

WILKIE COLLINS
SOCIETY JOURNAL



NEW SERIES

VOL. 8

2005

Signed Articles, Notes and Reviews Copyright © 2005 by the Authors
Editorial Material Copyright © 2005 by WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL
ISSN: 0897-2982

WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL



ISSN: 0897-2982
New Series, Volume 8, 2005

Contents

~Articles~

- Gendered Visions: The Figure of the Prostitute
in *The New Magdalen* and *The Fallen Leaves*
JESSICA COX 3
- Ruskin and the Evil of the Raphaelesque in *Hide and Seek*
AOIFE LEAHY 19
- Collins and the Custody Novel: Parental Abduction and Family Business
TAMARA S. WAGNER 31

~Note~

- The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (1)
WILLIAM BAKER, ANDREW GASSON, GRAHAM LAW, & PAUL LEWIS 48

~Reviews~

- Lyn Pykett, *Wilkie Collins* (Authors in Context)
MARK KNIGHT 56
- The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*, ed. William Baker et al.
LILLIAN NAYDER 58
- Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The White Phantom*, ed. Jennifer Carnell
GRAHAM LAW 62

Editors' Note

There can be no doubt that 2005 has been a notable year in Wilkie Collins Studies, with a number of major events and publications reflected in the current issue of the *Journal*. March saw the one-day conference organized by Andrew Mangham at the University of Sheffield, which attracted many distinguished speakers and a lively international audience. June saw the publication of *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* from Pickering & Chatto, four weighty volumes of collected correspondence under the editorship of William Baker and his colleagues, which has been more than five years in the making. And September saw the appearance of Lyn Pykett's volume in the "Authors in Context" series from Oxford University Press, where Collins joins the likes of the Brontës Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, Wilde and Woolf. Reviews of both Lyn Pykett's monograph and the Pickering & Chatto edition of the letters are included in this issue, while we are also happy to be able to include the first of a planned series of lists of "Addenda and Corrigenda" to the letters from the hands of the editors. Two of our featured articles also derive from presentations at the Sheffield conference: Jessica Cox on the image of the prostitute, and Aoife Leahy on the "evil of the Raphaelesque". The issue is rounded out with an original piece on "Collins and the Custody Novel" by Tamara S. Wagner, and a review of the recent reprints of Mary Braddon's penny bloods from the Sensation Press. Since next year sees the publication of the *Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, edited by Jenny Taylor, there seems every reason to expect another *annus mirabilis* for students of Wilkie Collins.

Lillian Nayder
Graham Law

Gendered Visions:
The Figure of the Prostitute
in *The New Magdalen* and *The Fallen Leaves*

Jessica Cox

University of Wales, Swansea

The character of the fallen woman is a staple figure in the novels of Wilkie Collins: from Margaret Sherwin in *Basil* (1852) and Sarah Leeson in *The Dead Secret* (1857) to Lydia Gwilt in *Armadale* (1866) and Anne Silvester in *Man and Wife* (1870), sexually transgressive women repeatedly feature, and are almost always depicted in a favourable light. Collins was by no means unique in offering sympathetic portrayals of women who had crossed the boundaries of Victorian respectability. Throughout the period – from Dickens’s Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, serialized from 1837, to Hardy’s Tess, who outraged critics in 1891 – the fallen woman was a recognizable and controversial figure in the novel. Her presence reflected contemporary anxieties about female purity: Victorian attitudes to fallen women in general, and prostitutes in particular, were often rooted in a fear of female sexuality and the notion that female desire was somehow contagious, an attitude most notoriously reflected in the Contagious Diseases Acts. The sexual double standard prevailing in the nineteenth century, which condemned the sexually transgressive female whilst tacitly accepting male promiscuity, is often reflected in the literature of the time. The conventional fate of the fallen woman in the Victorian novel is to sin, suffer and die: as Tom Winnifrith observes, “the condemnation of fallen women ... appears at first sight to be shared by almost every nineteenth-century writer of any stature” (Winnifrith, 5). In Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*, for example, the prostitute Nancy is brutally murdered, while in Gaskell’s *Ruth* (1853), the eponymous heroine, mother to an illegitimate child, dies of typhus. However, Victorian novelists did not universally condemn the fallen woman. *Ruth* is significant in that it offers a compassionate depiction of her, although Gaskell ultimately adheres to Victorian literary convention and kills her errant heroine. In its overt sympathy for the fallen Ruth, Gaskell’s text anticipates the

sensation novels that first emerged in the 1860s, which often shocked Victorian sensibilities with their depictions of sexually transgressive women. These in turn anticipated the fiction of the fin-de-siècle, which reflected “a change in sexual attitudes and the depiction of sexual matters” (Winnifrith, 9), although the death of Hardy’s Tess is indicative of the fact that the fallen woman remained a controversial figure throughout the Victorian era.

The fallen woman of the sensation novel often succeeded in infiltrating the middle or upper class domestic sphere, coinciding with the beginning of Josephine Butler’s campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts – a campaign that brought taboo subjects to public attention, and more particularly to the attention of middle and upper-class women at a time when “decent women did not talk about sex in public – still less about sexual diseases, or the double standards employed by men when legislating about them” (Wilson, 473). Butler, as the main public figure of the campaign, came to be viewed by many Victorian moralists as little more than a prostitute herself – the consequence of speaking openly on such outrageous topics. This, of course, is indicative of why Victorian novelists refrained from explicit depictions of sexual transgression. The first of the Contagious Diseases Acts was passed in 1864, and they were only repealed in 1886. They allowed the internal examination of women suspected of being prostitutes, and women who refused to be examined, or who were found to be suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, could be imprisoned for up to nine months (see Walkowitz *Prostitution*). Aside from the fact that the acts sanctioned the violation of women’s bodies, their effectiveness was extremely limited, as men who visited prostitutes were not subject to examination, and therefore the spread of disease could not be contained. Through the work of Josephine Butler’s Ladies National Association, the acts received a great deal of publicity, but they were, in fact, just one of many laws which, while attempting to regulate sexuality, failed to adequately protect women from sexual abuse: until 1885, the age of consent was just thirteen (Walkowitz *Prostitution*); there was no legislation to protect women from incest or marital rape in the nineteenth century; and men abusing adolescents between the ages of thirteen and sixteen could not be prosecuted if more than three months had elapsed since the abuse had taken place (see Bartley, 182). Furthermore, rape was extremely difficult to prove, and consequently very few incidents were reported, even fewer resulted in prosecution, and less still in conviction. Women who became pregnant as a result of sexual abuse were rarely regarded as victims, and were often forced into refuges, workhouses or prostitution.

The passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the public campaigns calling for their repeal, undoubtedly meant that the fallen woman theme carried a new resonance for the sensation novelists. The sexual double standard in particular became a focus in sensation literature, and is attacked – either overtly

or subvertly – in a great many novels of the 1860s, not least those of Collins - although more conservative writers, such as Mrs Henry Wood, also participated in the genre, and frequently upheld Victorian moral standards. Although the sensation novels and the campaign for the rights of prostitutes at this time may have appeared to reflect a more tolerant attitude towards female sexuality, they also had the effect of outraging large sections of society, amongst whom was deeply embedded the idea that, in the words of Josephine Butler, “a woman who has once lost chastity has lost every good quality” (cited in Jordan, 158). It is in this respect that the sensation genre, and the novels of Collins in particular, often differ from earlier fallen woman narratives: not only does Collins rarely punish his fallen women for their sexual transgressions, he often depicts them marrying into the middle or upper classes, suggesting his own feminist sympathies and disapproval of hypocritical Victorian attitudes. Yet, while the character of the sexually transgressive female is often present in Collins’s fiction, the figure of the prostitute appears only twice. This essay will thus focus on the depictions of Mercy Merrick in *The New Magdalen* (1873), a former prostitute whom the narrative idealizes, and Simple Sally in *The Fallen Leaves* (1879), who is paradoxically represented as a virginal prostitute, and whose portrayal is at the same time highly sympathetic and highly sexualized. “In both cases the prostitute ends up respectably married,” as Tom Winniffrith observes (140), but in neither text is Collins’s treatment of the fallen woman straightforward or entirely free from gender stereotyping.

* * * * *

In *The New Magdalen*, Mercy Merrick, the reformed prostitute of the title, is the illegitimate daughter of an actress and a gentleman, who falls into prostitution after she is drugged and raped whilst unconscious. Repentant of her past and determined to reform, she fails to find respectable work as a result of her earlier transgressions. Consequently she adopts the identity of another woman – Grace Roseberry, whom she believes to be dead – in order to escape the stigma of her prior misdemeanours. However, Mercy’s past catches up with her when Grace reappears alive and well. Mercy returns to the shelter where she had originally sought refuge, refusing her employer’s offer to overlook her disreputable past, as well as a marriage proposal from a respectable clergyman, Julian Gray, whom she loves. Eventually, after he becomes seriously ill, she agrees to marry him. They are subsequently rejected by polite society and leave Britain to begin a new life in the New World. The briefest examination of the plot indicates a significant move away from the traditional fallen woman narratives of earlier decades. Not only is the protagonist forgiven for her sexual transgressions, but she is also rewarded for her repentance with a happy

marriage at the conclusion of the novel. Collins thus actively subverts the conventions of the fallen woman narrative.

Whilst Collins's depiction of Mercy serves to highlight the hypocrisy of Victorian attitudes towards fallen women, the portrayal is somewhat problematic. The protagonist has all the characteristics of a gentlewoman, but her history is entirely contradictory to this. Not only has she experienced a childhood plagued by poverty and later turned to prostitution, but she also spent time in prison after being (falsely) accused of theft. Her history is reminiscent of Dickens's Nancy, yet her character has more in common with Rose Maylie in the same novel. However, it was necessary for Collins's purpose that Mercy should appeal to the reader, hence the paradoxical representation: Nancy's crudeness and hardness would not have translated into a character whom the reader could both pity *and* empathize with. The necessity of this alteration is emphasized by an examination of the writings of Josephine Butler, in which "prostitutes generally speak like ladies" (Jordan, 68). Both Butler and Collins were appealing to a middle-class readership, and to appeal to them through the language and speech of the lower classes would have been fruitless. Yet the consequence is that Collins's depiction of Mercy is not only idealistic, but unrealistic as well, and thus ultimately serves to undermine the novel's moral purpose: Mercy is simply not representative of the Victorian prostitute. Whilst a few middle-class women did become prostitutes, the large majority were working-class – forced by poverty into one of the few occupations in which they could earn an independent income. Paula Bartley emphasizes this point, observing that those women of the middle and upper classes seeking refuge at reform institutions "were more likely cast-off mistresses or single mothers than ex-prostitutes" (Bartley, 37).

As a plea for society's fallen women, the novel ultimately fails: the nineteenth-century reader may have agreed that Mercy was worthy of forgiveness, and deserving of happiness, but she is not representative of society's fallen women, who turned to prostitution not unintentionally and "guiltlessly", as Mercy does – "I was an innocent girl ... I was at least not to blame" (Collins *The New Magdalen*, 241), but because there was no other option available for them. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the narrative are indicative of nineteenth-century attitudes towards the figure of the prostitute. In the opening scene, when Mercy reveals her past to the shocked and unsympathetic Grace, her despair is telling: "what I *am* can never alter what I *was* ... the lost place is not to be regained. I can't get back! I can't get back" (12). Collins suggests the unforgiving nature of the morality of the middle and upper classes that prevented the fallen woman from regaining any respectable position within society, and it is this rigid morality that is the author's main focus of attack in the novel. It is worth noting, however, that, amongst the working classes at least, "as long as prostitution represented a temporary stage

in a woman's career, and as long as she could leave it at her discretion, she was not irrevocably scarred or limited in her future choices" (Walkowitz *Prostitution*, 196). In his seminal work on prostitution, William Acton, although not generally inclined to come down on the side of women, supports this view:

I have every reason to believe, that by far the larger number of women who have resorted to prostitution for a livelihood, return sooner or later to a more or less regular course of life ... [T]he better inclined class of prostitutes become the wedded wives of men in every grade of society, from the peerage to the stable.

(Acton, 39)

While the number of former prostitutes who married amongst the middle and upper classes was undoubtedly few, it is clear that the attitude expressed towards the prostitute in much Victorian literature may have masked a rather different reality.

Although by no means an entirely realistic portrayal of the nineteenth century prostitute, *The New Magdalen* does succeed in drawing attention to the hypocrisy of Victorian "respectable" society and their supposedly Christian values – sentiments paralleled by Josephine Butler and the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts. This is achieved partially through the presentation of Mercy, but more significantly through the character of Julian Gray and the novel's conclusion. Like Captain Kirke in *No Name*, Julian Gray is the Christ-like saviour of the heroine – more explicitly in this case given his status as a Clergyman, though this is a role that he eventually forsakes before marrying Mercy. Julian's character is representative of true Christian values – those of forgiveness and unconditional love. Significantly, the sentiments he expresses parallel those of key figures campaigning for the social rights of prostitutes. Pleading Mercy's case following her confession to Horace, Julian pronounces that "her heartfelt repentance is a joy in Heaven. Shall it not plead for her on earth? Honour her, if you are a Christian. Feel for her, if you are a man!" (Collins *The New Magdalen*, 250). This echoes the sentiments of Josephine Butler:

when you say that fallen women in the mass are irreclaimable, have lost all truthfulness, all nobleness ... and all tenderness of heart because they are unchaste, you are guilty of a blasphemy against human nature and against God.

(cited in Jordan, 116)

Indeed, the similarities between Josephine Butler and Collins's Julian Gray are numerous, and worthy of consideration. Like Butler, the novel's hero is a renowned orator, who actively involves himself in the rescue of fallen women, and whose effect upon them is profound, as Mercy's account of his sermon at the refuge demonstrates:

His text was from the words “Joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” What happier women might have thought of his sermon I cannot say; there was not a dry eye among us at the Refuge.

(Collins *The New Magdalen*, 14)

A strikingly similar account is to be found of Josephine Butler’s first visit to the oakum sheds in the mid-1860s, where “women for whom there was no hope of redemption” worked in pitiful conditions: “Josephine ... bid them pray, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ and, as if in response to a charm, all fell to their knees upon the damp bricks. She knelt too, and heard a great moaning and weeping rise up from the cellar floor.” (Jordan, 67-8). In both extracts, the speaker quotes from the Gospel of St. Luke in attempting to reclaim society’s fallen women. The repeated use of the New Testament by both Butler and Julian Gray is significant, indicating the positioning of both as mirrors of Christ in their relation to the fallen woman. The image of the hero as saviour is not uncommon in Collins’s novels, and is demonstrated in *The New Magdalen* in the words of reassurance Julian offers to Mercy: “Rise, poor wounded heart! Beautiful, purified soul, God’s angels rejoice over you! Take your place among the noblest of God’s creatures!” (142). The words are again reminiscent of the religious sentiments of Butler who, “one day ... felt moved to say to a woman who was just dying, ‘Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee’” (Jordan, 82), and who acted as “the saviour of oppressed women, ... a female Christ” (174).

The religious beliefs of Collins’s character clearly echo those of Butler. Both repeatedly refer to the scriptures, but both are also disillusioned by the hypocritical religion practised by large sections of society. This disillusionment with the Church results in Julian resigning his post of clergyman in *The New Magdalen*, and similar hypocrisies in the attitudes of Christian leaders were observed by Butler at a meeting of the Church Congress in 1871: “The majority of the clergy present had been carefully trained by evil advisers to consider this legislation [the Contagious Diseases Acts] an excellent thing” (Butler, 56). Butler viewed her rescue work and campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts as a mission from God, and her work was clearly based upon a deep personal commitment to Christianity, not dissimilar to that expressed by Collins’s Julian Gray. Parallels can also be drawn between Julian’s rescue of Mercy, and Butler’s personal involvement in the lives of individual prostitutes such as Mary Lomax, one of many fallen women whom Butler took into her own home. The gratitude Mercy expresses towards Julian – “No words of mine can describe what I owe to him. He has never despaired of me – he has saved me from myself.” (Collins *The New Magdalen*, 180) – is analogous to that articulated by Mary Lomax in a poem to Butler:

When I think of how she found me so wretched and so low,
So torn with pain and sickness, so plagued in guilt and woe;
How sweet she said she loved me, even me the wicked one
And answered my despairing words with joyous hopeful tone.

(cited in Jordan, 72)

The parallels between Josephine Butler and Collins's Julian Gray should not be dismissed as merely coincidental. Butler's controversial campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts had already captured public attention when Collins began writing *The New Magdalen*, and the author would undoubtedly have been aware of it. Indeed, Collins's decision to name the character J. Gray may be a nod towards Butler, whose maiden name was Grey. The figure of the reformed prostitute in the novel can be read as a deliberate attempt to engage with public opinion at the time – possibly as a marketing technique, but more likely because his own beliefs regarding the social status of sexually transgressive women corresponded with those of Butler. Collins's purpose in *The New Magdalen* – to draw attention to society's hypocrisy through the plight of the repentant fallen woman – clearly parallels the arguments used by Butler in both her rescue work and her campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts. Butler's belief that prostitutes were entitled to the social rights and the opportunity to reform were founded on the same Christian principles which Collins espouses in the novel, and like Collins, she held in contempt the hypocritical Christianity practised by so many in Victorian society.

* * * * *

Collins's attack on the hypocrisy that lay at the heart of Victorian "respectability" is even more central to *The Fallen Leaves*. The metaphor of the title suggests the impossibility of the fallen woman ever regaining a respectable position in society, echoing Mercy's sentiments in *The New Magdalen*. The book follows the progress of the hero, Amelius Goldenheart, who leaves a Christian Socialist community in America to travel to England, where he becomes involved in the lives of various women, including that of the young prostitute, Sally.

Unlike Collins's earlier portrayal of Mercy, that of Sally is completely unidealized. Indeed, she is so much a victim of her life on the streets as to make her depiction shocking and even harrowing. Collins's image of a young prostitute is rendered more disturbing by her child-like simplicity: "she's a little soft, poor soul – hasn't grown up, you know, in her mind, since she was a child" (Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 275). She is nicknamed "Simple Sally" and as a consequence of her simplicity, Amelius treats her like a child: "Think of

the new dress, and the pretty bonnet' suggested Amelius, speaking unconsciously in the tone in which he might have promised a toy to a child" (289). However, in contrast to her childishness, Sally's character is also highly sexualized, and from their first meeting Amelius's pity for her is clearly mingled with sexual attraction, which permeates the narrative's description of her and immediately casts her in the role of fantasy figure:

The lost creature had, to all appearance, barely passed the boundary between childhood and girlhood – she could hardly be more than fifteen or sixteen years old. Her eyes, of the purest and loveliest blue, rested on Amelius with a vacantly patient look, like the eyes of a suffering child. The soft oval outline of her face would have been perfect if the cheeks had been filled out; they were wasted and hollow, and sadly disfigured by a piece of plaster covering some injury. She was little and thin; her worn and scanty clothing showed her frail youthful figure still waiting for its perfection of growth. Her pretty little bare hands were reddened by the raw night air. ... But for the words in which she had accosted him, it would have been impossible to associate her with the lamentable life that she led. The appearance of the girl was artlessly virginal and innocent; she looked as if she had passed through the contamination of the streets without being touched by it, without fearing it, or feeling it, or understanding it. Robed in pure white, with her gentle blue eyes raised to heaven, a painter might have shown her on his canvas as a saint or an angel; and the critical world would have said, Here is the true ideal – Raphael himself might have painted this!

(Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 272-3)

Sally is presented, paradoxically, as a virginal prostitute. The dichotomy in the way that Amelius views Sally continues throughout the narrative. As Sally Mitchell observes, "the prostitute was the one woman about whom it was permissible to have sexual thoughts; if victimisation made her pure she could be an object of both pity and desire" (Mitchell, 133). These sentiments are echoed by Collins within the novel, in the words of warning spoken to Amelius by one of the Elder Brothers of the Christian Socialist community: "Be especially on your guard, my son, if you meet with a woman who makes you feel truly sorry for her. She is on a high-road to your passions, through the open door of your sympathies" (Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 460). Although he refers to their relationship as one between "brother and sister," or "master and pupil" (387), Amelius is constantly struggling to resist his desire for Sally, to his own apparent shame: "That innate depravity which Amelius had lately discovered in his own nature, let the forbidden thoughts loose in him again" (354). The relationship ultimately culminates in their marriage, so that Amelius finally gains sexual access to Sally, albeit with legal sanction.

The division in Sally's character between child-like innocent and sexual fantasy figure is an uncomfortable one, and taints Collins's portrayal of the fallen woman in the novel. Sally never fully escapes the world that objectifies

her and casts her as a figure for male fantasy, for even Amelius, her saviour, continues to view her in this light. Although in *The New Magdalen* Julian too marries the fallen woman, thus also entering into a sexual relationship with her, Mercy is presented as intelligent, independent and entirely capable of making her own decisions. In spite of this, there is inevitably an imbalance of power in their relationship: Victorian morality, social convention and assumptions about gender roles effectively prevent the respectable clergyman and the fallen woman from being presented on equal terms. However, in contrast to Mercy, Sally is childish to the point of being mentally disabled. Thus the impression given is that Amelius, motivated by his sexual attraction, is taking advantage of her. Given Collins's penchant for depicting the rescue of the fallen woman in his fiction, as well as his own relationship with Caroline Graves, rumoured to have begun after he rescued her from "a bully or a pimp" (Peters, 192), it seems likely that the author's own fantasies are embodied in the character of Sally.

Collins's depiction of Sally in *The Fallen Leaves* prefigures Hardy's portrayal of Tess twelve years later in which, as Penny Boumelha observes, "the narrator's erotic fantasies of penetration and engulfment enact a pursuit, violation and persecution of Tess in parallel with those she suffers at the hands of her two lovers" (Boumelha, 46). Lynne Pearce also notes that "often ... Tess is seen specifically through the eyes of one of the male characters" (Pearce, 35), but more significantly, the reader sees Tess through the eyes of her male creator, who, like Collins in *The Fallen Leaves*, not only sympathizes with his protagonist, but also desires her. Comparisons can also be drawn between Collins's novel and W. T. Stead's investigation into child prostitution in London, which resulted in the publication of "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885. In attempting to highlight the problem of child abuse and trafficking, Stead purchased a young girl for the sum of five pounds – an act for which he was later prosecuted and imprisoned for three months (see Walkowitz *City*, 81-120). Walkowitz notes, in a statement which could easily be applied to Collins's *The Fallen Leaves*, that Stead "combined the seemingly incompatible sensibilities of male feminist and voyeur" (95). The examples of Collins, Hardy and Stead (whose investigation helped to bring about the increase of the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen) demonstrate that while the conjunction of male fantasy with genuine sympathy for the plight of women may be uncomfortable, it was nevertheless not uncommon.

Philip O'Neill proposes that *The Fallen Leaves* "is a text that has a great deal to say about the representation of women, and comes closest to justifying the 'feminist' label of Sayers" (O'Neill, 6). He argues that the sexual desire between Amelius and Sally is mutual, and that their marriage serves to "legitim[ize] their sexual desire" (72, emphasis added). However, the internal

evidence of the text directly contradicts the idea that Sally feels sexually attracted towards her rescuer. The sexualization of Sally's character by both Amelius and Collins undoubtedly detracts from a feminist reading of *The Fallen Leaves*. Although Sally escapes from her role as prostitute, she remains restricted by Amelius's perception of her, and, in contrast to a number of Collins's other novels, there is no real attempt to address the issue of the social and legal rights of the fallen woman. She is consistently portrayed as child-like – described as a “child-victim ... still only feeling her way to womanhood” (Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 365), as possessing a “quaint childish charm” (369) and repeatedly referred to by Amelius as “My dear child” (303, 401, 455, 465). Although Sally clearly loves Amelius, it is depicted as a platonic love. When Amelius kisses Sally, both his desire for her and his power over her are clearly apparent:

He was young – he was a man – for a moment he lost his self control; he kissed her as he had never kissed her yet. Then, he remembered; he recovered himself; he put her gently away from him, and led her to the door of her room, and closed it on her in silence.

(Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 469)

But when Sally kisses Amelius, it is “with innocent familiarity ... as a sister might have kissed him” (376). Even when Sally originally propositions Amelius on the streets of London, her motive is not sexual, but financial: she must “bring money home” in order to “save her[self] a beating” (274). O'Neill recognizes the underlying sexuality that motivates Amelius, but ignores the significance of Sally's childish mentality, and suggests that “while she may be the object of sexual desire, Collins is careful not to outrage decorum and [therefore] Sally is seen in terms of a rather simple child” (O'Neill, 68). In fact, the image of Sally as both child and object of sexual desire is one of the most disturbing elements of the text. Sally's age (fifteen or sixteen) is enough to make the modern reader uncomfortable with Amelius's relationship to her, although it is significant that when Collins wrote the novel the age of consent was only thirteen. More disturbing than her actual age, however, is her child-like mentality. She is described as having a “vacantly submissive manner” (Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 276), a “feeble intelligence” (313), and repeatedly refers to herself in deprecating terms, as a “poor stupid girl” (283) and “an ignorant creature” (375). She is both mentally and morally disabled – never seemingly fully aware of the implications of her actions, and it is this fact that renders Amelius's desire for her so disquieting. Further emphasizing the uncomfortable and contradictory nature of their relationship is the fact that both of them view Amelius as a substitute parent to Sally. He refers to her as “my child”, exclaiming, “I must be all that the kindest father and mother could have been to you, now. Oh, my poor little girl!” (440). Similarly for Sally, Amelius is “father and mother both to her simple mind” (401). Their relationship is

further complicated by the narrative repeatedly comparing Sally to a dog. When he first encounters the child-like prostitute, she “looked at him with the dumb fidelity of a dog” (303), and later she is described as having a “dog-like devotion to Amelius” (308-9). The comparison culminates in the scene in which Sally appears before Amelius after escaping from the Refuge:

In his unendurable loneliness, he had longed for his dog ... There was the martyred creature from the streets, whom he had rescued from nameless horror, waiting to be his companion, servant, friend ... innocent of all other aspirations, so long as she might fill the place which had once been occupied by the dog

(Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 365)

Like Amelius’s desire for the fallen woman, which necessarily objectifies her, the analogy between Sally and a dog similarly dehumanizes her character. Although it can be surmised that Collins’s intention was to emphasize the extent of her retardation, the dehumanization of the figure of the prostitute in the novel represents a pornographic cliché, and thus raises further questions about Collins’s attitude towards the fallen woman and his feminist intentions. Sally’s simplicity is contrasted by the complexity of her position in relation to Amelius. She is viewed by her rescuer at various points in the narrative as virgin, whore, child, daughter, sister, pupil, object of desire, and dog. These contradictions and paradoxes ultimately act as barriers to a feminist reading of the text. Consequently, O’Neill’s assertion that the novel represents the pinnacle of Collins’s feminist writings must be called into question. His discussion of *The Fallen Leaves* raises important questions about the position of the male critic in relation to the fictional child as sexual object: his interpretation of the narrative is skewed, arguably as a result of a gendered reading of the text.

In spite of the fact that he objectifies Sally, Amelius is still presented, like *The New Magdalen*’s Julian Gray, as her saviour, and he does indeed rescue Sally from the streets and give her a better life. In her gratitude, Sally idolizes Amelius, and refuses to be parted from him. However, her feelings towards him further increase the imbalance of power in their relationship: Amelius knows he may give in to temptation at any time, and Sally, willing to do whatever he asks of her, would not object. Although he ultimately gains legitimate access to her through marriage, Amelius nevertheless violates the trust Sally has placed in him, and contradicts his own claim that his only motivation in rescuing her was Christian compassion, his aim being “to restore that poor starved, outraged, beaten creature to the happy place on God’s earth which God intended her to fill” (292).

The control that Amelius wields over Sally, whether consciously or not, is in part derived from the fact that she lacks the independent will and strength of mind that characterize many of Collins’s other heroines, such as Magdalen

Vanstone and Mercy Merrick. These characteristics have provided key evidence in feminist readings of Collins's work, which have frequently focused on the assertiveness of Collins's central female characters. Sally's lack of will therefore presents another obstacle to a feminist interpretation of *The Fallen Leaves*. Ironically, the narrative criticizes Regina for her "weakly complacent good nature" (195) and for failing to "assert ... a will of her own" (193). Yet Sally is no more assertive than Regina. She is a transgressive protagonist because her role as a reformed prostitute is at odds with the role of heroine, but she is – unlike many of Collins's other heroines who are marked by their independence – controlled by the men in her life: first by her pimp, and later by her rescuer, Amelius. In this respect parallels can be drawn between Amelius and Sally's pimp, both of whom are interested in Sally as a sexual object. The underlying implication is that marriage is a form of prostitution, a notion repeatedly found in Collins's work. It is Amelius's decision to take Sally off the streets, to allow her to live with him and for them to eventually marry. Whilst Mercy essentially acts independently in choosing to relinquish her life as a prostitute, Sally's reformation is entirely Amelius's doing. Although the text implies that her inability to act independently is the result of the extreme brutality with which she has been treated, she is nevertheless not in the same category as many of Collins's other heroines who have inspired feminist criticism, such as Marian Halcombe and Magdalen Vanstone. Consequently, the distinction between Sally and Regina is not as palpable as it initially appears, and certainly not as clear as the division between Mercy and Grace in *The New Magdalen*. Ultimately, despite Sally's sexual transgressions, both she and Regina emerge as disappointingly conventional Victorian heroines.

Collins's narrative implies that Sally's life on the streets has prevented the development of her mind: "the natural growth of her senses – her higher and her lower senses alike – has been stunted, like the natural growth of her body, by starvation, terror, exposure to cold, and other influences inherent in the life that she has led" (302). Thus, Collins's depiction of Sally, although problematic, can nevertheless be read as a commentary on the dangers that threatened women – particularly young women – working as prostitutes in Victorian Britain. Although, as in *The New Magdalen*, Collins make no specific reference to the Contagious Diseases Acts, possibly because of the taboos surrounding the subject, his representation of Sally and the threats posed to her mind and body while she works as a prostitute is timely, coinciding with Butler's campaign. However, Sally's mental deficiencies are such that it seems possible that they are the cause, rather than the effect, of her fall into prostitution. In her 1912 article "The Cause of Purity and Women's Suffrage," Ursula Roberts suggested that "Feeble-minded girls are peculiarly liable to be seduced ... they are too feeble to make any resistance to the demands of unprincipled men. Once they are seduced, the downward path is easy" (Roberts,

288). The debate over whether feeble-mindedness precipitated women's fall into prostitution, or whether their fall *resulted* in the retardation of the mind is interesting, and while 'feeble-minded' girls may have been particularly vulnerable, they did not account for the majority of prostitutes. Collins's critique of prostitution, which suggests the detrimental effects of the trade on women's minds, can be linked to the views of campaigners such as Josephine Butler, who emphasized the dangerous consequences of prostitution on the mind, body and spirit of those involved, and highlighted the lack of protection available for young, vulnerable and poor women. Through the character of Sally, Collins aligns himself implicitly with those campaigning for the rights of prostitutes, clearly supporting the view that prostitution "is the production of ... gross physical cruelty, of moral death" (Blackwell, 100).

Collins's depiction of Sally in *The Fallen Leaves* is both more realistic and more problematic than his portrayal of Mercy in *The New Magdalen*. Sally, unlike Mercy, is clearly affected by her experience – both mentally and physically. The true brutality of her situation is poignantly depicted in the scene in which she is accosted by her pimp, a character reminiscent of Dickens's Bill Sikes:

Amelius turned, and saw Simple Sally with her arm in the grasp of a half-drunken ruffian; one of the swarming wild beasts of Low London ... "You've got a gentleman this time," he said to her; "I shall expect gold to-night, or else!" He finished the sentence by lifting his monstrous fist, and shaking it in her face.

(Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 276-7).

In contrast to *The New Magdalen*, the horror of the life of a poor London prostitute is clearly portrayed. Sally is still working as a prostitute when she is introduced to the reader: her sexual transgressions are not cloaked in the mystery of her past, as Mercy's are, nor is her status in any way ambiguous, as Nancy's is in *Oliver Twist*. The abuse of Sally's body by the man who effectively controls it in a sense mirrors the abuse of the prostitute's body by doctors as a consequence of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which effectively sanctioned the violation of the female body. Furthermore, Amelius's expectation that the law will protect Sally (277) is ironic, considering that the law effectively encouraged the abuse of the prostitute's body through the Acts. Once again, Collins appears to be alluding indirectly to the controversy surrounding this legislation, and the policeman's admission that the law cannot protect Sally mirrors the legal system's failure to prevent, indeed, its encouragement of, the abuse of the female body.

Collins is more forthright in his presentation of prostitution in *The Fallen Leaves* than in any of his previous works, and indeed than in most other Victorian novels dealing with the same subject. However, while Mercy eventually escapes the stigma of her past – albeit by escaping from England and

the conservative and hypocritical attitudes of its inhabitants – the same cannot accurately be said for Sally. Mercy is ultimately accepted – at least by Julian and Lady Janet, members of the society which previously refused to forgive her. Those members of “respectable” society who cannot forgive her are shown to be hypocritical and unchristian. However, in *The Fallen Leaves* there is no union representing the forgiveness and acceptance of the reformed prostitute as there is in *The New Magdalen*. Although Sally is apparently happily married at the conclusion of the novel, it is not to a respected member of Victorian society, like Julian Gray, but to an outsider like herself. Amelius belongs to a Christian Socialist world far removed from, and disapproved of by, English society. Therefore, while his acceptance of Sally and her past may represent, in Collins’s estimation, true Christian values, these values are not to be found within the closed circle of polite society. Amelius’s servant, Toff, is the only other character in the novel who accepts the marriage. Even Rufus, friend and ally of Amelius, disapproves of the union. Furthermore, the marriage is not primarily the culmination of Sally’s reformation, but the fulfilment of Amelius’s sexual desires. While Sally escapes a life on the streets, it is ultimately only exchanged for a life in which she continues to be objectified. Interestingly, in the proposed Second Series of *The Fallen Leaves*, Collins intended to show the breakdown of Amelius’s and Sally’s marriage (see Gasson, 59) – another indication, perhaps, that Amelius is driven not by Christian love and compassion, but by his sexual desire for Sally.

* * * * *

Collins’s depictions of prostitution in *The New Magdalen* and *The Fallen Leaves* enable an assessment of the author’s attitude towards not only the figure of the socially and legally oppressed prostitute, but also women in general. Although Collins campaigned forcefully through his fiction for greater legal protection for married women (*Man and Wife*) and illegitimate daughters (*No Name*), his portrayals of Mercy and Sally emphasize his ultimately ambiguous attitude towards women. While these narratives can be read in the context of contemporary debates about prostitution, there is no overt engagement with the campaign to secure basic human rights for the prostitute. Indeed both texts appear to suggest that the fallen woman’s salvation is possible only through redemption in the form of marriage – not through the achievement of individual autonomy and respectability. The removal of the prostitute from the Victorian streets to the sphere of home and respectability, where she may fulfill the conventional roles of wife and mother is in some sense radical, signifying as it does the forgiveness of the fallen woman and the possibility of redemption. However, the transformation from disreputable

prostitute to respectable wife is a problematic one – particularly in light of the analogies repeatedly drawn by Victorian feminists between marriage and prostitution, and the concept of the prostitute as paradoxically representative of the Victorian feminine ideal points to a sexualizing of the conventional Angel of the House. This clearly emphasizes the problematic nature of Collins’s depictions of the fallen woman – particularly in terms of a feminist approach to his work: his texts arguably reflect not a desire to free the fallen woman from the trappings of Victorian attitudes towards morality, but a desire *for* the fallen woman – a desire exhibited by both the author and his characters, particularly in the case of Sally in *The Fallen Leaves*. If we accept Lyn Pykett’s assertion that the “expeditions that [Dickens] undertook with Collins in the 1850s involved entertaining and being entertained by ‘ladies of the night’” (Pykett, 51) then it is hardly surprising that this desire manifests itself in Collins’s fiction.

Works Cited

- Acton, William. *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects*. 2nd edition, 1870. London: Frank Cass, 1972.
- Bartley, Paula. *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860 – 1914*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Blackwell, Elizabeth. “Rescue work in Relation to Prostitution and Disease.” In Jeffreys, ed., *The Sexuality Debates*, 100-10.
- Boumelha, Penny. “*Tess of the d’Urbervilles*: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form.” In *New Casebooks: Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, ed. Peter Widdowson, London: Macmillan, 1993, 44-62.
- Butler, Josephine. *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*. London: Horace Marshall, 1896.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The New Magdalen*. 1873. Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1993.
- _____. *The Fallen Leaves*. 1879. New York: P. F. Collier, 1900.
- Gasson, Andrew. *Wilkie Collins: An Illustrated Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Jeffreys, Sheila, ed. *The Sexuality Debates*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Jordan, Jane. *Josephine Butler*. London: John Murray, 2001.
- Mitchell, Sally. *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women’s Reading 1835 – 1880*. Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981.
- O’Neill, Philip. *Wilkie Collins: Women, Property and Propriety*. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- Pearce, Lynne. “Sexual Politics.” In *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, eds Sara Mills and Lynne Pearce, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996, 16-50.
- Peters, Catherine. *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1991.
- Pykett, Lyn. *Authors in Context: Wilkie Collins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Roberts, Ursula. “The Cause of Purity and Women’s Suffrage.” In Jeffreys, ed., *The Sexuality Debates*, 283-294.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. London: Virago Press, 1992.
- _____. *Prostitution and Victorian Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Wilson, A. N. *The Victorians*. London: Random House, 2002.

Ruskin and the Evil of the Raphaelesque in *Hide and Seek*

Aoife Leahy

University of Limerick

Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek* was initially published in 1854 and is the first of many novels in which Collins mischievously undermines Raphael, the adversary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This enmity is clearly identified in the name of the Brotherhood itself, since the objective of the P.R.B. was to return to the innocence of art before Raphael (or, more precisely, to art before the latter part of Raphael's career). In this essay, I will examine points of similarity between *Hide and Seek* and John Ruskin's 1853 lecture "Pre-Raphaelitism," in which Ruskin defends the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood by attacking both Raphael himself and the Raphaelesque art of the nineteenth century. Ruskin's lecture makes a dramatically effective argument and suggests that there is a great evil or catastrophe at the heart of Raphael's art that has been passed on to the modern day artists that emulate him. Although the points made are not particularly logical in terms of art history, they are intended to work as a powerful narrative in defence of the Brotherhood, and in this sense the lecture succeeds brilliantly. *Hide and Seek* repeats several of Ruskin's condemnations of Raphael, but in a mischievous and covert way, through in-jokes that were probably only evident to Collins's artistic friends in 1854.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood claimed influences that, in many ways, were full of contradictions. The young artists opposed themselves to the Royal Academy interpretation of the Raphaelesque, that is, the influence of Raphael on a line of British artists from Sir Joshua Reynolds to traditionally minded contemporary artists in the Royal Academy. Yet they admired artists like William Blake, who had wanted to claim a fresh line of influence from Raphael to himself in opposition to Reynolds's appropriation of Raphael for his own artistic values.¹ Their "medieval" inspiration came from Early Renaissance figures such as Giotto, from a scanty knowledge of the Quattrocento, and even

¹ See Blake's statements to this effect in *On Art and Artists*, 203-8.

from the early work of Raphael.² The Pre-Raphaelite name suggests a complete rejection of Raphael, but this is misleading. The P.R.B. really wanted to reset the progress of Raphael's influence, to take inspiration from his early work in a way that was true to the values of the Early Renaissance, referred to as Early Italian Art or the medieval period in Pre-Raphaelite writings. One of the most confusing things about reading art criticism from the nineteenth century in general is that the term "Renaissance" generally refers to the High Renaissance only, so that everything from Giotto to early Raphael can be referred to as medieval art. In support of the Pre-Raphaelite agenda, Ruskin argued that there was a sharp dividing line between Raphael's early, moral "medieval" art and his later, destructive creations.

Ruskin's lecture in defence of "Pre-Raphaelitism" can be confusing for the reader if the argument is taken too literally. Contradicting some of his own previous writings,³ Ruskin claims that a single project by Raphael marks a great split between medieval and modern art, the latter spanning from the High Renaissance to the nineteenth century. Medieval truth is lost from Raphael's work in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican, in which Christ is ruler of Theology in the *Disputa* but Apollo usurps Christ as the ruler of the Arts in *Parnassus*. This single act of blasphemy causes ripples through art history and removes God from all modern art. The "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," or writing on the wall for the "Arts of Christianity" (Ruskin, 162), dates from this event. Ancient Greek sculpture, which was pagan, elevates the "ideal beauty" or standardization of features that is later copied by High Renaissance artists. Present day Royal Academicians that rely on "Elgin marbles" (166) and Raphael's paintings to learn to draw the ideal form are rejecting the superior period of medieval art, when the presence of God and truth to nature in art was more important than anything else. Greek/High Renaissance/Victorian art worships "beauty rather than veracity" (163), and is thus tainted. In the present day, the foolish artist who blindly continues to paint from an idealized and artificial standard by copying Raphael is rejecting God by rejecting nature. The Pre-Raphaelite movement is to be commended, however, for bravely attempting to return to the principles of medieval art.⁴ Ultimately, Ruskin's argument presents a simple opposition between the Pre-Raphaelites and the

² See Wood, 10-12, for an account of equally important and contemporary influences such as William Dyce.

³ In his pamphlet of 1851, also entitled "Pre-Raphaelitism" (reprinted in Ruskin, 1-47) Ruskin claims that the P.R.B. artists are not medieval at all and should avoid the perils of "mediaevalism and Romanism" (20n). In the 1853 lecture (reprinted in Ruskin, 151-74) he revises his interpretation of medievalism so that it is no longer associated with Catholicism but with truthful art.

⁴ Christ is at the apex of the P.R.B.'s pyramid of immortal influences, restored to his rightful place in art history (Hilton, 34).

Royal Academy: truth versus deceit. The artists of the Royal Academy change God's work to meet an artificial, classical standard (also found in High Renaissance art), thus lying to the viewer. Metaphorically, they worship Apollo rather than Christ, by replacing truth to nature with a classical standard that only looks natural.⁵ This central metaphor explains Ruskin's otherwise peculiar claim that a single elevation of Apollo over Christ could doom all "modern" (that is, Victorian) art to a state of "deny[ing] Christ" (155).

The plot of *Hide and Seek* depends on the history of complicated family relationships, which seem to parallel events in the history of British art. Madonna, the novel's deaf heroine, is the illegitimate child of two suspiciously beautiful parents whose liaison ends because of deceit and misunderstandings. A gentleman who is known by a false name seduces Mary Grice, and leaves her pregnant. Although he does not intend to abandon her, his act of deception in giving a false name facilitates a tragic sequence of events. Mary flees from her family home to avoid bringing disgrace to the name of her father, Joshua, and dies soon after giving birth. The names are telling: Madonna is a reproduction of Mary, and the shamed father recalls Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy and a famous supporter of Raphael. At first a circus family cares for the baby, but some years later the artist Blyth is so startled by the child's resemblance to a Raphael Madonna that he adopts her. The main action of the novel takes place when Madonna is twenty-three and has unknowingly fallen in love with her half-brother Zack Thorpe, the legitimate son of her mother's mysterious lover. A marriage between Madonna and Zach would produce more "copies" or children that would inherit a tainted legacy. The truth is finally uncovered by Mat, Madonna's uncle, who has returned from the sea and is seeking revenge for the death of his sister. Ultimately, however, the elder Mr Thorpe dies of natural causes shortly after Mat has forgiven him. The novel ends as the Blyths embrace their unusual extended family, but with no apparent prospect of marriage for Madonna, whose Raphaelesque face must not be reproduced in a new generation.

The reader's first view of Madonna seems to suggest that Collins is praising Raphael, despite the novelist's involvement with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood:

[Friends of the Blyths] unanimously asserted that the young lady's face was the nearest living approach to that immortal 'Madonna' face, which has for ever associated the idea of beauty with the name of RAPHAEL. The

⁵ The absolute symmetry of classical sculpture deceives the human eye into seeing a perfect and extremely healthy figure. As the Victorians were aware, however, thanks in part to scientific progress, real people are subject to many variations that are absent in standardized models of beauty. Raphael's figures were praised for looking natural in his own time and for centuries later, but the Victorians could identify this natural appearance as an illusion.

resemblance struck everybody alike, even those who were but slightly conversant with pictures, the moment they saw her.

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 50)⁶

There is already a suggestion of tongue-in-cheek humour, however, in the fact that those who are relatively ignorant of art and only “slightly conversant with pictures” (50) tend to appreciate a Raphael. The popular taste of the masses is parodied. Collins’s review of Pre-Raphaelite art at the 1851 Royal Academy exhibition in *Bentley’s Miscellany* takes a similar approach, apparently echoing typical criticism of the P.R.B. but only when he is satirically looking through “the eyes of the general spectator” (623).⁷ The review ultimately suggests that most viewers lack the intelligence or sensibility to appreciate Pre-Raphaelite art: only the most refined viewer will appreciate Charles Allston Collins’s *Convent Thoughts*.

Yet Collins goes on to point out that Madonna’s appearance is imperfect by the standards of ideal beauty and thus not truly Raphaellesque in the Royal Academy tradition:

Taken in detail, her features might be easily found fault with. Her eyes might be pronounced too large, her mouth too small, her nose not Grecian enough for some people’s tastes. But the general effect of these features, the shape of her head and face, and especially her habitual expression, reminded all beholders at once and irresistibly of that image of softness, purity, and feminine gentleness, which has been engraved on all civilized memories by the ‘Madonnas’ of Raphael.

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 50-51)⁸

By Pre-Raphaelite standards, Madonna is redeemed by her so-called faults. Her features are not completely Grecian or standardized, suggesting that she is an individual rather than a type. In “Pre-Raphaelitism,” it is the marriage of Raphael’s art to Apollo – to the classical – that is destructive. Madonna proves her virtue by painting from nature; she is a Raphael figure before the Stanza della Segnatura fall rather than afterwards. Blyth will foolishly place temptation in front of her, however, by trying to make her copy a classical bust of Venus.

Although the casual reader may simply believe that *Hide and Seek* praises Raphael and thus traditional Victorian artists, Collins is critical of the Royal Academy approach to art. By his subtle criticism, he avoids disapproval from supporters of Raphael such as his collaborator Charles Dickens, who

⁶ I quote from the Catherine Peters edition of *Hide and Seek*, which uses the revised 1861 text, but have checked all citations against the first edition of 1854.

⁷ Dolin and Dougan, 6-7, discuss the background to Collins’s decision to write the review, but do not consider the piece to be satirical.

⁸ In the Bentley three-volume edition of 1854, “engraved for ever on so many memories by the ‘Madonnas’ of Raphael.” (I XX).

wrote “Old Lamps for New Ones” in defence of Raphael’s reputation. More significantly, perhaps, Collins often employs the same amusing, double-edged language that is found in Victorian art reviews and essays, which are full of insider jokes and knowing ironies. Although art reviews from the period can appear pompous at first glance, the tone is often more playful than the reader might expect.⁹

Collins seems to link the positive aspects of Madonna’s beauty back to Early Renaissance artists rather than forward to the present-day Royal Academicians. The Pre-Raphaelites themselves liked much of Raphael’s art, particularly his early work, and objected only to the slavish copying of his later paintings.¹⁰ Ruskin also suggested that Raphael’s art before the Stanza della Segnatura was in the “ancient and stern mediæval manner” (162). Consequently, Collins does not undermine the anti-Raphael argument even if he is condoning the type of beauty that Raphael would have depicted in his youth. The admiration is, in any case, often expressed through the flawed judgement of characters that view Madonna. Blyth’s excitement when he beholds Madonna’s face for the first time reveals a confusion of images in his thoughts:

Mad and mysterious words, never heard before in Rubbleford, poured from his lips. “Devotional beauty,” “Early Italian art,” “Fra Angelico’s angels,” “Giotto and the cherubs,” “Enough to bring the divine Raphael himself down from heaven to paint her.”

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 60)

If Madonna’s beauty is comparable to the figures in the works of Giotto and Fra Angelico, she is a suitable inspiration for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood itself. The reference to “Early Italian art”, a phrase often used in the P.R.B.’s publication *The Germ*,¹¹ hints strongly at this. Collins may be suggesting that the young Raphael simply learnt to paint figures from the great artists before him, to the extent that the ignorant viewer sees Madonna as being Raphaellesque.

Yet Blyth embarks on a path of misleading silence and deception after he adopts Madonna, because he fears that telling the truth will lead to her being reclaimed by her unknown father. This suggests that Madonna’s influence can

⁹ In such writings, even the solemn Private View exhibitions at the Royal Academy, events reserved for dignitaries, can include broad humour. In “Old Lamps for New Ones,” Dickens includes a joke about the potential realism of ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ nudes and the Queen’s reaction: “the event of a skilful painter of the figure becoming a little more perverted in his taste, than certain skilful painters are just now, might place her Gracious Majesty in a very painful position, one of these fine Private View days” (12).

¹⁰ See William Michael Rossetti’s introduction to facsimiles of *The Germ*, 6.

¹¹ One essay by Frederic Stephens (under the pseudonym “John Seward”) was entitled “The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art.”

be negative when interpreted by the wrong people. If Raphael's early art eventually degenerated into a fallen state in the past, perhaps it will do so again.¹² Similarly, the tragic seduction of Mary Grice may be repeated if Madonna is corrupted by her affection for Zach. Believing that he is protecting Madonna by hiding the truth about her origins, Blyth casts her in harm's way by allowing her to become close to Zach. If Blyth had given his circle of friends a truthful account of his adoption of Madonna, Mr Thorpe could have identified his daughter years before her infatuation with her half-brother was allowed to develop. Lies, even lies by omission, hold hidden dangers.

Blyth's attempts to teach both Madonna and Zack to draw reveal that he is a well-meaning but inadequate instructor, of the type that Ruskin describes in the "Pre-Raphaelitism" lecture. Blyth does not allow Zack to draw from nature as he begins his studies; he must copy existing artworks that elevate the ideally beautiful. Ruskin says of the laborious act of copying drawings from the antique: "The dull child will slowly do your bidding, blacken his paper and rub it white again" (Ruskin, 165), just as Zack does in response to Blyth's command to "rub out what you have done" (Collins *Hide and Seek*, 149). In Madonna's case, copying a bust of Venus is something not "much to her taste" (52). Like Ruskin's promising student, who can draw in the "middle-age spirit" by perceiving the "country outside" (Ruskin, 164) through his own eyes, Madonna has preferred since her childhood to draw from nature, showing "ungovernable delight at the prospect of a sketching expedition with Mr Blyth in the Hampstead fields" (Collins *Hide and Seek*, 120). True to Pre-Raphaelite values, Madonna learns more from the fields than from Royal Academy methods of drawing.

Zack, who decides to become an artist only for financial reasons, is more easily persuaded to submit to the standard training. Poor Blyth exposes his own limits as an artist as he promises to train Zack:

"I'll teach you myself to draw from the antique. If someone can be found who has influence enough with your father to get him to let you go into the Royal Academy, you must be prepared beforehand with a drawing that's fit to show. Now you shall come here, if you promise to be a good boy, you shall come here, and learn the ABC of art, every evening if you like. We'll have a regular little academy. . . ."

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 130-1)

The infantilism of Zack in the course of his training forces him into the role of the "good boy" (130) who obeys his drawing master, becoming the dull, obedient child that Ruskin describes. To Blyth, art is learnt like the alphabet through a set programme of copying before moving on to life models, thus

¹² A similar threat hung over the Pre-Raphaelites themselves, particularly in 1854, since the Brotherhood had disbanded and the painting style of Millais was changing dramatically.

applying artificial ideals to the subject. Such training persuades the artist to see a living model as it “should” be and alter it in the work of art.¹³ This leads to Blyth making unintentionally humorous remarks, such as his remark that a circus performer’s legs are “out of drawing” (65) although she is a human figure, not a painting. Madonna is the true artist who is deaf and dumb but who has unimpaired vision, while Blyth and Zack are blinded by poor training.

As a sheltered young woman who learns to draw in her own family circle, Madonna is initially excluded from the company of other student artists. Yet this is beneficial to her progress, since she cannot be led astray by the foolishness of less talented students. Rossetti’s young artist narrator in the framing narrative of “Hand and Soul” is humiliated when others insist in copying a Raphael instead of appreciating the medieval picture that inspires him. Independence of spirit and vision are also vital in “Pre-Raphaelitism,” since the aspiring Pre-Raphaelite must ignore both his poor masters and the “dull” (Ruskin, 165) students who obey them. A woman whose social position means that she must learn from nature has the particular advantage of avoiding unhelpful influences on her work, and can create true art instead of soulless reproductions of classical busts. At first Madonna is in the enviable position of learning directly from the natural world. Although Blyth is a flawed teacher, Madonna is strong enough to maintain her artistic integrity. As her feelings for Zack grow, however, she works harder at her set assignments, because he professes a careless admiration for her work and “def[ies] the whole Royal Academy to equal it.” (Collins *Hide and Seek*, 151). She frames her “copy from Blyth’s bust of the Venus” (153) for him, perpetuating the deceit of his offhand flattery with deceitful art. The company of another student has been detrimental to her work.

In 1840 William Wordsworth wrote in the concluding lines of the sonnet “On a Portrait of I.F., Painted by Margaret Gillies”:

Where’er, preserved in this most true reflection,
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure affection,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must survive.

(Wordsworth, III xxviii)

Gillies, an artist who preceded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but whose work looks Pre-Raphaelite in retrospect, painted in a realistic style. She thus depicted subjects as they really were, rejecting the Royal Academy practice of improving on a subject’s features by, for instance, substituting a straight Greek nose for an upturned one. As Wordsworth points out, an affectionate viewer hopes for a good likeness in order to remember a departed loved one. A “true

¹³ Seeing and painting a subject as it should exist in a classical form, rather than as it is, is a key principle of Joshua Reynolds’s *Discourses*.

reflection” captures the soul of the subject in its humble truth to nature. Conversely, an idealized portrait may have no soul at all. This is also implied in “Hand and Soul”, in which a Raphael portrait is contrasted to Chiaro dell Erma’s portrait of his own soul. If the artist does not respect nature, and elevates an artificial standard of beauty in nature’s place, the resulting work of art will be empty and soulless. When Madonna gives in to Blyth’s training and frames the copy of the Venus, she compromises her integrity and denies the importance of truth in her artistic vision. She is a liar like Blyth, Zach and Mr Thorpe, because she has perpetuated the lie inherent in ideal beauty.

Collins certainly wanted his novel to be read by the common reader. He wrote to Edward Pigott in late June 1854, after the latter had reviewed *Hide and Seek*, and enthusiastically told him that “the public demand from what I can hear of the Libraries seems to be as brisk as possible on all hands” (Baker et al., eds, I 103). Yet for most readers, the references to Raphael in the novel will not seem connected to Blyth’s poor methods of teaching. But Royal Academy students learnt ideal beauty from copying antique statues (or from drawings or plaster busts of these statues, meaning that they were making copies of copies) and from studying the Raphael cartoons in Queen Victoria’s collection.¹⁴ Ruskin’s lecture jumps from the description of Raphael’s betrayal of Christ in the Vatican to an attack on Royal Academy teaching practices. Only those trained in the production of nineteenth century art would recognize the link between Blyth’s idolization of Raphael and his instruction to a student to copy a bust of Venus. The standard of ideal beauty, rather than drawing from the life without making alterations, is essentially the same in the eyes of Victorian artists. Those in Wilkie Collins’s circle, including his brother Charles and his close friend John Everett Millais, would be capable of spotting this link, but a more general readership is likely to be left in the dark.

With the knowledge that his possession of Madonna may have increased Blyth’s worship of the Raphaelesque, the reader has a clearer understanding of Madonna’s predicament. As a woman who bears some resemblance to a Raphael virgin, she inherits a contradictory legacy. She can blind the viewer to the virtues of the natural world, by embodying the dangerous and seductive qualities of ideal beauty. Her birth parents were beautiful but their lives were shaped by lies: by Thorpe’s false name of Arthur Carr, by Mary’s concealment of her pregnancy from her father, and by the hypocritical deceptions of Mary’s aunt, Joanna. Alternatively, because there are imperfections or individual characteristics in Madonna’s looks, she might guide the viewer back to the

¹⁴ The cartoons, now on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum, were kept in Hampton Court in the nineteenth century. Such key influences as Raphael and the Elgin marbles on Victorian artists are discussed widely in Boase, e.g. 278.

pure art of Giotto and Fra Angelico and bring a Pre-Raphaelite truth to the viewer. As it happens, she is unable to do this without her uncle Mat's help, since the combined influence of Zach and Blyth has misled her.

In *Hide and Seek*, Collins shows the first hints of the theme of horror in association with the Raphaelesque that he will develop more fully in later novels. Mat's reaction to his first view of Madonna at Blyth's exhibition, where she is displayed like the other artworks, is the clearest indication of this horror:

The first amazed look that he cast on her, slowly darkened, while his eyes rested on her face, into a fixed, heavy, vacant stare of superstitious awe. He never moved, he hardly seemed to breathe, until the head of a person before him accidentally intercepted his view.

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 250)

Mat sees Madonna less as a person than as a frightening copy of his sister's image that brings a message from beyond the grave:

The awful face of the dead woman, as she was in her youth (now fixed for ever in his memory by the living copy of it that his own eyes had beheld) seemed to be driving him on swiftly into unknown darkness, to bring him out into unexpected light at the end.

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 260-1)

The emphasis is on the terror of Madonna as a "living copy" of her Raphaelesque mother. In his 1853 lecture, Ruskin represents Raphael's art as a catastrophe, bringing "doom" (163) into the world that is perpetuated every time his mistakes are copied. Mat, however, will escape from this damaging influence. In "The Exhibition of the Royal Academy" review, Collins notes that as the P.R.B. artists cast off the misleading lessons inflicted by the Royal Academy, "they are emerging from the darkness to the true light" (625). Mat is going through the same process, although he is not yet aware how the light at the end of his journey will liberate him.¹⁵

The fact that Raphaelesque confusion is loose in the world at present is emphasized by the paintings that Blyth has on display in his studio during his own Private View for family members and patrons. He paints pictures of babies and kittens to support his family, but he creates one or two paintings of so-called High Art each year for the Royal Academy exhibition. These paintings are in the esteemed genre of historical painting, which means that Blyth is influenced by Raphael's later work and by Royal Academy tradition. Collins is particularly satirical when Blyth attempts to explain a painting he has

¹⁵ "Chiaro", the name of Rossetti's medieval artist in "Hand and Soul," means light. Traditional Royal Academy artists employed 'chiaroscuro,' or the contrasting light/dark technique in their compositions, while the Pre-Raphaelites were noted for flooding their compositions with light. Mat will also find his way to light without darkness.

completed of Columbus discovering America. Anything but a realistic depiction, Blyth's painting includes winged allegorical figures¹⁶ that cannot be interpreted by anyone but the artist himself. With unintentional irony, Blyth explains that the viewer will be able to understand one part of his painting:

Here we get to Reality, and to that sort of correctly-imitative art which is simple enough to explain itself.

(Collins *Hide and Seek*, 240)

The artwork is so ridiculously large and unwieldy that it falls off the wall and is caught by Mat. Mat, an actual sailor, points out the ship in the painting is a very poor one. He sees no reason to paint a scene allegorically when the allegory is too dense to be understood, and Collins himself clearly takes Mat's point of view. Although the sense of disorientation that Mat experiences while looking at the art mirrors his troubled mental state, the broadly satirical tone that Collins uses to describe the paintings themselves seems a little incongruous. There are several possibilities for disaster at this point in the plot of *Hide and Seek*. Mat could discover Mr Thorpe and kill him, reading a violent instruction from his sister in Madonna's face. History also seems to be repeating itself as Madonna falls in love with Zack, who has inherited his father's seductive looks, since the sister and brother may marry and pass their tainted beauty onto a new generation of doomed Raphael-esque children.

Mat is the bringer of truth in the novel, however, and avoids disaster with his ultimately righteous actions. His virtue is emphasized by his striking physical disfigurements. As the lovely Mary's brother, he may once have been handsome, but he returns to England with deep and discoloured facial scars and without a normal scalp. The black cap that he wears to cover his worst injuries, however, is oddly reminiscent of the fashionable berets worn by men in Raphael's portraits. Dante Gabriel Rossetti condemns such portraits in his story "Hand and Soul," in which the generically titled *Berrettino* causes students to lose their artistic vision as they copy a Raphael rather than think for themselves (33). While Raphael's sitters wore their headgear over flowing locks of hair, Mat's head has a stark appearance, for there is "nothing but bare flesh, encircled by a rim of black velvet" (Collins *Hide and Seek*, 182). One chapter title that refers to Mat in the revised 1861 edition, "The Man with the Black Skull-Cap," suggests a descriptive title for a portrait of an unidentified sitter. Mat seems to be the wreck of an ideally beautiful subject, but, like Oscar in *Poor Miss Finch* (1872), the mutilation of his features allows a truthful soul to emerge. He confronts a withered Mr Thorpe, who has lost his former deceptive beauty, and manages to forgive him. Zack and Madonna can never marry each other, but they show no interest in marrying anyone else. Their line may be at

¹⁶ The P.R.B. linked this type of painting to Raphael's late, mannerist work *The Transfiguration* (Hilton, 29).

an end, reflecting Collins's notion that it is time for Joshua's Raphaelesque descendants or copies to die out gently. At the end of the novel, Zack takes Mat as his role model, not Blyth, and the danger of a new generation of inadequate artists has also passed. Mat himself is not an artist, but perhaps no art at all is better than Raphaelesque deception.

Hide and Seek shows Collins using two different ways of criticizing the Raphaelesque. Satire, evident in the description of Blyth's paintings, is used again in *A Rogue's Life* (1857) to scoff at the art world in general. The Rogue is a caricaturist, a portrait painter and a forger in turn, and in none of these guises is he a truthful artist. Timothy Hilton includes a long quotation from *A Rogue's Life* in his study of *The Pre-Raphaelites* (55), since the novel includes a direct and unsubtle comment on contemporary fashions in art. The tinges of horror, however, anticipate the more dramatic and more successful plots of many other Collins novels. Collins has made a beginning in finding his recurring theme of evil that is brought into the world by the Raphaelesque. In *The Moonstone* (1868), for instance, Raphael's arabesques are painted on Rachel Verinder's bedroom door immediately before the theft of the diamond, as if that act of copying must bring disaster into the world. The association of the Raphaelesque with ghostly and supernatural messages, read by Mat in Madonna's physiognomy, is realized in *The Haunted Hotel* (1878) as a tormented spirit appears in a room painted with images from the Stanza della Segnatura.

Hide and Seek is a fascinating novel, destined for a wide readership and yet apparently written for a select number of artistically aware readers. Many of its apparently opaque moments make more sense in the light of Ruskin's "Pre-Raphaelitism": the significance of Blyth's poor teaching, the horror suggested by Madonna's face, the necessity that Mat should be disfigured and thus more truthful. The central danger in the novel is that Raphaelesque deceit will hide the truth forever, in a perpetual game of hide and seek. A kindly character like Blyth endeavours to idealize or gloss over the past, threatening a terrible future for Madonna and Zack, because he is already used to lying in his art. Collins's ending, which leaves both of his young characters unmarried, may seem to deny *Hide and Seek* its necessary closure. In fact, the conclusion that Madonna and Zack will not reproduce themselves means that Collins's plot is fully resolved. Once truth prevails, the deceit inherent in ideal beauty cannot be created once again. The decline of the Raphaelesque is the happiest possible ending for all concerned.

Works Cited

- Baker, William, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law, and Paul Lewis, eds. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*. 4 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005.
- Blake, William. *On Art and Artists*. 1808-9. Reprinted in *Selected Poems*, London: Penguin, 1996, 198-209.
- Boase, T.S.R. *English Art 1800-1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- [Collins, Wilkie.] "The Exhibition at the Royal Academy." *Bentley's Miscellany* 29:174 (June 1851) 617-27.
- Collins, Wilkie. *Hide and Seek*. 1854. Ed. Catherine Peters. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- [Dickens, Charles.] "Old Lamps for New Ones." *Household Words* 12 (15 June 1850) 12-14.
- Dolin, Tim and Lucy Dougan. "Fatal Newness: *Basil*, Art and the Origins Sensation Fiction." In *Reality's Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins*, ed. Maria Bachman and Don Richard Cox, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003, 1-33.
- Hilton, Timothy. *The Pre-Raphaelites*. 1970. London: Thames & Hudson, 1995.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. "Hand and Soul." *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature Poetry, Literature, and Art* 1 (January 1850) 23-33.
- Rossetti, William Michael. Introduction. *The Germ: The Literary Magazine of the Pre-Raphaelites*. 1899. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1979, 1-30.
- Ruskin, John. *Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelitism and Other Essays and Lectures on Art*, ed. Ernest Rhys. London: J.M. Dent, n.d.
- Seward, John [Frederic Stephens]. "The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art." *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature, and Art* 2 (February 1850) 58-64.
- Wood, Christopher. *The Pre-Raphaelites*. London: Phoenix, 1997.
- Wordsworth, William. *The Prose Works*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart. 3 vols. London: Moxon, 1876.

Collins and the Custody Novel: Parental Abduction and Family Business

Tamara S. Wagner

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

The Evil Genius, Wilkie Collins's late "mission novel" about changing divorce and custody legislation, opens appropriately enough in a court of law. One of the most detailed, and most satirical, trial scenes in Victorian fiction, it differs from most sensationalized accounts by placing emphasis on the jury's arbitrary rearrangement of the evidence, rather than on the defendant's experience of standing trial and facing the verdict. If this approach satirizes legal processes somewhat clumsily, it also serves to draw attention to the impossibility of passing judgement on the basis of incomplete or falsified evidence, or, more significantly still, on what are shown to be preconceived concepts of the proper as well as of the probable. Instead of focusing directly on adultery, divorce, or even child custody – an increasingly popular ingredient of Victorian sensation fiction – the novel proceeds to criticize both legal and social systems for seeking to police domestic arrangements. In this, it seeks to illuminate particularly, and indeed provocatively, the rights and needs of variously misjudged fathers. They are shown to be on trial precisely in order to indict the changes in the legal reconfiguration of paternity that has ironically put them into this compromising position in the first place. That the first trial scene has little to do directly with custody law, but instead investigates a case of insurance fraud, not merely substantiates the accusation of the judicial system and its fraudulent abuses, but further testifies to the wide-ranging repercussions of the law's deeply resented interference in domestic affairs. In addition, it sets in motion a chain of interlocked cases of deception that ultimately bring yet another father to court. This time the law deprives a man of his family in a more clear-cut fashion by taking away neither his liberty nor his life, but his custody rights over his daughter. Yet in each case, the legally or morally "convicted" father is effectively taken in custody by Victorian ideologies of domesticity and, with a peculiarly poignant irony, through the implementation of newly created concepts of domestic fatherhood. The custody dispute in which Collins's last and most provocative "custody novel" culminates, thus ensures that there is much more on trial than custody legislation alone.

Published in 1886, the year that saw the Guardianship of Infants Act, *The Evil Genius* significantly started out as Collins's critical commentary on what he saw as the problematic marginalization of fathers by a new privileging of maternity, although the novel's representation of paternity is fascinatingly disturbed by a much more complex ambiguity. The introduction of a father convicted by an incompetent and careless jury in the opening chapters functions as an important emblem of judgmental late-Victorian society and its judicial system, while his death of heart-failure not only foreshadows, but, through an array of coincidences, leads to another father's condemnation for domestic offences. A proliferation of false clues that mimics the trial, however, at the same time propels a new conceptualization of fatherhood that wrenches it from patrimony, while its linkage to various ways of being taken in custody puts a new spin on what can be termed Victorian "custody fiction."

Usually overlooked as a perfunctory prologue or frame-story that primarily serves as an excuse for the adulterous father of the main plot, "Before the Story," as the first section is entitled, is thus of particular importance as it targets the legal system as a whole, not just individual lawyers or jurymen. It mocks society as a collection of clueless individuals, bound together by constricting conventions. Captain Westerfield, recently returned from sea, stands accused of having deliberately helped to wreck his ship in order to claim insurance money and, further, of having made away with the cargo of valuable diamonds. Suspected of "trying to influence the verdict" (Collins *The Evil Genius*, 49), the foreman lapses into silence, leaving the jurymen to muddle through a confused, and glaringly incomplete, recollection of facts to the best of their deplorably limited abilities. Standing in for an intriguingly unreliable narrator, he then invites the members of the jury (and, by extension, the readers) to judge for themselves. Yet the very opening sentence spells out a warning against the reliability of such a management of the case: "The gentlemen of the jury *retired* to consider their verdict" (45, emphasis added). Eliding the presentation of the evidence, the prologue shows the jury in somewhat sleepy retirement, while the accused lies dying of a weak heart. It is an ominous anticipation of society's judgmental treatment later in the novel of both an adulterous father and his socially ostracized wife and child. With its investment in the process of working through conflicting evidence, *The Evil Genius* instead emphasizes extenuating circumstances that the jury typically fails to take into account. While legal arrangements (or their circumvention) structure the plot, they are ultimately dispelled in a somewhat fortuitous resolution that aptly repeats the critique of "the rules of society": "Is there something wrong in human nature? Or something wrong in human laws?" (194).

In Victorian "custody fiction," it is indeed invariably "[t]he law's mysterious authority," as it is described in Anthony Trollope's own anti-sensational custody novel *He Knew He Was Right* (441), written at the end of what came to

be known as “the sensational sixties,” that really is on trial. Collins’s late addition to this intriguing subgenre may ultimately locate the “evil genius” within the family itself, yet, in combination with the central exposure of the law’s interference in the domestic sphere, this creates a sensational spectacle of both family and society. The novel reworks earlier sensational narratives that capitalize on adultery or divorce as common plot-devices to explore instead the law’s power to affect domestic change and, conversely, the influence of ideologies of domesticity on legislation. As a result, the revision of the most easily sensationalized plots also works out a generic shift in popular fiction. Collins’s most self-conscious custody novel underscores the significance of changing family law to Victorian literature and culture and, simultaneously, maps out the reworking of both sensationalism and specific social “missions” in his later works in general.

A subgenre that was never conceived or advertized as such at the time, but which can be identified by more than just its common theme, the Victorian “custody novel,” as it developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century had its roots in nineteenth-century discourses on divorce, as well as in the mid-century novel’s dissection of the increasingly nuclear family. In both, it significantly overlapped with the sensation novel as the central cultural product of the Victorian craze for sensation. As Karen Chase and Michael Levenson have argued, as “a new age of divorce loomed,” there was a call for new narrative conventions: “Marriage had its elaborate tropology, but divorce erupted into imaginative life without coherent metaphors” (187). This partly explains the popularity of the “bigamy novel,” although it also necessarily raises the question of why divorce yielded bigamy novels and not divorce novels. Chase and Levenson suggest that the answer rests in bigamy’s function as a “‘quiet’ alternative to the divorce pandemonium” (203). The custody novel provides an alternative that more effectively negotiates the ruptures in the Victorian family precisely because its break-up is sanctioned, even ordered, by the law. If bigamy can easily be condemned as illegal as well as immoral, the split-up of families in custody novels is arranged by the legal system itself.

It is therefore particularly important to note that the plotting of divorce and custody in the Victorian novel was by no means limited to sensation fiction. It was not even necessarily concerned with women’s rights. Plot-lines structured on custody disputes specifically fostered an interest in psychological realism even while, or perhaps especially because, they employed some of the sensation novel’s preferred themes. Perhaps nothing testifies to this more forcefully than Trollope’s self-conscious revision of one of the most easily sensationalized plot-devices of the genre’s “domestic Gothic”: a parental abduction that is legal, yet evinces the father’s growing insanity. By the late-1860s, custody issues and child abduction had indeed become such recognizable sensation elements that Trollope and Margaret Oliphant, the genre’s most dedi-

cated critics, both drew on them almost as a matter of course in their own ventures into sensation. If they at once widened and differently narrowed down the interests of custody fiction, their experimentation with its confines intriguingly prepared the way for Collins's later revision of both the sensational thrust and the psychology underpinning of parental abduction plots. In order to situate *The Evil Genius* in relation to the general vogue for custody fiction as a sub-genre of the sensation novel, but which eventually cut across contested generic demarcations, I shall also explore how a range of Victorian novels variously used child abduction as a plot-device to arrest its sensationalization: Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right*, Oliphant's *Salem Chapel*, Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and even Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*, as well as *The Fallen Leaves* and *Heart and Science* by Collins himself.

Taking Sensation in Custody: Re-Plotting Abduction

He Knew He Was Right may set out to invert the sensation novel's interest in carefully concealed mysteries, but its own ponderous unfolding of progressive madness ends up paying tribute to the genre's narrative potentials. In re-addressing both the "woman question" and the need to take the insane in custody (rather than letting them assume custody rights), it rearranges two of the genre's most commonly chosen themes. In a very different vein, Oliphant's *Salem Chapel* (1863), a particularly self-conscious venture into sensation fiction, depicts a melodramatic murderess and a frivolous ex-husband against a provincial backdrop. This was originally erected for her domestic series, the *Chronicles of Carlingford*, of which *Salem Chapel* was to be the final instalment. As a result, the abduction plot sits rather oddly within a novel that is primarily about a young dissenting minister's struggles to compose uplifting sermons, with sometimes unexpected results. The father, in fact, abducts his imbecile daughter merely out of spite, driving his former wife to murder. That Oliphant chose parental abduction when reluctantly turning to sensation fiction indeed says more about the plot-device's popularity, its unflinching attraction *as* a sensational *topos*, than about its rather abrupt intrusion into provincial Salem. By contrast, Trollope's novel brings together the two interrelated problems of reconciling popular sensation with domestic fiction and of successfully negotiating literary aspiration and popular demand. With its pointed exposé of self-righteousness in the title, *He Knew He Was Right* underscores the constrictions created by the law, the press, and the social conventions governing upper-class society. A novel of the late 1860s that operates at the margins of the sensation genre, but at the same time questions its devices, it forms a particularly striking counterpoint to Collins's fictionalizations of divorce and custody laws. Instead of expanding on the largely off-stage abduction, it illuminates the intricacies of the legal system. It is exactly such intricacies that often remain obscured in more sensational representations.

But if Collins's early fictional uses of divorce and custody disputes are without doubt unselfconsciously sensational, there is a significant shift in his reassessment of the process of judging. Written nearly two decades after the sensation novel's heyday, *The Evil Genius* is less concerned with new infant custody laws – although they serve as a decisive catalyst – than with social typecasting of “failing” fathers and, on another level, of the father's dwindling significance in a progressively domestic culture. In this case, however, it is a marginalization that is sanctioned by new laws. While Collins's earlier novels may often have dwelt on longstanding juridical oversights or contradictions, that a recent revision of the legal system, could generate *more* injustice added quite a new spin on Collins's critique of the Victorian legal system.

In concentrating on one of Collins's most blatant “mission novels,” his “novels-with-a-purpose,” as Lyn Pykett calls them (20), I seek to set in the foreground the ways in which *The Evil Genius* redirects both popular sensation plots and topical issues in order to articulate this twofold interest in paternity. Most strikingly perhaps, the novel rejects the sensation trope of paternal persecution sanctioned by patriarchal laws and instead deploys a *maternal* abduction that flies in the face of the law. But if the mother's initially illegal claiming of the child serves to cement the break-up of the family, new custody laws are shown to expedite the process. It is intriguing to notice to what extent the father's adultery is represented as understandable, indeed almost inevitable in the circumstances, while the maternal abduction it leads to is at once sensationalized and frowned upon. The father's emotional needs as well as rights indeed feature so prominently as to diminish sympathy for the betrayed wife. While this makes the novel's take on parental abduction peculiarly provocative as well as powerful in its rearrangement of plot-twists, it also firmly places the blame on the law itself. As the family lawyer (and a fond father at that) cogently puts it, when he “reluctantly reminded [Mrs Linley] that the father had a right” to his child: “No person – not even the mother – can take the child out of the father's custody [...] unless it happens that the law has deprived him of his privilege” (189). The mother colludes with what is presented as an unjust, even inhumane, deprivation, but without the law's interference in the Linleys' family affairs, it is suggested, reconciliation could be affected much more easily.

The governess may penetrate and disrupt the triangular unity of father, mother, and child, as does the mother-in-law (the evil genius of the title), but the governess's childlike dependency has been brought about by the break-up of her own family, which has similarly been arranged by court proceedings. It is therefore doubly symptomatic that her own father is falsely convicted of an insurance scam. In a pointed alignment with the implementation of custody laws, the father's loss of the rights to his child, little Kitty, in the main plot is associated with a swindle. Thus, as the unfortunately desirable governess, Captain Westerfield's daughter Sydney is emphatically declared to be the vic-

tim of the law's interference in two families. Sydney Westerfield is first introduced as an unwanted child who becomes the childlike governess of a girl that is turned into a contested commodity through a custody dispute. Little Kitty's father, Mr Linley, picks up a new governess at a cheap school simply because he feels an ambiguous interest – at once pseudo-paternal and romantic – in an exploited teacher. He employs her at once, without so much as asking for references, carrying her off like a chattel, or indeed like a prisoner or a child, someone taken into custody, or one over whom he has custody rights. This may seem a praiseworthy act of impulsive charity, but as Sydney herself acquires desirability as childlike lover, it leads in turn to the child's commodification as a possession.

In a poignant rewriting of various popular narrative structures, including the governess novel and the sensational divorce novel, Sydney is deprived of agency and responsibility by social structures which also take the shape of – and this becomes important to the reinvestigation of maternity and paternity – the monstrous mother who abandons her and the miserly aunt who exploits her. In the words of her new employer's shrewd, yet vicious, mother-in-law: “remember what a life she has led, [...] the good qualities of that unfortunate young person can *not* have always resisted the horrid temptations and contaminations about her” (Collins *The Evil Genius*, 100). The offspring of an aristocrat's marriage to a former barmaid, Sydney is raised as a pupil-teacher by her aunt. Like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* before her, she advertises in the newspapers, becomes a governess, and falls in love with her pupil's father. But, as Jane certainly would not have, she succumbs to adulterous desire. To reassess Sydney's position in the plot, as in cultural fictions of adultery, the novel further filters her trials through a rewriting of the governess-novel and, more pointedly still, of the age's most memorable narrative of marital incompatibility: Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848).

Anne Brontë's novel is significantly the first and, until the publication of *The Evil Genius* nearly forty years later, probably the only novel to represent maternal abduction. As the heroine struggles against her husband's right to their son, however, she is not merely constrained by domestic confines, but reinforces them through a promotion of bourgeois ideals of maternal rights that ultimately take the novel's proto-feminist agenda firmly in custody. As Laura Berry has powerfully argued (37-9), through the double meaning of the term custody, *Wildfell Hall* aligns any form of domestic guardianship, whether paternal or maternal, legal or illegal, with incarceration. As the proto-Victorian woman embodies this introduction of domesticity in the novel's Regency setting, her ultimate possession of the heir (the future Victorian gentleman) arrests the Regency dandy's homosociality to appropriate him for the bourgeois Victorian home. The heroine's escape hence engenders a new structure of domestic confinement.

The Evil Genius reworks this plot-line precisely in order to question the Victorian ideologies of domesticity – and specifically of maternity – that the changing infant custody laws of the nineteenth century endorsed. *Wildfell Hall* functions as a retrospective reassessment of the seminal Infant Custody Act of 1839 (Berry, 106). Passed after Caroline Norton’s much discussed divorce and fight to gain access to her children, a fight that involved massive campaigning, the new custody bill at once built on and assisted in the promotion of a new maternal ideal. It was the first time that divorced women, provided they had not been proved guilty of adultery, were given the right to apply for the custody of children, if under seven years of age. Although different laws applied in other parts of Britain, it was not until the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 that women in England could petition for divorce. But as Lawrence Stone has pointed out, the Married Women’s Property Acts of 1870, 1874, and 1882 had a much more socially and culturally important impact than the Divorce Act, which made divorce a commodity only purchasable by the upper middle classes (390). Indeed, in contrast to a number of sensational custody novels of the 1860s and 1870s, money certainly is not the issue for the wealthy, landowning Linley family of Collins’s “mission novel.” What is much more crucial to the Linleys’ dilemma is that changes in legislation over the course of the nineteenth century paved the way for a profound shift in attitudes to divorce (Stone, 371-82), which the Guardianship of Infants Act of 1886 reflected as well as helped to promote. The Act not only appointed a mother guardian upon the father’s death, but further suggested that, as Stone pointedly puts it, by the late-Victorian age “it had become morally accepted that it was only right to grant custody of young children to their mother” (390). It is this assumption that Wilkie Collins took issue with and proceeded to explore within a reworking of popular, sensation-alized plots.

It is therefore peculiarly significant that, for the court scene that decides custody over Kitty Linley, the 1886 Guardianship of Infants Act is not particularly relevant, although its implications are central to the novel’s promotion of a “family father.” Presumably set before the act was passed, the novel never discloses a specific timeframe; even letters are undated, an omission that is rare indeed in Collins’s fiction. Instead, what makes divorce possible for the wife is a cleverly manipulated discrepancy between Scottish and English marriage laws. In Scotland, unlike in England, a wife could petition for divorce on the grounds of the husband’s adultery alone without its being compounded by cruelty, bigamy, or incest. This explains why the novel is partly set in Scotland, just as Scottish settings had facilitated similar legal twists in *Man and Wife* (1870), Collins’s first novel with a declared “mission,” or in the tellingly titled *The Law and the Lady* of 1875 (Law, 11). *The Evil Genius* is similarly interested in exposing the ways in which laws can be manipulated, and how even sympathetically presented lawyers, however ashamed they might be of living by the law

(see Collins *The Evil Genius*, 187), make much of legal loopholes. When, after her husband has deserted her to form an adulterous relationship with the governess, Mrs Linley pays for a wily lawyer to maintain possession of her daughter, this tends to leach away sympathy from the betrayed wife: "... there is a law, after all, that will protect me in the possession of my little girl. I don't care what it costs; I want that law." (189). By capitalizing on its incongruities, the future divorcee beats the law with its own weapons. After staging an illegal child abduction under the very noses of the father's professional spies, she cunningly circumvents custody rights by using a Scottish court to grant a divorce on the grounds of adultery, which duly deprives the father of his "privilege": "His lordship then decreed the Divorce in the customary form, giving the custody of the child to the mother," yet not without first condemning the wife as "an inconsiderate woman, culpably indiscreet and, I had almost added, culpably indelicate" (214-5). However unfair this judgement, it reflects the social ostracism which Mrs Linley and her daughter face. It is, moreover, underscored by the legal manoeuvring that has empowered Mrs Linley in the first place.

So if *The Evil Genius* was sparked off by imminent changes in the legal construction of infant custody, in the same way in which most of Collins's "mission novels" were concerned with a topical issue, even if their plots had a tendency to get the upper hand,¹ it was also particularly ambiguous about the ideologies of domesticity that underpinned them. So far from functioning as a shelter, as Ruskin so hopefully termed it in a much-cited passage in *Sesame and Lilies*, "from all terror, doubt, and division" (122), the family is not merely vulnerable to social constrictions, to incursions of the law into the privacy of domestic space, and to various business ventures (including fraudulent speculations), but creates business for the family lawyer. Domestic Gothic feeds on a plenitude of familial divisions, as studies of the sensation novel have amply argued (Nayder, 72; Taylor, *passim*). In a more recent study, Karen Chase and Michael Levenson speak of the "antifamily of popular sensation" (7). Its revision in a late "mission novel" that takes up an easily sensationalized *topos* as a fictional engagement with legal discourses renegotiates both familiar plot-lines and new cultural concepts of domesticity and paternity.

¹ Compare Wiesenthal on *Heart and Science*: Collins's novel about vivisection, it also develops new theories of hysteria as well as reworks inheritance-plots, a love-story, and, as we shall see, conceptualizations of fatherhood. Similarly, *Man and Wife* deals with issues other than marriage laws and "muscular Christianity;" *The Two Destinies* not only about mesmerism; *The Legacy of Cain* about more than phrenology.

Why they knew he was wrong: the child abductor as villain and victim

The Evil Genius rewrites the abduction plot of Brontë's *Wildfell Hall* by twisting its negotiation of marital conflict into what may at first sight seem a conservative slanting of controversial issues. Despite its ambiguities, it does so by developing interest in a new ideal of fatherhood that divorces paternity from issues of patrimony. As John Tosh has shown, in mid-Victorian Britain, the home became "a man's place" in a markedly new way: not as "his possession or fiefdom, but also as the place where his deepest needs were met" (1), and fatherhood was an integral part of man's domestication. However, if the new idea of the father was entirely an outgrowth of middle-class domestic ideals, the privileging of maternity had profited even more from the same idealization of the family. Wilkie Collins powerfully represented this as at best a one-sided promotion of parenthood. In that the possession of the child is shown to become reduced to a personal issue, the bone of contention in a fight over possession, *The Evil Genius* exposes the fraudulent premise of any exclusive emphasis on the mother's sentimental investment in her children.

In this, the novel may partly prefigure the use of emotional blackmail in what is perhaps the most memorable literary work on custody, Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897): James's novel tests domestic arrangements that are only suggested, or threatened, in earlier fiction (*He Knew He Was Right* and *The Evil Genius* among them). The brilliant irony brought out by Maisie's central consciousness is, however, intriguingly anticipated by Kitty's naïve but probing questions about her father, about her own suddenly fatherless position, and as we shall see, also about her disconcertingly aggressive desire for father surrogates. But as a bridge between the wife's flight in *Wildfell Hall* and the ironic diffusion of responsibility in *What Maisie Knew*, Collins's novel most compellingly revises the vilification of the abducting father in earlier custody novels such as *Salem Chapel* and *He Knew He Was Right*. In both novels, parental abduction is the last resource of a dangerous man driven to desperation and even insanity.

In *The Evil Genius*, maternal abduction creatively complicates a somewhat overused plot-device. In a cleverly conducted kidnapping, the child is rowed across a lake in a thick fog, stripped "in an empty yard – no idlers about in that bad weather" – and clad in "[a] boy's ready-made suit – not at all a bad fit for Kitty!" (208). This successfully throws the pursuing spies off the scent. If this is fascinating as a major deviation from the dominant device of paternal abduction (of male heirs by male villains), it is also a detective plot in reverse. The novel thus partially rejects sensational plot-lines, but without necessarily circumventing sensationalism completely. A brief comparison with Trollope's self-consciously anti-sensational take on the Victorian custody novel therefore illuminates best Collins's reworking of parental custody as a plot-device. What is an excruciatingly painful process in the most psychologically probing pas-

sages of *He Knew He Was Right* remains unexplored in *The Evil Genius*. Yet the latter nonetheless profits significantly from the reworking of a theme that had, by the late 1860s, already come to be regarded as a straightforwardly sensational plot-line. In Collins's late, if not belated, reworking, it is freely discussed that Mrs Linley is "to be reckoned up [. . . that is,] detective English for being watched" (188). Yet there is none of the self-disgust that slowly drives the desperately jealous husband mad in Trollope's novel.

In contrast to the majority of detectives in sensation fiction, professional and amateur alike, the ex-policeman employed by increasingly unstable Mr Trevelyan to spy on his wife has "in the special spirit of his trade [...] taught himself to believe that all around him were things secret and hidden [...]. He lived by the crookedness of people." (Trollope, 243). In the first "days of his madness," Trevelyan takes "Mr Bozzle into his pay," and it is then only right that he feels "a crushing feeling of ignominy, shame, moral dirt, and utter degradation" (230). Bozzle's sensationalized reading of society and the law provides the sordid narrative Trevelyan needs to justify his jealousy, a possessiveness that evolves into a monomaniacal obsession. As he resorts to child abduction to get his son back, there is no doubt about the authorial condemnation of his action, despite its legality which is appropriately articulated by the despicable Bozzle: "'The paternal parent has a right to his infants [sic], no doubt.' That was Bozzle's law." (497). Yet, neither of them qualifies as a sensational villain: if Bozzle is too transparent (too comically vulgar), Trevelyan is a case-study in the indeterminacy of sanity. A domestic man "to whom his child was very dear [and] one too to whom the ordinary comforts of domestic life were attractive and necessary," he harps much upon family values: "My whole happiness was in my home. [...] My child and wife were everything to me." (161, 235-36). His wife might be reckoning up "her budget of grievance" (238), but so is he, and as far as their expressions of possessiveness go, blame and sympathy are carefully measured out. As Trollope's most sympathetic treatment of "the foolish workings of a weak man's mind [that] ruin the prospects of a woman's life" (505), his custody novel presents a marked contrast to the focus on the father's wrongs in Collins's later work – a contrast that significantly questions simplified polarizations of moral judgements both in sensation fiction and in anti-sensational novels by Trollope or Oliphant.²

Some of the most sensational abduction plots – including a newborn's almost perfunctorily evoked kidnapping in the frame-story of Wilkie Collins's 1879 sensation novel *The Fallen Leaves* – are less concerned with legal or moral alignments than with melodramatic effects. Here, the abductor's vilification,

² *He Knew He Was Right* has been described as "a powerful commentary on the Custody of Infants Act" and, like *Wildfell Hall*, can be linked to Caroline Norton's campaigns that helped to bring about the act (Markwick, 4, 12).

moreover, is often tied up more generally with the commodification of the child, whose financial value to the father, rather than emotional worth to the mother, is at stake. In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Black Band* (1862), for example, the villain, a foreign colonel and the mastermind of a secret society, has his newborn snatched from the cradle to strengthen his hold on his wife's inheritance, which is his ticket to the title and estate of an Englishman. As he admits freely to his wife: "I am making arrangements for myself assuming your ancient name, as successor, in some measure, to your father's property" (Braddon, 221). (Why he chooses to abduct and hide the child rather than have him killed remains obscure, considering that he has had a hand in a number of murders.) The baby-farmer with whom the "baby heir" (290) is left is told neither to "speculate on his rank nor his future; from the hour in which I place him in your arms his rank is your rank, his fortune yours" (287). In a strikingly similar way, Collins's *The Fallen Leaves* shows a father abducting and then abandoning his daughter for financial gain. Perpetrated by an ambitious porter, the abduction is a financial venture, premised on emotional blackmail and acted out through a bargain with a cheap baby-farmer. The porter succeeds in carrying it out by ensuring the interest of his employer's daughter: "Yes! he, the low-lived vagabond who puts up the shop-shutters, he looks forward to being taken into partnership, and succeeding you [his employer] when you die! [...] His one chance is to set your temper in a flame, to provoke the scandal of a discovery" (Collins *The Fallen Leaves*, 14). This "low-lived" dependent speculates on the emotional dependencies that can be used to disrupt a family business. When his first speculation – to marry the impregnated daughter of the house and thus to become her father's partner – fails, he "calculated on [the] disgraceful circumstance" of the child's birth as well as on the young mother's desolation, and "deliberately abandoned his child, as a likely cause of hindrance and scandal in the way of his prosperous career" (215, emphasis added). He breaks into the house to take the momentarily unsupervised infant, with one stroke removing the illegitimate offspring as a future hindrance to his advancement and offering himself as the bereaved mother's consolation, without, of course, ever revealing his role in the kidnapping. Appropriately, at the end of the novel, like "his other rotten speculations" (261), this riddance fails. His wife's suicide, his daughter's reappearance as "Simple Sally," and his bankruptcy coincide. Most significantly, *The Fallen Leaves* bears witness to the consequences of the abduction. The victims of typical fictional abduction plots remain children, but Simple Sally emerges as a prostitute, albeit a childlike one.

Collins's subsequent use of the *topos* is increasingly concerned with this interest in long-term social and moral effects. *Heart and Science* (1883), Collins's next novel that touches upon financial speculations concerning children, by contrast, sets the father's emotional investment in his daughters against an heiress's victimization by her scheming aunt. There the much-abused, indeed

emasculated and childish, father walks out with his two little daughters in tow. With the help of a shy, blushing lawyer, “a human anomaly” (Collins *Heart and Science*, 70), he engineers the rescue of his own children and that of his wife’s dependent niece: “they innocently achieved between them the creation of one resolute man” (262). Here the lawyer still assures the “[a]mazed and distressed” father that he stands “on firm ground” (265) as far as custody rights are concerned. But there is no such comfort in *The Evil Genius*. In other words, as Collins continues to explore the theme of child custody, the laws become less reliable, the issues of fatherhood more pressing, and the villains more difficult to pin down.

If *The Fallen Leaves* and *Heart and Science* still evince an interest in inheritance, it is important to note that the children at stake are all girls. This is in itself a rewriting of the hitherto predominantly male abduction plot. Most children in Victorian novels are the victims of kidnappers because they are heirs to disputed fortunes. Their financial legacies guarantee that they have value. This accounts for the disappearance of a newborn in Braddon’s *The Black Band*, as we have seen, and also in her more domestic sensation novel *John Marchmont’s Legacy* (1863), as also for a baby’s quick concealment in Ellen Wood’s sensation novel *Lord Oakburn’s Daughters* (1864). Even in *Salem Chapel* it is important to the plot that the imbecile daughter is an heiress. In contrast, nothing is said about Kitty’s expectations in *The Evil Genius*,³ where the inheritance plot is consigned to the margins. Indeed, the inheritance theme is reworked in the subplot as a striking counterpoint to the main plot’s exclusive interest in the purely domestic reconfiguration of parenthood. Sydney’s mother and aunt are fixated by children’s pecuniary value: brutish Mrs Westerfield favours her son, who might have succeeded to the estate of Lord Le Basque – which is why she married the lord’s younger brother in the first place – and resents her first child’s being a girl and the father’s favourite. This monstrous mother’s “habitual neglect of her eldest child” culminates in the child’s desertion (Collins *The Evil Genius*, 59), which, as I have emphasized, sets in motion the adultery and custody narratives that propel the main plot. What is significant to note here, however, is that Sydney’s mother keeps her son, taking him with her when she emigrates to the United States, although she abandons her daughter as having no value to her. The girl is left with her aunt, who significantly makes a living out

³ By contrast, in Collins’s seminal sensation novel *The Woman in White* (1860), the value of the swapped women, both childlike and rendered mentally disturbed by their experience, is primarily pecuniary in the plotters’ plans. Testifying to the prevailing and increasingly self-reflexive interest in the *topos*, the opening chapters of the first series of Wood’s *Johnny Ludlow* (1868) revolve around child abduction, while “Tod’s Repentance” in the third series (1885) has an ironical twist: a boy goes missing, a never-do-well relative is suspected, but the child has really only been accidentally locked in a barn.

of children (67). Exploited as an unpaid pupil-teacher, Sydney is in a particularly vulnerable position, of which her future employer can easily take advantage by offering her escape from her aunt, a position in his family, and himself as an ambiguous paternal figure. In the mother's charge, however, the boy witnesses a fatal scuffle between his mother and a stepfather, simply denominated as "The Brute" (63), and is subsequently lost in the wilds of the American West. Not only does his inheritance never materialize, but he soon vanishes from the narrative.

But as the Linleys' welcoming, emphatically casual, family is offered as an escape, the governess's acceptance as part of the family quickly becomes a mockery of Mr Linley's pseudo-incestuous interest in a young woman he tries to identify with his daughter, ironically in order to channel his sexual desires into paternal feelings. In addition, his wife may be the most deserving, though at first almost impossibly idealized, mother-figure in the novel, but she comes together with a mother-in-law who has surprising affinities with Mrs Westerfield, despite their class differences. Both glory in the manipulation of laws and trials. As such, they double as evil geniuses that allow the effects of such scheming easily to be exorcized at the end of the novel. Thus, both the unnatural mother who abandons her daughter and the overprotective mother-in-law who enjoys scheming against her son-in-law on behalf of her daughter and granddaughter, function as counterpoints to the desirable parents: Kitty's mother and father. In addition, as the main plot's evil genius, the mother-in-law must take the blame for prompting the mother to take legal action as well as for instigating the illegal abduction, in the process facilitating the somewhat improbable reunion of Kitty's parents. If the mother is temporarily condemned for agreeing to the child abduction, her own mother's greater culpability ironically helps to redeem her.

Maternal Abduction: The Mother-in-law and "Poor Lost Papa!"

As the main and subplots of *The Evil Genius* are welded together by two trials, they metonymically bring out a central issue. In a proliferation of legal puns, the protagonists undergo trials or take things on trial. The governess "offers her services on trial" (82), characters are judged according to their "endurance under trial" (163), especially when faced with "a trial to [their] self-control" (159), and remembrance of their once happy marriage "is the terrible trial" to the divorced parents (198). "Before the Story" is subtitled "Miss Westerfield's Education," of which the first part is "The Trial." The novel ends with the child "appeal[ing] from the Law of Divorce to the Law of Nature," taking "it for granted that her father and mother should live together, *because* they are her father and mother" (348), as the sentimental, paternal, lawyer sagely puts it. Father and mother are forced back together. Even more incongruously perhaps, the final domestic scene unites Sydney with her dead father's

friend: it is “as pretty a domestic scene as a man could wish to look at. The arrival of Kitty made the picture complete” (348). If this celebration of the father’s return disturbingly reads like displaced incest, in that the pairing of a father and a father-surrogate is followed by the latter’s sexual interest in his “adopted” daughter, it puts the family on trial only the more effectively.

The sensation novel’s domestic Gothic of course always tends to underscore the troubled family’s usefulness for fiction, but when custody fiction is turned into a mission novel in *The Evil Genius*, the novel additionally insists on the unreliability of any judgement on its (re)arrangement. The instability of personal memory and opinion (and hence testimony) permeates Collins’s re-creation of court proceedings, yet it becomes nowhere so pertinent and personally involved as in the parents’ tug-of-war. A mother-in-law who continuously harps upon “maternal interest” (154), or indulges in an ironically presented “outburst of maternal love” (304), aptly acts as the evil genius in a novel that blames the law for failing to recognize natural, rather than legally sanctioned, relationships. In the subplot, the father’s murder is seemingly effected by the law, but in reality perpetrated by his heir’s manipulating mother. Mrs Westerfield has evidence of her husband’s innocence in her hands, but she prefers to retain it to take financial advantage of her knowledge: the letter that proves his innocence also contains ciphered instructions leading to the stolen diamonds. She literally trades her husband’s life for money. Even more deviously, the mother-in-law of the main plot declares Kitty’s father dead to “widow” Mrs Linley and to “orphan” Kitty: “If the man who was once your husband isn’t as good as dead to you, I should like to know what your Divorce means!” (242). Hence, Sydney’s father dies of heart failure while his wife profits from the jury’s carelessness, while Kitty loses her father through a “shameful falsehood” (339) which (at least in the mother-in-law’s interpretation) is legally sanctioned: “[t]he cruel falsehood which had checked poor Kitty’s natural inquiries [and] raised an insuperable obstacle to a meeting between father and child” (273). His resurrection brilliantly exhibits fatherhood as lachrymose spectacle:

She put her hands on his shoulder and lifted her face to him. In the instant when he kissed her, the child knew him. Her heart beat suddenly with an overpowering delight; she started back from his embrace. “That’s how papa used to kiss me!” she cried. “Oh! You *are* papa! Not drowned! not drowned!” She flung her arms round his neck, and held him as if she would never let him go again. “Dear papa! Poor lost papa!” His tears fell on her face; he sobbed over her.

(Collins *The Evil Genius*, 343)

This arraigns the law as well as the mother-in-law for depriving a child of her father, but poor lost papa’s recognizable kiss disturbingly undercuts the reunion. The “dead” father resurfaces after having been falsely shipwrecked by the mother-in-law “as the shortest way of answering inconvenient questions”

(269). In closure of the frame-story, the dead father's friend, Captain Bennydeck, emerges just as fortuitously to assert that Westerfield is innocent. The neatly paralleled reunion scenes suggest that, like Kitty's new doll, daughters long for fathers as well as mothers: "Kitty's arms opened and embraced her gift with a scream of ecstasy. That fervent pressure found its way to the right spring. The doll squeaked: 'Mamma!' – and creaked – and cried again – and said: 'Papa!'" (139). In "Before the Story," the recently orphaned Sydney similarly plays piteously with her ragged dolls, and she is "obliged to be papa and mama to them, both in one" (60). More ominously, the first time Linley encounters Sydney, he thinks "of his pretty little girl, the spoiled child of the household" (83). Sydney becomes not so much his child's governess as "her friend and playfellow" (108), and when kissing her Linley calls her "My poor child!" (119) and "Dear little Sydney!" (122). To complete this circle of recognizable kisses, Bennydeck seals his "fatherly interest" (274) by "kiss[ing] her as he might have kissed a daughter of his own" (332). Marriage to the father's friend of course presents a fortuitous solution, but the suppressed incest that runs through the childlike governess's relationships casts a very disturbing light on this seemingly neat closure.

In short, as the law denies them a father by taking him into custody, or taking custody from him, it compels them to approach paternal surrogates whose interest in them is not necessarily innocent. Even as the new family man expresses paternal love that is significantly different from a patriarch's pride in his offspring, too much time spent in the nursery may lead to an infatuation with "papa's governess, so sweetly fresh and pretty" (130), if not incestuous desire.⁴ The novel, in fact, is deliberately ambiguous in its representation of the father's new role. And yet it is really only fatherless daughters that crave paternal, or pseudo-paternal, attention at any cost. Even the wife's lawyer takes a sudden paternal interest in the husband's mistress: "I confess I was interested in her. Perhaps I thought of the time when she might have been as dear to her father as my own daughters are to me." (261). Like the prostitute in *The Fallen Leaves*, abducted and abandoned by her father, Sydney appeals to the "fatherly interest" that masks sexual desire. A similar fate seems to loom over Kitty, an increasingly troublesome child after her father's fraudulently established death: "Since the day when her grandmother had said the fatal words which checked all further allusion to her father, the child had shown a disposition to complain" (282). Not only does Kitty's interest in Bennydeck as her potential "new papa" (298) replicate both her mother's and (more disturbingly) Sydney's infatuation with the generally patronizing captain, but the child also takes "impudent [...] lib-

⁴ I discuss Collins's critical representation of masculinity and fatherhood in more detail elsewhere (Wagner "Overpowering Vitality," *passim*; Wagner *Longing*, 230-3).

erties” by hanging on to another father surrogate, the lawyer Sarrazin, “with her arms *and* her legs,” at the same time demanding news of her lost papa: ““Mamma’s going to have a new name. [...] And I must be Miss Norman. I won’t! Where’s papa? [...] Do you hear? Where’s papa?”” (219).

* * * * *

The effects of custody disputes, as of parental abduction, on the child and, even more strikingly, on the adult the child later becomes, are the core of Wilkie Collins’s late contributions to Victorian custody fiction. Mysteriously concealed and disappearing children may figure from his early writing onwards, yet *The Evil Genius* deliberately, and self-reflexively, takes one of the most sensational plot-devices and filters it through a growing interest in psychological realism, as anticipated most effectively by Trollope’s pointedly titled anti-sensation custody novel, *He Knew He Was Right*. Long regarded as simply marking his decline (Pykett, 20), Collins’s “mission novels,” in fact, fascinatingly reshape hackneyed plots, reviving their narrative potential and social currency. *The Evil Genius* thus helps to prepare the way for literary dissections of domestic Gothic that make “a masterly anatomy of human motives” (89) their business.

Works Cited

- Berry, Laura C. "Acts of Custody and Incarceration in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*." *Novel* 30:1 (1996) 32-55.
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. 1862. *The Black Band*. Hastings: Sensation Press, 1998.
- Chase, Karen, and Michael Levenson. *The Spectacle of Intimacy: A Public Life for the Victorian Family*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The Evil Genius*. 1886. Peterborough: Broadview, 1994.
- _____. *Heart and Science*. 1883. Peterborough: Broadview, 1996.
- _____. *The Fallen Leaves*. 1879. Stroud: Sutton, 2001.
- Law, Graham. Introduction. In Wilkie Collins, *The Evil Genius*, 7-30.
- Markwick, Margaret. *Trollope and Women*. London: Trollope Society, 1997.
- Nayder, Lillian. *Wilkie Collins*. London: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Pykett, Lyn. Introduction. In *Wilkie Collins*, ed. Lyn Pykett, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, 1-29.
- Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. (*The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 18). London: George Allen, 1905.
- Stone, Lawrence. *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Taylor, Jenny Bourne. *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth Century Psychology*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Tosh, John. *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Trollope, Anthony. *He Knew He Was Right*. 1869. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Wagner, Tamara S. "Overpowering Vitality: Nostalgia and Men of Sensibility in the Fiction of Wilkie Collins." *Modern Language Quarterly* 63:4 (2002) 473-502.
- _____. *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel, 1740-1890*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2004.
- Wiesenthal, C.S. "From Charcot to Plato: The History of Hysteria in *Heart and Science*." In *Wilkie Collins to the Forefront: Some Reassessments*, ed. Nelson Smith and R.C. Terry, New York: AMS Press, 1995, 257-68.

The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (1)

William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law, & Paul Lewis

This is the first of a series of planned annual updates to *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*, published in four volumes by Pickering & Chatto. The editorial principles, transcription conventions, and abbreviations employed here remain consistent with those described in the prefatory sections of Volume I. In the course of time, it is hoped that this material will be incorporated into a revised edition available in digital form with the added benefit of searchability. Though *The Public Face* appeared as recently as June 2005, in the meantime eleven more letters have come to light, including three to Georgina Hogarth and one to James Payn. This raises the number of known extant letters to those recipients to eighteen and sixteen respectively, and the total sum of recorded letters to 2998. The opportunity has also been taken to correct one or two substantial editorial slips. We hope readers of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* will be able to draw our attention to further sins of omission and commission.

(A) Addenda

* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 20 AUGUST 1860

MS: Texas (Ms Works, W. Collins, Ellery Queen Collection).¹

A Square in a Country Town.

=

“There was a bare little plot of grass in the middle, protected by a cheap wire fence. An elderly nursemaid and two children were standing in a corner of the enclosure, looking at a lean goat tethered to the grass. Two foot-passengers were talking together on one side of the pavement before the houses, and an idle little boy was leading an idle little dog along by a string on the other. I heard the dull tinkling of a piano at a distance, accompanied by the intermittent knocking of a hammer nearer at hand. These were all the sights and sounds of life that encountered me when I entered the square.”

From “The Woman In White”² | By | Wilkie Collins | August 20th 1860

-
1. Accompanied by a photograph of WC, the full-length miniature portrait by Herbert Watkins – see to him of 12 June 1861. The photograph and autograph face each other on opposite sides of a folded sheet of paper to which they have been pasted.
 2. From 5. The Narrative of Walter Hartwright, VIII, where Hartwright seeks out Mrs Catherick in Welmingham, ‘an English country town in the first stage of its existence’. This appears to be the first extant example of WC providing an autograph hunter with a signed passage from one of his novels.

* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [25] DECEMBER 1862**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Catalogue of Myers & Co., Autumn, 1955.

Summary: *Signature, subscription and date cut from a letter, Christmas 1862.*

* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 12 FEBRUARY 1867**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Puttick & Simpson (sold to Woodhouse for 10s., 11 November 1915, according to E. H. Courville in *Autograph Prices Current* I, August 1914-July 1916).

Summary: ‘A.L.s. 3 pp. 8vo. Feb. 12, 1867, mentioning Chas. Reade, Dickens and his reading tour etc, etc.’

* **TO MARY MOTLEY,¹ 22 MARCH 1870**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie’s (Sale 5621, 7 June 2005, South Kensington, Lot 12).

90 Gloucester Place | Portman Square | March 22nd 1870
Mr Wilkie Collins accepts with much pleasure the honour of dining with the Minister of the United States and Mrs Lothrop Motley on Monday 28th March at ¹/₄ to 8 ’oclock. /

1. The reply to the invitation would have been formally addressed to Mary Motley, née Benjamin (d. 1874), the wife of John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877: *ANB*), American ambassador in London from April 1869 to December 1870. Born near Boston, Massachusetts, Motley was a distinguished historian and diplomat who spent much of his life in Europe.

* **TO LLEWELLYN JEWITT,¹ 29 OCTOBER 1875**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie’s (Sale 5621, 7 June 2005, South Kensington, Lot 12).

Brussels | 29th October 1875

Dear Sir,

I have been travelling – and there has been some occasional delay in forwarding my letters.² This circumstance will, I hope, plead my apology for not having written to you sooner.

Having already subscribed to the Testimonial, I must beg you to excuse me if I refrain from availing myself of the proposal which you are so good as to address to me.³

I remain, Dear Sir, | Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins
Llewellyn Jewitt Esqr

1. Llewellyn Frederick William Jewitt (1816-1886: *DNB*), engraver, art historian, archaeologist and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Friend of Samuel Carter Hall, editor of the *Art Journal*, with whom he wrote *The Stately Homes of England* (1874-7).

2. WC seems to have left London for the continent on or about 10 October, returning around a month later.

3. The nature of the proposal remains unclear, though the testimonial might be that of £1,600 presented to Samuel Carter Hall and his wife Anna Maria on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary, 20 September 1874.

* TO GEORGINA HOGARTH, 18 JULY 1879

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie's (15 July 1999, lot 186/2). Extracts and partial images: Christie's catalogue, pp. 139-40.¹

18th July 1879

My dear Georgina,

The terms seem to me to be simply preposterous.² You are quite right in refusing to accept them. Ouvry's calculation is unanswerable.³ I send you a brief sketch of the terms that I should insist on. The 3rd Clause leaves you free, if you are not satisfied with the result of the sale of the first edition, to try another publisher, or to adopt a new method of publication, in regard to the second edition....

Terms

=

[10 per] cent commission

[Accoun]ts to be rendered [regul]arly – and profits, [deduction]s stipulated [*cropped*], to be paid [promptly] at the date [when th]e account is rendered.

...

1. The lot includes three of the many extant letters to Georgina Hogarth concerning the edition of Dickens's letters planned by her and Mamie Dickens. The three are described thus in the catalogue: '13 pages, 8vo, the first letter incomplete ... London and Ramsgate, 18-29 July 1879.' The accompanying illustration shows five overlapping leaves, exposing seven pages of text, of which five are visible only in part, though we have recorded cropped text wherever this is meaningful. This image suggests that the incomplete letter of 18 July is made up of two small leaves, each torn from a sheet of folding notepaper. Christie's

catalogue states that the letter shows WC ‘expressing his opinion that the terms seem to him “to be simply preposterous” (“...Ouvry’s calculation is manoeverable [*sic*]...), sending fresh proposed terms (including 10% commission) which he thinks Chatto & Windus would accept, and suggesting that another publisher (such as Macmillan) could be approached for a second edition’.

2. As the following letter to Hogarth makes clear, the ‘preposterous’ terms must have been those initially proposed by Chapman & Hall who published the volumes on commission for the authors.

3. The solicitor Frederic Ouvry (1814-81: *DNB*), who had served Dickens for many years. Also in the Christie sale (Lot 186/1) was a two-page memorandum on the costs of printing Dickens’s letters, dated 17 December 1878, suggesting that the profit on an edition of 2000 copies priced at 30 shillings each should be around £1100.

*** TO GEORGINA HOGARTH, [27] JULY 1879¹**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie’s (15 July 1999, lot 186/2). Extracts and partial images: Christie’s catalogue, pp. 139-140.²

. . . [the] alternative lies [between] £2.... and £1..10... [there] is no harm in [a delay o]f a day or two [to wr]ite confidentially [to Mr] Bentley, and [consult h]is experience. . . .

Notes on the Agreement³
=

1st Clause:- “The first edition of the Work of 2000 copies” – deducting such copies as may be required for presentation, ~~and~~ for the newspapers, and for delivery to the British Museum & [*illegible*]

Query:- Add to the Clause words to this effect (?)

5th Clause. I fancy the sale of copies over the counter to ...

2)

[Mr Chap]man has [consented] to the altered [terms – i]t might be [more grac]ious to [consult hi]m on [this as we]ll as [on the point] respecting [the agents’ Com]mission [which is quite] a [new element so far as my experience goes.]

1. Conjectural dating based on the fact that WC writes on the same day from Ramsgate to George Bentley, consulting his experience on the question of the pricing the Dickens’s letters (Baker & Clarke, II, p. 423).

2. The image suggests that the letter comprises five pages in all, four on a single sheet of folding notepaper, and the fifth on a separate half-sheet headed ‘2’. The third page is fully visible, the second and fifth partially so.

3. According to Christie’s catalogue, in this letter WC considers ‘the agreement with Chapman & Hall “beyond criticism”, but quibbles about certain clauses including the

proposed price of the volumes (“... I should be inclined to say £1..10...”), cites advertisements in the *Athenaeum* as “a safe guide to follow”, and seeks clarification of some wording (“... Or – seeing that Mr Chapman has consented to the altered terms – it might be more gracious to consult him on this as well as on the point respecting the agents’ Commission which is quite a new element so far as my experience goes ...”).

*** TO GEORGINA HOGARTH, 29 JULY 1879**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie’s (15 July 1999, lot 186/2). Extracts and partial images: Christie’s catalogue, pp. 139-140.¹

. . . [cou]nse]l caution in the matter of those “people living abroad” – mentioned in Mr Chapman’s letter.

. . . – to [Mr Lippin]incott, and [ask h]im for his [prop]osal by return [of] mail. It may not be amiss, in the mean time, to ask Mr Chapman to name the person . . .²

1. The image suggests that this letter consists of four pages of text on a single sheet of folding notepaper, though only lower portions of the second and third pages are clearly visible.

2. According to Christie’s catalogue, in this letter WC ‘refers to George Bentley’s view of the price, suggests seeing “what Forster did, in the case of the ‘Life’” (“...His account with Chapman would be of some use as a guide...”), notes that Smith & Son and Mudie “are monopolists who have you at their mercy”, mentions arrangements for correcting proofs, and comments on the “anonymous applicant” whose potential offer should be considered.’ Given the apparent mention of the Philadelphia publisher J. B. Lippincott, this last reference probably concerns the question of publication in North America, reverted to in the letters to Hogarth of 11 and 16 October 1879.

TO A.S. BARNES & Co., [SPRING] 1880

MS: Unknown. Extract: *International Review* NS 8:6 (June 1880) p. 18.

It [this article] has my name attached to it because I wish to take on myself the entire responsibility of the tone in which this little protest is written. If the article is published, I must ask as a condition that it shall be published without alterations of any kind, excepting palpable errors or slips of the pen, *exactly as it is written*.¹

1. WC refers to ‘Considerations on the Copyright Question’, published by A.S. Barnes & Co. of New York in their monthly *International Review* (June 1880) pp. 609-18. Following the signed article appears the following note:

The editors agree with Mr. Collins in thinking that a treaty securing International Copyright is in every way just and proper; but they must disclaim all responsibility for the language adopted by him in his argument. In a letter to the publishers of this Review Mr. Collins says: [*cites extract as above*] The article is printed in exact accordance with this request.

TO JAMES PAYN, 6 OCTOBER 1884

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis Website.

Ramsgate | 6th Oct: 1884

My dear Payn

Two questions:

1. Has “By Proxy” escaped the clutches of the ordinary Italian translator?¹

2. If yes – do you care to extend the influence of that interesting story to a new circle of readers in Italian newspapers?

By far the best translator whom I have yet met with is the Italian lady who translates my books.² She is not dependent on her pen, and she follows her original conscientiously and gives herself all the time that is required for her difficult task.

On the other side, let me add, that you would be served up in daily teaspoonfuls, in a feuilleton.³ Also that the translation fees are so contemptible that they are not even to be thought of, either by you or me.

I go back tomorrow to 90. Gloucester Place – after some glorious sailing. On the deck of the yacht, I read with sincere pleasure some friendly words relating to poor dear Charley and to myself, in “Literary Recollections”, which added to the delights of my holiday.⁴

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Payn’s most highly regarded novel, with the opening scenes set in the north of China. It was serialised in *Belgravia* from July 1877, before appearing the following year in two volumes from Chatto & Windus.

2. Presumably Lida Cerracchini, who translated both *The Black Robe* (as *La Vesti Nere*; Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1882) and *Heart and Science* (as *Cuore e Scienza*; Milan: Eduardo Souzogno, 1884). The latter volume is recorded on the title page as an authorised translation.

3. That is, serialised in a daily newspaper.

4. Payn’s *Some Literary Recollections* was published by Smith, Elder in 1884. There is in fact very little in the book about the Collins brothers: WC’s reaction to a book of Payn’s occupies ten lines on pp. 242-3, while a couple of anecdotes concerning CAC are found on pp. 255-8.

*** TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 24 SEPTEMBER 1888**

MS: Unknown.¹ On sale: Swann Galleries, New York, 22 November 2005, sale 2058 lot 321.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins
82 Wimpole St | London | 24th September 1888

1. On a small rectangular piece of card. Presumably an autograph scrap only.

(B) Corrigenda

TO SYDNEY DAVIS, 1 MARCH 1873

II, pp. 381-2, Note 2, latter part:

The paragraph below had appeared . . . unauthorized dramatic version of *Poor Miss Finch*.

Should read:

The following paragraph had appeared in the *Hornet*, 7:225 (3 May 1873), p. 13a, in the ‘Buzzings at the Wings’ column devoted to theatrical gossip:

Mr. Charles Reade is often blamed for plain speaking, but Mr. Collins can put a point quite as bluntly. Take this, for example: ‘My Poor Miss Finch has been dramatised (without asking my permission) by some obscure idiot in the country. I have been asked to dramatised it, and I have refused, because my experience tells me that the book is eminently unfit for stage purposes. What I refuse to do with my own work, another man (unknown in literature) is perfectly free to do against my will, and (if he can get his rubbish played) to the prejudice of my novel and my reputation.’ ‘Obscure idiot’ is good!

This brief notice had appeared the following week, in the *Hornet*, 7:226 (10 May 1873), pp. 13c-14a:

BLYTH | At the Octagon Theatre there were performances of the new comedy-drama *Shipmates* and *Poor Miss Finch*, the play recently alluded to by Mr. Wilkie Collins, who mentioned the author in terms the reverse of courteous. The leading performers were Mr. Sydney Davis and Miss Emily Cross.

The original source of WC’s complaint was a letter to John Hollingshead of 25 February 1873 (Baker & Clarke, II, pp. 362-3), written in response to a request for support in the fight against the unauthorized dramatic adaptation of published works of fiction. Along with opinions from the likes of George Eliot, M.E. Braddon, and W.S. Gilbert, the paragraph in question was reprinted by Hollingshead in April 1873 in a pamphlet entitled *Copyright Reform, as Affecting the Right of Stage Representation of Novels* – see John Hollingshead *My Lifetime* (2 vols, London: Sampson Low, 1895), II, pp. 50-4. We are unfortunately unable to identify the ‘obscure idiot’ and his unauthorized dramatic version of *Poor Miss Finch*.

TO ADA CAVENDISH, 23 JUNE 1883

IV, Addenda, pp. 403-4: The following revised transcript of a letter not previously seen by the editors incorporates a number of minor corrections:

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.

23rd June 1883

My dear Ada,

The business letter – relating to your tour – is enclosed. The terms – to you – are £3,,-, for each representation. Let us consider them confidential (because I have refused to accept them in the case of proposals not made by my own original Mercy Merrick).

As to the January revival (1884) in London, here are my “sentiments”:-

If the contemplated performances are supported by a capitalist who finds the money, I will at once send you a Draft of agreement, stating the conditions on which I will consent to ~~the~~ a new series of representations in London next year.

But – if the responsibility of the speculation is your’s; I don’t like making you answerable to me (or to my Executors?). To insist on a guaranteed “run” and on stipulated payments – with you – if the venture turned out to be less successful than we had hoped, would (as I am sure you must know, my dear) be simply impossible. And, in that disastrous case, what would my position be? After having refused over and over again to allow the piece to be prematurely revived – I should be left with a worthless dramatic commodity on my hands for years to come. This (after the pecuniary sacrifices I have made in keeping the play in my desk) is a prospect which I cannot afford to contemplate. In one word – I must be paid, and I wont say “must” to you. There it is – roughly ~~as~~ stated as if I was writing to a man. Will you forgive me?

I still hope to hear that the risk is not your risk.

There has been some electric disturbance in the atmosphere, which you are feeling, I suspect. Let me hear that you are better.

Always affectly yours, | WC

I have been away – or I should have written earlier. My illness is – feeling ninety years old, and badly preserved for my age.

~~Reviews~~

Lyn Pykett. *Wilkie Collins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Series: *Authors in Context*. pp. xviii + 254. ISBN 0-19-284034-7.

Lyn Pykett's lucid new contribution to the study of Wilkie Collins is part of a series entitled *Authors in Context*, published by Oxford University Press and designed to provide students and other general readers with a manageable introduction to important authors. The series, which "examines the work of major writers in relation to their own time and to the present day," takes its place alongside several other introductory guides that publishers have favoured of late. Such introductions will surely be welcomed by literature students, particularly those faced with long Victorian novels and the additional difficulty of coming to terms with an increasingly diverse body of historical and critical material, and in general I think that books of this sort are a good thing. They are, however, extremely difficult to write: authors not only have to make complex and extensive material accessible for students; they have to negotiate reviewers, fellow academics, and other experts on the subject in question, all of whom want to hear something new and all of whom are quick to note what has been left out.

I will certainly be recommending this volume to my own students. Aside from anything else, it is full of helpful material: chapter one offers a brief biography, the next two chapters examine the social and literary context, chapter four through six are thematically focussed, and the final chapter "recontextualizes" Collins by considering the afterlife of his work, with special reference to adaptations and criticism. As my brief description of the chapter headings indicates, the book has plenty of appeal beyond its student audience—I, for one, found myself thoroughly engaged by the material covered. Pykett is at her best when she pursues thematic discussions, all of which are built around thoughtful close readings of Collins's work. The discussion takes in a wide range of writing by Collins; inevitably, the texts treated at greatest length are *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *Armadale*, yet considerable space is given to other novels such as *Basil* and *The New Magdalen*. While all the thematic issues addressed by Pykett are handled with the confidence and deftness one would expect from an experienced commentator on Collins, the strongest and most dynamic textual readings are those relating to gender and marriage, reflecting Pykett's particular interest in this area. Chapters six and seven, covering, among things, science and adaptations, are also very stimulating, and I suspect that they will encourage readers to undertake further work in these important areas. Whether or not this extends to anyone taking on Pykett's challenge for a musical version of *The Moonstone*, is another matter. With a mischievous gesture to Andrew Lloyd Webber's recent adaptation of *The Woman in White*, Pykett writes: "As far as I

know, there are no plans to stage a musical version of *The Moonstone*. However, one could envisage some splendid song opportunities for the lovelorn Rosanna Spearman, the embittered Limping Lucy, and the garrulous Miss Clack. Moreover, Franklin's opium-induced re-enactment of the theft of the diamond has distinct balletic possibilities" (204).

Although the book should be considered a success, it is not without its faults. The decision to separate consideration of the social and literary context from the subsequent thematic readings of the texts seems odd. Some of the material overlaps and threatens to become repetitive, and a number of the claims made in the section on social context are too detached. No-one would argue that "[a]lteration, invention and competition" are "Victorian keywords" (29), but the recognition of this needs to be rooted in a more extended discussion if it is to avoid sounding too general. The problem is less to do with the synopsis of nineteenth-century history that the book provides, which seems perfectly reasonable, and more to do with the implication of the structural division of chapters, that historical background somehow precedes textual discussion. In recent years cultural and literary historians have gone to great lengths to blur the division between text and context; rightly, I think, for, as Pykett makes clear in chapters four through six, the most effective way to deal with the interaction between history and text is to consider them in combination. The other major weakness of this book concerns its relative neglect of criticism published after 2000. Graham Law's *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (2000), which sheds new light on Collins's readership, is referred to in the footnote to a paragraph on newspaper syndication but does not make it into the bibliography, while there is no mention at all of Caroline Oulton's *Literature and Religion in Mid-Victorian England: From Dickens to Eliot* (2003), despite its extensive discussion of the theological implications of Collins's novels. Nor does Pykett acknowledge the existence of Lillian Nayder's *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Victorian Authorship* (2002), Maria Bachman and Don Richard Cox's essay collection *Reality's Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins* (2003), or indeed any material from the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal—New Series*.

The problems with structure and the absence of any reference to key recent works of criticism do not, ultimately, detract from the value of this book. As I began by saying, writing an introductory guide is an extremely difficult task, and, on the whole, Pykett rises to the challenge commendably. Anything that helps orientate and introduce a new generation of students to the work of Wilkie Collins, an important nineteenth-century writer who still does not always receive the recognition he deserves, is to be welcome, not least because, as Pykett begins her book by reminding us, he offers "a curious combination of respectability and social fragility, of orthodoxy and unconventionality" (1).

Mark Knight
Roehampton University

***The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters.* William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law, and Paul Lewis, eds. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005. 4 volumes. pp. lxx + 335 + viii + 430 + viii + 455 + viii + 456. ISBN 1851967648.**

Writing to Edward Pigott in July 1854, in a letter marked “Private,” Wilkie Collins offers his “deep sympathy” to his close friend and associate—not because Pigott has lost a family member but because the scandal surrounding Thornton Hunt’s adulterous relationship with Mrs. George Lewes, and sanctioned by her husband, threatens to damage the reputation of Pigott’s weekly, the *Leader*, with which all four men are connected. “If you take the steps, which I believe you will think as necessary as I do when you hear all particulars,” Collins advises, “you will...extricate yourself from a dangerous and degrading connection” (1:106). Coming from a man who would eventually live with another man’s wife—Mrs. Joseph Clow, also known as Caroline Graves—while fathering three children with a second partner, Martha Rudd, Collins’s harsh disapproval of Lewes and Hunt seems particularly ironic, and helps to gauge the distance he traveled in becoming a figure largely celebrated for his lack of convention. Perhaps more significantly, Collins’s letter calls into question the opposition it seeks to secure—the divide between private and public matters. In so doing, it testifies to what Karen Chase and Michael Levenson term “the spectacle of intimacy” among Victorians. In a letter marked “Private,” Collins helps to circulate various “reports” about Hunt and Lewes, discussing a scandal that publicized intimate details, and in which the domestic lives of the *Leader*’s editors threatened to damage Pigott professionally. Providing his friend with “testimony” against Lewes and Hunt, Collins imaginatively puts them on trial, and in the process renders suspect the alleged separation of the spheres.

Addressing the relation of public to private in their Introduction and illuminating their choice of title, the editors of *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* explain that “the noticeable majority of Collins’s letters are concerned less with artistic and personal issues than with business and public affairs” (xxiii). Identifying each of Collins’s letters as belonging to one of four major categories (“Social, Artistic, Publishing and (other) Business”) and then regrouping the four categories into two—“the spheres of Private and Public”—they note that “the number of letters concerning Publishing affairs” nearly doubles those “devoted to either Social or Artistic matters” and belonging to what they consider the private realm (xxiii-xxiv). There can be no doubt that the correspondence made newly available to us in these volumes has great importance because it provides “an extraordinarily rich insight into key developments in print culture in the later decades of the Victorian period,” as the editors claim (xxx). Written over a span of nearly sixty years, Collins’s letters chart developments in the laws governing copyright and in the professionalization of authorship as well as revealing the rise of the literary

agent and the challenge posed to the circulating libraries and three-volume publication in the second half of the Victorian period.

But if most of Collins's letters concern the public world of publishing and derive significance from that fact, they also prove valuable in showing how Collins challenged the very divide between public and private. From nearly the outset of their Introduction, the editors note that their categorizations involve "judgement calls that would be complex to justify in open court" (xxviii)—conceding, for instance, that while they list Collins's correspondence with Charles Ward as "Social," it also addresses business matters. Yet Collins's letters do not simply *bridge* categories: at times, they evade or subvert them, merging private with public, social with artistic, and demonstrating that their author not only constructed a "face" for public view but assumed various persona in his intimate relations as well. Distinguishing their four volumes from the two edited by William Baker and William M. Clarke in 1999, which foreground Collins's correspondence with his mother and with his friend Charles Ward and thus provide "a life in letters," the editors present *their* work as one that exemplifies "the business of letters" (xxx). Yet Collins *personalized* his business relations, as the editors show—while also devoting himself to the business of private life.

The publication of this extensive and well-edited collection of letters is most welcome: a major event in Collins scholarship and in Victorian studies generally. It aptly follows the appearance of the twelfth and final volume of the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens's letters and enables us to read the letters of the two friends and literary collaborators side by side. Organized chronologically, *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* transcribes approximately 2,500 letters from more than 80 archives and private collections worldwide, with over 2,100 published in full for the first time. It also cites and briefly describes, in their proper chronological positions, all of the letters included in the 1999 Baker and Clarke collection that are not transcribed in full in the four new volumes. Transcribing—or, rather, re-transcribing—dozens of letters that were included in an incomplete or summarized form in Baker and Clarke, it corrects errors that, at times, substantially obscured Collins's meaning and cast doubt on the overall reliability of that earlier collection. The "sharp unfragmented walks" to which Collins allegedly refers in writing to his mother from Normandy in August 1847 (Baker and Clarke, 1:47) become "dark unfrequented walks" in the new collection (1:17), as they should, and a "ghostly set of people" (Baker and Clarke, 1:46) becomes a "ghastly" (1:17). The new volumes also correct the dating of many letters in Baker and Clarke and revisit and correct a less familiar, annotated edition of Collins's letters—those from the University of Texas, transcribed in William Coleman's 1975 doctoral dissertation. The editorial principles of the new collection are well conceived, clearly explained and consistently applied. Each volume contains facsimiles of two autograph letters, and useful appendices in the last include correspondence written for Collins in his last days and about his affairs after his death as well as various publishing agreements. In a final "Addenda" section, the editors provide several letters made known to them after the volumes were in proof.

One of several tables in the Introduction lists every person who received at least two letters from Collins, citing the number of letters in each case, the time span in which they were written, and assigning them to one specific category (“social” or “artistic,” for example). While these categorizations seem too rigid to be of much help to readers, the factual information conveyed here is very useful. We learn, for example, that Collins addressed nearly 300 letters to his literary agent A. P. Watt in the 1880s, over 160 to his mother between 1831 and 1868, and 125 to his solicitor William Tindell in the 1860s and 1870s, with these three topping the list of recipients in the four volumes. But numbers can be deceiving, as the editors explain, since letters to some recipients (Collins’s mother, for instance) are generally much longer than those to others. Whatever their length, Collins’s letters were received by a wide and sometimes surprising range of correspondents, including such figures as Charles Edward Mudie, Catherine Dickens, and Lillie Langtry, with men (or male-gendered corporations) outnumbering women by a ratio greater than five to one.

Neither Caroline Graves nor Martha Rudd are included among Collins’s female correspondents, a “significant gap” in the record, the editors observe (xx). Nonetheless, these women make their way into the collection—through references and allusions in Collins’s letters to others as well as in his telling silences and the evidence of physical destruction to pertinent portions of the correspondence. Their mediated presence in the four volumes helps us understand how Collins constructed and negotiated his intimate relationships while providing glimpses of their complexities. Martha Rudd first enters into the correspondence in Volume 2, as the single initial “M.”—when Collins writes to his solicitor in 1871 about his will and the “ready money to be left to C. and M. on [his] death” (2:268). She resurfaces at wide intervals: Collins refers to her in a second letter to Tindell, in 1874; he alludes to her in 1882, when telling his Canadian publisher of his “morganatic” family” (3:360); and he identifies her as “Mrs. Dawson” in an 1886 letter to his wine merchants (4:142). As the “C.” to Martha’s “M.,” Caroline Graves appears in at least as many permutations, as the correspondence Collins dispatched from Whitby in August 1861 reveals. To his landlord at 12 Harley Street, he refers to Caroline as “Mrs. Collin’s [sic],” showing the two passing for husband and wife (1:242); to Charles Ward, he writes of “Caroline,” who is “getting great benefit from this fine air” (Baker and Clarke, 1:201); to his mother, he writes as if he were in Whitby alone, completely eliding Caroline’s presence. “I am at last established here, in excellent rooms, and in one of the finest places in England,” he tells her, a statement that suppresses at least as much as it reveals. “Despite appearances,” the editors point out when annotating this first of the Whitby letters, “WC was travelling in company with Caroline Graves” (1:240, 241 n. 2). “Note . . . that in the following letter to his mother [Collins] uses the first personal singular throughout,” they remind us in glossing correspondence he mailed from Paris in October 1863, during a “trip made with Caroline Graves and her daughter” (1:306 n. 2).

In providing such directives, the editors offer an implicit commentary on Collins's letters to his mother, flagging significant and purposeful elisions. But generally speaking, their annotations are less interpretive than factual—although the process of determining the facts sometimes requires keen interpretive skill on their part. While the editors recognize that today's readers need "a good deal of . . . assistance" to understand Collins's letters, they "have tried hard to make [their] interventions unobtrusive" (lvii). They succeed in doing so, supplying annotations that are useful and to the point—considerably more substantial and well researched than those in Baker and Clarke though still rather less extensive than those in the monumental Pilgrim Edition of Dickens's letters. When possible, they identify and place Collins's correspondents; they explain a wide range of biographical, literary and political references, and provide publication information and details of dating and physical bibliography; and, on occasion, they refer readers to pertinent secondary sources and quote from them. Out of thousands of annotations in the four volumes, only a handful seem to require emendation—the glossing of "Thompson" as T. J. Thompson rather than George Thompson appears questionable in one instance (1:81 n. 4) as does a possible reference to "Alfred [Dickens]" as "unidentified" (1:138 n.2). In glossing Collins's 1858 recommendation of Charles Reade to Francis Underwood and the *Atlantic Monthly*, the editors might note the furor ultimately created by the publication of Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* in 1865–66, which brought the novelist into court and set Collins in opposition to Dickens; and a note might explain Collins's reference to "the last two pages . . . written expressly for this [1861 Sampson Low] edition" of *Hide and Seek* (1:245)—Collins's own "Note to Chapter VII," which outlines his debt to John Kitto's *Lost Senses*. Considering the impressive editorial achievement of these four volumes, however, such emendations and suggestions are merely quibbles.

The extensive new material in this collection should influence and inspire Collins scholarship for years to come. It illuminates Collins's artistic aims and methods and his work as a dramatist, identifies little-known source materials, reveals Collins's sense of himself as an increasingly significant figure in the literary landscape, and shows how that landscape altered during his lifetime. It illustrates the savvy Collins developed in negotiating agreements with publishers as well as the changing nature of those agreements, and demonstrates his willingness to share his knowledge and strategies with writers less experienced than himself.

Nearly fifty letters to Harriet Collins from the collection at Pembroke College, Cambridge, deepen our understanding of his relationship with his mother—the intimacy of their bond, its charm and humor—while also showing that restraint or reservation, and a sense of audience, inevitably limited his closest family ties. At the same time, letters to Collins's publishers and his literary agent, most previously unknown, disclose striking moments of intimacy in his more distant, professional relationships. Writing to his mother, Collins persistently declines to acknowledge the presence of his companion Caroline Graves; writing to his Canadian publisher George Maclean Rose, a

man he barely knows and appears to misunderstand, Collins explicitly refers to his illegitimate children and alludes to his “irregular” tie to Martha Rudd (3:360). His intermingling of reserve and intimacy, the personal and the professional, also characterizes his relationship with A. P. Watt, which takes shape in the third and fourth volumes of the collection. Difficult to categorize, mixing distance with disclosure, Collins’s dealings with Watt, like his relationship with his mother, confirm our sense of him as “the king of inventors,” as Catherine Peters aptly puts it. He emerges from these four volumes as a figure whose “public face”—or, more aptly, whose public *faces*—appear in intimate contexts, and for whom public and private are not simply “two faces of the same human coin” (xliii) but currencies that are easily exchanged and sometimes conflate the counterfeit with the real, devaluing that opposition. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* reveals the many faces of a writer inspired by his sense of audience, reveling in his ability to construct multiple plotlines for his own life, and animated by a desire to perform.

Lillian Nayder
Bates College

Mary Elizabeth Braddon. *The White Phantom*, ed. Jennifer Carnell. Hastings, East Sussex: The Sensation Press, 2005. pp. xx + 366. ISBN 1-902580-09-5.

In his essay on “The Unknown Public” in *Household Words* in August 1858, Wilkie Collins assumed a great gulf fixed between the middle-class literary audience (“the subscribers to this journal, the customers at publishing houses, the members of book-clubs and circulating libraries, and the purchasers and borrowers of newspapers and reviews . . .”) and the huddled mass of working-class readers (“the mysterious, the unfathomable, the universal public of the penny-novel-Journals”). Yet only a few years later critics were outraged that the sensation novel was encouraging a dangerous narrowing of the gap between bourgeois and proletarian tastes. According to W. Fraser Rae in the *North British Review* of September 1865, by publishing her “stories of blood and lust, of atrocious crimes and hardened criminals . . . in three volumes in place of issuing them in penny numbers,” Mary Braddon was turning “the literature of the Kitchen” into “the favourite reading of the Drawing Room.” In a notice of Collins’s *Armadale* in the *Westminster Review* in July 1866, J.R. Wise saw “Sensational Mania” as a “virus . . . spreading in all directions, from the penny journal to the shilling magazine, and from the shilling magazine to the thirty shillings volume.” Yet, despite the quantity of university seminars and academic articles dedicated to the sensation novel over the last few decades, we have come little further in understanding its true relations to the popular melodramatic fiction of the mid nineteenth century. The main reason is that few people are familiar with “penny bloods” because they are now so difficult

to get hold of. Though novels issued in penny numbers like Reynolds's *Mysteries of London*, or serialized in penny fiction papers like the *Family Herald*, reached hundreds of thousands of Victorian readers, these publications were both physically fragile and aesthetically unappealing to contemporary librarians or collectors, so that few original runs survive. So, while major publishers like Oxford, Penguin and Everyman are happy to issue competing scholarly editions of *The Woman in White* or *Lady Audley's Secret* in cheap paperback format for class use, writers like Reynolds remain vastly underrepresented even in the British Library catalogue and fail to show at all in the Gutenberg Project. For this reason alone, we should be grateful to the Sensation Press, a small independent publisher committed to reprinting popular Victorian literature, and with a special interest in Braddon.

From the start Collins had found little difficulty in placing his work in prestigious middle-class periodicals like *Bentley's Miscellany* or Dickens's *Household Words*, but Mary Braddon began her literary career writing bloods for the unknown public, and continued to appear anonymously in the cheapest weekly papers well after *Lady Audley's Secret* had brought her name to public attention. *The White Phantom* appeared originally from May 1862 in weekly parts in *The Halfpenny Journal; A Magazine for All Who Can Read*, and the Sensation Press edition represents its first appearance in volume form. In all, half a dozen other Braddon serials seem to have appeared in the same paper, which was published by her partner and agent John Maxwell, of which two have already been reprinted by the Sensation Press—*The Black Band* (1998) and *The Octoroon* (1999). In her introductions to these volumes, Jennifer Carnell paints a vivid picture of the conditions in which they were written. Following the lead of Collins in "The Unknown Public", she refers extensively to the "Answers to Correspondents" columns of the paper in order to convey the attitudes and aspirations typical of its subscribers. She argues that the plates that headed the weekly instalments—all reproduced here in their appropriate places—are more likely to be acquired from French sources than freshly commissioned, and thus that the unexpected twists and turns of the plot may be attributable to constraints other than the looming deadline. And she quotes tellingly from Braddon's correspondence with her literary mentor Edward Bulwer Lytton, where the following self-deprecatory postscript must refer to one of the closing episodes of *The White Phantom*:

I do an immense deal of work which nobody ever hears of, for Halfpenny & penny journals. This work is most piratical stuff & would make your hair stand on end, if you were to see it. The amount of crime, treachery, murder, slow poisoning, & general infamy required by the Halfpenny reader is something terrible. I am just going to do a little paracide [*sic*] for this week's supply.

In the narratives themselves, though, there is little sense of Braddon writing tongue-in-cheek. Indeed, since we know that both the composition and serialization of, say, *The White Phantom* and *Aurora Floyd*, were largely simultaneous, what is striking is the facility with which the author supplies the different demands of the penny journal and the shilling magazine markets, just

as later in her career she would become the darling of both the circulating libraries and the newspaper syndicates.

What then are the general characteristics of Braddon's halfpenny bloods, in contrast to her shilling sensations? First, the short weekly instalments lead to a rather more episodic, anecdotal, syncopated narrative. Second, there are more frequent appeals to conventional radical sentiments, whether sympathy for the down-trodden masses or anger at aristocratic vice. Lastly, the moral scheme tends much more uniformly towards monochrome, as typified in the closing lines of *The Black Band*:

We have followed the innocent and the guilty alike impartially through the intricate labyrinth of life. We have seen the innocent for a time oppressed—the guilty for a time triumphant; but we have also seen that the wondrous balance of good and evil will infallibly adjust itself in the end; and that a dire and unlooked for vengeance will alight upon the heads of those who defy the Power which rules this marvellous universe, or laugh to scorn the just and merciful laws of an All-Wise Providence.

That said, in *The White Phantom*, Braddon does blur the boundaries to a significant extent. Though there are a number of heavy stage villains, like the hired murderer Gambia, an Indian devotee of the Thug cult, the narrative is a good deal less steeped in blood than *The Black Bland*, and there is a rather more tonal variation and moral ambiguity. The angelic foundling heroine Aurora (a far cry from Floyd, it must be stressed) is brought up as a showgirl by the tender-hearted huckster John Primmins, and this leads to a number of interludes of Dickensian humour which can counterbalance the Gothic excess:

“... Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, walk up! Come and see the new and original drammer hentitled the Mountain Spectre, or the Bleeding Finger! with real blood, which is drawn fresh for every performance from a gentleman who is kept on purpose to 'ave his throat cut hevery three quarters of a hour ...”

At the same time, the golden-haired, alabaster-skinned anti-heroine Lady Blanche Vavasour, with marked homicidal tendencies and a talent for disguise, reveals something of the complexity of Lady Audley when her guilty secrets are finally revealed. It is probably this interest in “the dangerous edge of things” that makes *The White Phantom* such an absorbing read.

Through her meticulously researched biography with its wealth of new material on Braddon's career as an actress, as well as the Sensation Press editions of Braddon's plays, Jennifer Carnell has also done a great deal to aid our understanding of the relations between sensation fiction and the popular Victorian theatre. Crisply printed and handsomely bound in black cloth with an attractive dust-jacket in “yellowback” style, this edition of *The White Phantom* is another valuable contribution to our understanding of the market for melodrama in the mid-Victorian decades.

Graham Law
Waseda University

WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL



The *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* (ISSN: 0897-2982) is an annual volume, sponsored jointly by the Wilkie Collins Society and the Wilkie Collins Society of North America, and is dedicated to original scholarly essays and reviews of publications relating to Wilkie Collins, his writings, and his culture.

Editors

Lillian Nayder

Graham Law

Advisory Board

Steve Dillon

Steve Farmer

Tamar Heller

Clair Hughes

Catherine Peters

Toru Sasaki

Jenny Bourne Taylor

Ronald R. Thomas

Submissions

The editors invite articles (not more than 6,000 words) or notes (not more than 2,500 words) which should be sent to one of the postal addresses provided below. All manuscripts should follow the *MLA Style Manual*, and be submitted on a standard computer diskette (MS-DOS Format, with Microsoft Word or Word Perfect) plus one paper copy, and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Please note that the e-mail addresses provided should be used for enquiries only, not for submissions.

Submissions and correspondence from North America to:

Lillian Nayder, Department of English, Bates College
Lewiston, ME 04240, USA

E-Mail enquiries: <lnayder@abacus.bates.edu>

Submissions and correspondence from elsewhere to:

Graham Law, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University
Nishi-Waseda 1-6-1, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-8050, Japan

E-Mail enquiries: <glaw@waseda.jp>

Subscriptions

Individuals: Included in membership of The Wilkie Collins Society or The Wilkie Collins Society of North America.

Institutions: \$25 or £15 annually. Enquiries to the editors.

The Wilkie Collins Society

Chairman: Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, Belsize Park, London NW3 4EA.

Secretary: Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU.

Memberships: Begin in January each year. Annually £10 for members in UK and Europe; £18 for those elsewhere. Payment in sterling only. Include subscriptions to regular newsletters and the annual *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*.

The Wilkie Collins Society of North America

All Enquiries: Lillian Nayder, at the address above.

Memberships: Annually \$20 (\$15 for full-time students). Payment in US dollars only. Include subscriptions to a newsletter and the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*.

**PUBLISHED BY
THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY
&
THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
NOVEMBER 2005**



ISSN: 0897-2982

WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL