are replaced with the back alleys, gambling dens, speakeasies, and cheap hotels of metropolitan areas that, in their own ways, echo the quote from Peter Mayhew's *London Labour and London Poor* featured in the introduction to this dissertation about the stark juxtaposition of wealth and poverty. Alongside this is a different type of detective: one who succeeds not because he is smarter or has special insight (though they always have privileged access to a range of social spaces) but because he is tougher and will stay with the investigation even if it means being pummeled and shot at by thugs. Just as the Golden Age detective is likely to reveal the guilty party at a dinner party in a display of class and national solidarity is the guilty party of a hardboiled detective novel going to be caught or die in a shootout or a brawl, whether with the protagonist detective or with the police. Perhaps the only shared elements between the two genres are their reliance on the classic detective formula, as well as a liberal use of racist and nationalist tropes that have not aged well (of course, such tropes permeate Victorian literature and inform Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue" as well).

Their most significant difference, I would suggest, is their respective worldviews. The Golden Age mystery presents a world of genteel stability and normalcy, at least as far as England is concerned, where someone or a small party of the greedy or vengeful may disrupt the status quo and necessitate the detective's intervention. The world is a largely good one, and only briefly broken. Criminal cabals and secret organizations may appear, but they are, much like Collins' *The Woman in White* depicts Italians and Sherlock Holmes uses America, of foreign origin and influence, and if the good English peoples are going to form a similar cabal, such as in *Murder of the Orient Express*, it is for the greater good and eventually approved by the detective. The Hardboiled tradition, by contrast, offers a world that is not broken by a single crime but a world that is already broken because of pervasive social and criminal corruption. It is not uncommon for the hardboiled detective to have underworld and criminal contacts and informants, to be gathering information from a gangster one moment, and the next be violently accosted or drugged by them, as occurs in *The Maltese Falcon*: once the villainous Caspar Gutman learns that Sam Spade is not in possession of the titular falcon, he drugs Spade.

Of course, the Golden Age and Hardboiled traditions are just two of many variations that have followed, and television has been a ripe field for such narrative and formulaic explorations. The *Perry Mason* television series (1957-1966) offers its own variation by incorporating the courtroom into the plot, replacing the revelatory dinner scene with a courtroom one, which also means that the lawyer Mason was complemented by his detective associate Paul Drake. More recently, the urban fantasy novel series The Fetch Phillips Files, by Luke Arnold consists of the novels *The Last Smile in Sunder City*, *Dead Man in a Ditch*, and *One Foot in the Fade* are about a human "man for hire" in a

world inspired by the likes of C.S. Lewis' Narnia and J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth among other fictional worlds of elves, dragons, and magic, written in a clear and deliberate hardboiled style. Another variation, popular in television programs such as the *CSI*, *NCIS* (similarly titled and narratively structured but unrelated and produced by different corporations), and *Bones* is to divide the detective into multiple characters, placing the focus on a team rather than a detective, each with their own expertise, necessary to solve the crimes. For example, coroners, forensic specialists, and computer hackers play as or more important (depending on the episode) roles as the detectives who gather the evidence at crime scenes and interview witnesses. There are, of course, programs that rely on some Sherlock Holmes, Science of Deduction gimmick to set them apart such as the TV series *Castle* where the titular mystery and crime novelist Richard Castle (Nathan Fillion) assists with murder investigations as part of his research, and *Psych* where the protagonist uses Sherlock Holmes like skills but pretends to be psychic as he assists the police. There are of course examples where the detective character works outside the law, such as the TV series *Burn Notice*, where a wrongfully discharged CIA spy works to help those in need alongside a returned Navy Seal and former IRA agent turned arms dealer, among others, including family and romantic interests of the characters; though they may work outside the law, they work as a team and adhere to the same formula: detectives, victims, and criminals. And this is without considering the three most recent and popular Sherlock Holmes adaptations: Guy Ritchie's film series, *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows* starring Robert Downey Jr. And Jude Law (set in the late Victorian period), Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat's BBC television series, *Sherlock*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman (Set in

modern day London), and Robert Doherty's *Elementary*, starring Johny Lee Miller and Lucy Liu (Set in modern day New York with a gender-swapped Joan Watson). These are just a few examples that point to the genre's staying power and flexibility.

I would also suggest that the genre's permanence owes something to its ability to offer glimpses into the lives and circumstances of others - which is the goal of Victorian realist and Sensation fiction. On the one hand, this is a voyeuristic approach, following the detective as they take photographs of private, clandestine, potentially scandalous liaisons, such as in the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* when Eddie Valiant (Bob Hoskins) photographs Jessica Rabbit (Betsy Brantley, Kathleen Turner) and Marvin Acme (Stubby Kaye) "playing patty-cake" (itself a scene of infidelity, echoing Sensation fiction's relationship with marriage and divorce). However, the opening up of such perspectives is part of literature's own power - it's ability to show the complicated lives of others. Indeed, while many of the television series mentioned above focus on a new crime every episode - similar to the serialized Late Victorian and pulp stories - it is not uncommon to have episodes or multiple-episode arcs that explore the personal lives of the characters, which can include dealing with the moral and legal complexities of when friends, family, and other close associates are the criminals or victims. The interests Victorian Realism and Sensation fiction have in morality and scandals points in this empathetic direction, aided by the presence of interweaving plots. These multiple plots are, as discussed above, part of the reason why Cawelti suggests Realism and Sensation fiction would not constitute classic detective stories: they have other narrative interests. However, this narrative focus, its interest in a strict formula and the focus on the detective, may be part of what has relegated the genre to its own section in libraries and

considered something unworthy of serious attention. Of course, much of the same could be said of Sensation Fiction and Sherlock Holmes, themselves exemplary for their popularity. For example, *East Lynne*, though largely forgotten today outside of academic circles, was a bestseller from the time of its publication until the end of the century. Indeed, I would suggest that the faint promise of other plots, explorations of the interactions of different peoples' lives, is an important part of the genre and something that modern scholarship into detective fiction can gain from its predecessors.

For example, consider Dashiell Hammett's novel of the American upper classes, *The Thin Man*. The novel has shades of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in it as it deals with Nick Charles, a retired detective who married the daughter of a wealthy client and now spends his time living a life of leisure and married bliss only to be involuntarily pulled into the mysterious disappearance of another former client, the eccentric inventor Clyde Wynant. Nick Charles must engage with Wynant's emotionally abusive ex-wife, their children, consisting of the demure Dorothy and the morbidly eccentric Gilbert, as well as the police and gangsters, including one gangster who breaks into the Charles' hotel room and threatens Nick to stay off the case (Nick receives a superficial gunshot wound in a scuffle in the same scene), not realizing and reluctant to believe that Nick Charles himself has no interest in the case, despite his wife, Wynant family, and the press believing that he is. Put simply, Nick Charles as detective must navigate a social world as diverse as anything from Dickens. However, *The Thin Man* is a fraction the length of, for example, *Bleak House*. The Vintage Crime/Black Lizard 1992 edition of *The Thin Man* is 201 pages long; the 1996 Penguin Edition of *Bleak House* is 989 pages, excluding prefatory matter and appendices: almost 5 times the length of the other (while I do not

reference exact word counts, both editions use comparable typefaces). Hammett may not explore the lives of others in the same breadth and depth of Dickens, but much of the same interest in intersecting lives across social, economic, domestic, gender lines is present as Charles engages in debonair parties one day, aids in the interview of a known gangster the next, and is assaulted and shot on another. As stories centered around crime and mystery, both *The Thin Man* and *Bleak House* are deeply invested in the complex connections of social life, how the events in one space can have far reaching repercussions, and complex questions that complicate the distinction between right and wrong or what it means to help or harm. The same can be said of Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*: the novel is predicated on a seemingly random assortment of international travelers, each seeming to have nothing to do with one another, until Poirot reveals that they all were connected by the death of Ratchett, who is actually the gangster Casetti, as an act of revenge for his having kidnapped, ransomed, and murdered the 3 year child of the Armstrong family, all of whom subsequently died: the mother Daisy in childbirth, the father and maid (who was also a suspected) by suicide.

I bring this up because these many examples, across the 20th-century and across genre and style as reminders that an overemphasis on the detective and their formula can detract from potential readings, complications, and explorations of literary and social issues and complications. *The Thin Man* is a story about a retired detective evading a missing person case; but it is also about emotional domestic abuse, murder, gang violence, embezzlement, and even about how people develop romanticized views of the detective from historical and fictional accounts. There is certainly something Dickensian about it, despite a separation of 60 or 70 years and differences in length. At the same

time, if one were to excise what of *Bleak House* does not feature Bucket, one might find themselves with something *Hard Boiled* in nature. Indeed, Cawelti's own description of *Hard-Boiled* settings only needs some obfuscating fog and one would have something Dickensian in nature: "The social setting of both gangster melodrama and hard-boiled detective story was the corrupt and violent American city ruled by a hidden alliance of rich and respectable businessmen, politicians, and criminals" (61). Indeed, while some may be inclined to draw a historical or taxonomic line through Dickens and Collins to Doyle, and then to Christie and Sayers, with Hammett and Chandler being a distinct branch, in many ways, the American *Hard-Boiled* tradition has more in common with the Victorians than their British successors in their willingness to show the grittier, more complicated sides of life. We therefore have more to gain from crime and mystery fiction by reading them as we would Victorian multiplot novels. These formulaic novels, television series, and movies may not provide deeply developed narratives that show the lives of others in significant detail, but the glimpses and juxtapositions alone can be telling.

This suggestion of reading crime and detective fiction as we would Victorian literature, however, does not work in reverse: if we try to read Victorian novels as we might a crime and detective novel, we run the risk of oversimplification and neglecting the novels' complex nature. I realize that in making this claim that I may run afoul of my own argument, which uses Cawelti's formula, itself modeled on late Victorian and 20th-Century detective fiction, as a foundation. Thankfully, Cawelti's formula is also the means to explain my concern. Simply put, my concern is that readers may approach Victorian novels with detectives and criminal investigations anticipating some

predecessor of Sherlock Holmes in Bucket, Cuff, or elsewhere and to prioritize the criminal investigations over other “narrative interests” (Cawelti 136). In other words, to place Bucket, Cuff, Archibald Carlyle, or others in privileged positions, enshrining them as protagonists when other characters and narrative interests take precedence. While this appears to place its focus on the plotting or narrative of the story, it instead gives a privileged position to the detective because it is they who conduct the investigation. Indeed, the use of specialized gimmicks, such as Holmes’ “Science of Deduction” and Poirot’s “Little Gray Cells” point to this. The genre, therefore, has trained us to look for character. Ironically, this can best be explained in terms of serialization. While works like *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone* were serialized, their focus was on their mysteries and social criticisms. The detectives of these novels begin and end with these narratives, just like every other character. We don’t expect Pickwick to play a major role in *Oliver Twist* any more than we assume the unnamed detective in *Our Mutual Friend* to be Inspector Bucket on a different case or that Dick Datchery of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is Bucket in disguise. Much like Robert Audley of *Lady Audley’s Secret* (itself serialized in *Robin Goodfellow* in 1861), fictional Victorian detectives are roused from passivity to action, only to cease their labors with the end of the novel. Once *Bleak House* ends, there was no more need of Inspector Bucket. He had served his purpose and Dickens would produce detectives as needs be and according to the needs of his plots.

Not so for Sherlock Holmes and his ilk. What sets Holmes apart from Bucket and Cuff is that Holmes - not the plots or mysteries - is what brought the readers back, so much so that Doyle famously killed off and then brought Holmes back to satisfy demand. A focus on character would be the standard for the likes of Poirot, Marple, The

Continental Op, Philip Marlowe, Colombo, Jack Reacher, so on and so forth; even in the aforementioned TV programs that rely on “teams” instead of individual characters, there is still significant interest in the characters as individuals with their own lives and proclivities and how these contribute to their team dynamics. What this means is that, with Holmes as its primary representative, the late Victorian period saw the shift of mystery and investigation away from an interest in mystery plots and onto an interest in fictional detectives. Hence the potentially anachronistic style of reading: to focus on the character of the detective in Mid-Victorian literature is to overlook their role in the plot and even how their investigatory plot impacts the rest of the novel. This is part of why the discussion of the relationship between *Bleak House* and detective fiction, discussed briefly at the start of the second chapter, is so interesting: all the elements we find in detective stories are there, and yet there is also so much more. We cannot neglect the clear shape of a detective story clearly laid out in its dramatic, climactic fashion, and yet it stands at odds with the rest of the novel. Returning to my own argument for this dissertation - we can learn much through the application of a modified, expanded, and multiply applied variation of Cawelti’s four character formula - but we run the risk of demeaning these novels and their complex plots if we force them all into a single formula. The formula is as helpful as it is malleable.

The implication for this is that our ability to read crime detection before the late Victorian period can be both inhibited and benefited by genre expectations that have been ingrained in the last century and a half. On the one hand, and as discussed throughout this dissertation, the formulaic nature of detective fiction provides a simplified but malleable perspective that can be applied to its longer, more complex Victorian predecessors.

However, this can be misapplied when we prescribe the formula. My approach has been contingent on how this formula can be expanded and broadened to accommodate more roles and to place characters in multiple roles corresponding with their various relationships and plots, and to treat these roles as more representative than prescriptive: we can have novels with multiple investigations, villains who work within the law, and criminals with complex sympathetic histories, and in looking closely at how the literature models these complex social relations, we should do the same for our own lives.

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2. Theory, Scholarship, and Criticism. Primarily includes literary scholarship and criticism, as well as additional sociological, historical, and political studies.
3. 20th-Century Media. Includes referenced detective and mystery fictional media published in the 20th-century aside from the exceptions listed above. Consists of print literature, television series, and films.

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