Wilkie Collins Journal

4th Series Vol. 1 2024

(Special Issue, in Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Wilkie Collins in 1824)

ISSN: 0897-2982

Wilkie Collins Journal

ISSN: 0897-2982
4th Series, Volume 1, 2024
(Special Issue on the 200th Anniversary of Collins's Birth)

Contents

~~Articles~~

~~Reviews~~

Editor's Note

Joanne Parsons has completed her stint as editor of the *Journal* and, on behalf of the members and officers of the Wilkie Collins Society, I would like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks. Jo will continue to serve on the Advisory Board of the Journal, as part of the team of around twenty distinguished Collins scholars—see the details on the inside back cover. As punishment for sins past, I have been pressed to take on the role of editor once again, having previously served together with Lillian Nayder for the duration of the Second Series over the decade from 1998. Published in hardcopy as well as digital format, the current issue is of around double the usual length, including half-a-dozen substantial articles and a handful of reviews in 120 pages. This serves not only to mark the beginning of a new series of the Journal, but also as a small contribution to the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Wilkie Collins in January 1824.

At the first centenary in the wake of the Great War, like most other manifestations of the Victorian melodramatic imagination, Collins's literary reputation whether scholarly or popular was still at a distinctly low ebb. However, it was only a few years later that, thanks in the main to the attention of T.S. Eliot and Dorothy L. Sayers, Wilkie began to be recognized once again as a master of sensation. Today, at the second centenary the author's renown is perhaps at its highest point, but now by no means only as a progenitor of the novel of mystery and detection. The last half-century or so has witnessed a remarkable increase in the available range of both scholarly materials and intellectual approaches. Now we have to hand: current critical editions of not only virtually all the novels but also the shorter fiction, theatrical pieces, and works of journalism; biographical resources in the form of a series of complete critical lives headed by those of Catherine Peters and William Clarke, as well as detailed accounts of particular episodes in the author's career such as Susan Hanes's study of his *American Tour*, and increasingly comprehensive collections of his correspondence, with the sterling work of Paul Lewis on digitalization building upon the labours of Bill Baker. One of the few remaining major tasks here is a comprehensive bibliography, which Andrew Gasson is in an ideal position to undertake. Among new critical angles attracting attention in recent decades, we might note particularly: sociological approaches foregrounding 'otherness' based not only on the general categories of class, gender, and ethnicity, but also on specific conditions such as physical and mental disability; and comparative/historical perspectives with particular focuses on communications media (periodical publication, public performances, film adaptations …), affairs overseas (Collins and France, America, India …), and other expressive arts (music and painting, most notably).

As several of those examples remind us, the flourishing of the Wilkie Collins Society since its foundation in 1980, due in large part to the efficiency and enthusiasm of Messrs Gasson and Lewis, thus helping to build a sturdy bridge between academic research and independent scholarship, has played no little part in this story of progress in Collins studies. I trust that the activities and publications of the Society, including of course the *Wilkie Collins Journal* itself, will continue to contribute to the development of the scholarship on the works and world of our author over the coming decades. And to this end I hope that a few more members might consider writing for as well as reading through the Journal.

Graham Law

~~Articles~~

On Re*hearing* Wilkie Collins's *Basil* (with an Inventory of Composers and Compositions Cited in Collins's Works)

Allan W. Atlas

If the first part my title sounds a bit odd, it is, obviously, because we generally do not *hear* a novel (audio books notwithstanding). Yet in *Basil* (1852), Collins invites the reader to do just that at two of the plot's most tension-filled moments: Part II, chapters 6–7, in which Basil approaches a home where a party is going on and hears dance music sounding through an open window (155–57);[1] and Part III, chapter 3, with its terrible confrontation between Basil and his father, nearly the whole of which is accompanied by the strains of an organ grinder playing in the street just outside (196–202). In both instances, I can imagine a wide range of reader responses to these musical allusions: whereas some will pay little or no attention at all to them, others (myself included) will bring them to life and create their own soundtracks, even to the extent of putting *Basil* aside for a while in order to listen to and think about the music and its relationship to what is unfolding in the novel.

* * * * *

Seated across from one another on a London omnibus are Margaret Sherwin, daughter of a linen-draper, and Basil, younger son of one of England's most ancient and respected families. For Basil, it is obsession at first sight: he disembarks when Margaret does, follows her home and within days, learns her identity, courts her in a manner of speaking (they meet twice) and asks her father to consent to their marriage. Mr Sherwin, captivated by the idea of his daughter 'marrying up', says yes, but with the following conditions, among others: though the marriage will take place within the week, it will remain secret and unconsummated for one year. And Basil, anticipating the volatile reaction likely to come from his own father, who dotes upon the family's long, aristocratic lineage, accepts.

[1] Page references to Collins's works are to the editions listed in Works Cited, Primary Sources. Note that Dorothy Goldman's World's Classics edition of *Basil* is based on the revised Sampson Low, Son & Co. edition of 1862, as that, in turn, was reprinted by Smith, Elder in 1873.

1. Dance music at the home of Margaret's aunt

A few introductory words are needed as we turn to our music-filled moments. Rather than summarizing the plot, I have let Collins speak for himself (at some length) by stringing together a series of passages directly from *Basil.* In both excerpts, diareses indicate omissions (without reference to length); extra space between lines signals a new paragraph or page (the latter cited in square brackets); italics mark my own emphasis; and speakers remain in effect until cancelled. As noted above, the passage in which Basil hears the dance music emanating from the home of Margaret's wealthy aunt appears in Pt II, chap. 6–7, 151–57.

> [Chap. 6, 151, Basil] . . . I went to see Margaret for the last time in my old character, on the last night which yet remained to separate us from each other.
>
> [152] A disappointment was in store for me. Margaret was not in the house; she had gone out to an evening party, given by a maiden aunt of hers . . .
>
> [153, Mr Sherwin] She'll be back by half-past twelve, or before. Mannion . . . [has] gone to take care of her, and bring her back . . .
>
> [154] I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Basil . . . you had better stop that fidgetty [*sic.*] temper of yours, by going to the party yourself . . . there's an envelope with the address . . .
>
> [Basil] I determined to go to the party . . .
>
> [Chap. 7, 155] The house of Margaret's aunt was plainly enough indicated to me . . . by the glare of light from the windows, *the sound of dance music* . . . I hesitated about going in.
>
> I determined to walk about in the neighbourhood of the house, until twelve o'clock . . .
>
> [156] I crossed the street . . . Then lingered a little, *listening to the music as it reached me through the windows* . . . After this, I turned away . . . ; and set off eastward on my walk . . .
>
> All sounds were silent to me save the love-music of my own thoughts . . . [a]
>
> [157] For the last quarter of an hour of my walk, I must have been unconsciously retracing my steps towards the house of Margaret's aunt . . . I determined to go nearer to the house, and ascertain whether the music had ceased, or not.
>
> I had approached close enough to hear the *notes of the harp and pianoforte still sounding as gaily as ever,* when the house-door was suddenly flung open for the departure of a lady and gentleman. The light from the hall lamps fell full on their faces; and showed me Margaret and Mr. Mannion.
>
> Going home already! An hour and a half before it was time to return! Why? There could be but one reason. Margaret was thinking of me . . .

[a]Just prior to 'All sounds were silent to me', Collins cut 189 words from the 1852 edition (351); there were no references to music in the deleted material, for a copy of which my thanks to Andrew Gasson.

Basil, of course, is wrong. He follows Margaret and Mannion to a hotel, where, from an adjoining room separated from theirs by a thin wall, he hears them in their act of adultery.

Now, though I would assume that most of Collins's readers (both in his time and ours) zip right through these musical allusions, since for Basil they serve the practical purpose of reinforcing the visual clues ('glare of light', 'cabmen', 'linkmen') and telling him first that he is at the right address and then, after he retraces his steps, that the party is still going on.

Yet as a musician/musicologist, there are things that I want to know about the music that Collins decided not to tell me. Upon coming to 'the sound of dance music . . . listening to the music as it reached me through the windows', I cannot help but ask: *what kind of dance music?* Which one of a number of then-popular dance types might Basil have heard coming through the window, and which, if any, might Collins have had buzzing around in his inner ear? Table 1 tabulates the number of compositions within each of six social-dance types as they are accounted for in that section of *The Musical World* called 'Reviews of Music' (that is, newly published music) during the years 1851–1853.[2]

Table 1. Newly published music representing six types of social dance and the number of times that each is accounted for in 'Reviews of New Music', *The Musical World,* XXVI, 1 (4 January 1851)–XXXI, 52 (24 December 1853).

Polka	= 74	Galop	= 18
Waltz	= 29	Mazurka	= 18
Quadrille	= 22	Schottische	= 9

As the numbers suggest, the early 1850s saw the polka eat into the popularity of the by-then well-established waltz (introduced to England in

[2] *The Musical World: A Weekly Record of Musical Science, Literature, and Intelligence* appeared from 18 March 1836 to 24 January 1891, mainly under the long-time (1843–1878) editorship and ownership of the music critic James William Davison (1813–1885). It was far away 'the preeminent nineteenth-century British music journal' until *The Musical Times* (founded in 1844) came to rival it in the early 1860s (Kitson ix). The literature on social dance in Victorian England is extensive, with four good starting points being Powers, Richardson, Wilson, *Literature and Dance*, and Wilson, 'Arrival of the Waltz'.

Note that what appears to be the journal's confusing numeration as it goes from 1851 to 1852 is a result of 'volume inflation', as Benjamin Knysack cleverly describes it (communication of 15 January 2024), 1851 begins with vol. XXVI, it becomes XXVII with issue 18, XXVIII with issue 19 and XXIX with issue 22.

1812) and even supersede it: ‘polkas spring up like mushrooms’ and ‘This polkamania is unendurable’.[3] Yet quite aside from the miniscule size of our sample, there are two other things to consider before we rush to conclude that Basil was two-and-a-half times more likely to have heard a polka than he was a waltz: (1) *The Musical World* makes it clear that not all the ‘dance music’ it reviewed was intended for the ballroom; rather, some of the stylized-dance pieces were written for the recital stage, drawing room and even pedagogical purposes;[4] and (2) a typical ball featured a variety of dance-types during the course of the evening. Table 2 offers a programme that one might have encountered at London’s well-known Laurent’s Casino in 1848.[5]

Table 2. A programme from Laurent’s Casino, 1848 (after Richardson 109).

Type of dance	*Title*	*Composer*
Quadrille (first set)	‘Robert Bruce’	Musard
Polka	‘Souvenir de l’Hippodromme’	Fessy
Valse	‘Pas de fleurs’	Maretzek
Parisian Quadrille	‘Le Comte de Carmagnola’	Bosisio
Cellarius Waltz[a]	‘New National Mazurkas’	Sapinsky
Parisian Quadrille	‘Don Pasquale’	Tolbecque
Polka	‘Eclipse’	Koenig
Valse	‘Le Romantique’	Lanner
Parisian Quadrille	‘Nino’	Coote
Polka	‘Polka d’amour’	Walle[r]stein
Parisian Quadrille	‘Les Fêtes du Château d’Eau’	Musard
Polka	‘Les Amazones’	Val Morris

[a] The so-called ‘Cellarius Waltz’ was developed by the dance master Henri Cellarius (1805–1876) and combined elements of the waltz and the mazurka (Cellarius 74–76).

[3] *The Musical World*, XXVI, 5 (1 February 1851), 70, and XXX, 7 (14 February 1852), 103, respectively. The dating of the introduction of the waltz in England is usually based on its first appearance at Almack’s Assembly Rooms (Richardson 93, Wilson, ‘Arrival of the Waltz’).

[4] For example, William Vincent Wallace’s *Grand Polka de Concert* would fit into the first of these categories, while J.R. Ling’s *The Chrystal* [sic] *Palace Polka* falls nicely into the third, being ‘excellently adapted for teaching’; see *The Musical World*, XXX, no. 4 (24 January 1852), 59, and XXVI, no. 5 (1 February 1851), 70, respectively. The Irish-born Wallace (1812–1865) was a major composer of English-language opera, with such successes as *Maritana* (1846) and *Lurline* (1847/1860); J.R. Ling, turned out a great deal of dance music and is undoubtedly related to the generation-older William T. Ling (fl. end of eighteenth/beginning of nineteenth century), about whom, see Brown and Stratton 248.

[5] On Laurent’s Casino, see Briggs 645, 647–55, 659–60.

THE COMPOSERS: Philippe Musard (1792–1839), Charles-Alexandre Fessy (1804–1858), Max Maretzek (1821–1897), Crispiniano Bosisio (1806/07–1858), Sapinsky = ?, Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Tolbecque (1797–1869) *or* Isidore-Joseph Tolbecque (1794–1869), Hermann Koenig (c. 1815–after 1870), Joseph Lanner (1801–1843), Charles Coote (1809–1880), Anton Wallerstein (1813–1892) (listed incorrectly in the programme as 'Wallenstein'), Val Morris is likely the American composer Sam V. Morris, active in the mid-nineteenth century and well known for his *Nebraska Polka* (Boston: Ditson, 1855).

Further, if we allow for approximately fifteen minutes per dance (see Powers, at 44:55, who draws upon an undated program from later in the century), Basil may well have heard one type of dance when he first approached the party and another upon his return, more than a quarter of an hour later. Beyond that we (or at least I) cannot go.

One final point remains, this having to do with Collins's two-piece dance band. Assuming that Margaret's wealthy aunt hired professional musicians, we can almost certainly speak of a two-*man* band. In 1851, one year prior to the publication of *Basil*, there were approximately 5,700 professional musicians in England and Wales; of these, no fewer than about 5,200 were men, so that they outnumbered women by about ten-to-one (Ehrlich 235). Odds are, then, that it was *Mr* Pianoforte and *Mr* Harp whom Basil heard that evening.

2. The organ grinder outside Basil's home

The calamitous confrontation between Basil and his father appears in Pt III, Chap. 3, 195–202; and once again, Collins speaks for himself. Here Basil is the only speaker; italics represent my emphasis; and, on three occasions, I have filled in extensive omissions with some necessary details of Basil's narration (in square brackets and smaller type).

> [196–97] Outside . . . the few stunted dusky trees were now *rustling* . . . Distant, but yet well within *hearing* . . . the mighty *murmur* from a large thoroughfare . . . While nearer still, in a street that ran past the side of the house, *the notes of an organ rang out shrill and fast; the instrument was playing its liveliest waltz tune*—a tune which I had danced to over and over again.[a]
>
> Minute after minute glided on, inexorably fast; and yet I never broke my *silence*.
>
> [Basil confesses that Margaret Sherwin is his wife; there is no indication that the organ has stopped.]
>
> [199] My father was leaning against one of the book-cases with his hands clasped over his breast.
>
> I ran horror-stricken to his side . . . He . . . thrust me from him furiously . . . The pleasant *rustling* of the trees *mingled musically* with the *softened, monotonous rolling* of carriages in the distant street, while *the organ-tune, now changed to*

the lively measures of a song, rang out clear and cheerful above both, and poured into the room as lightly and happily as the very sunshine itself.

[Basil's father takes a volume that contains the family's history from the book case and turns to the page devoted to Basil.]

[202] On this page my father now looked . . . *The organ-notes sounded no more;* but the trees *rustled* as pleasantly, and the *roar* of the distant carriages *swelled* as joyously as ever *on the ear*. Some children had come out to play . . . their *voices* reached us so fresh, and clear, and happy—but another modulation of the thanksgiving song to God which the trees were *singing* in the summer air—I saw my father, while he still looked on the page . . .

[Basil's father tears Basil's page out of the volume and refers to him 'not as a stranger . . . but as an enemy' . . .]

[a] The reference to the 'waltz tune' recalls the dance music at the home of Margaret's aunt, thus providing the two musical passages with a modicum of unity.

Collins had prepared us for this play of sounds on two occasions. First, Basil had just told us (192–93, italics added):

> While I now waited alone in my room, the most ordinary *sounds* . . . enthralled me . . . *noises* of a footstep, the *echo* of a voice, the *shutting or opening* of a door . . . presage some mysterious calamity . . . I found myself *listening intently* . . . a dread, *significant quiet* appeared to have fallen suddenly on the house.

Second, Collins had already called attention to the organ grinder in particular in the 'Letter of Dedication' that appears at the beginning of the novel: 'in certain parts of this book, where I have attempted to excite the suspense or pity of the reader, I have admitted as perfectly fit accessories to the scene the most ordinary *street sounds* [my emphasis] . . .' (xxxvi). Thus Collins intends both Basil and readers alike to notice these sounds. *It is all about the ear!*

It is interesting to compare the musical allusions of the two scenes, since they differ in significant ways. Table 3 sums things up as succinctly as possible:

Table 3. A comparison of the role and context of the musical allusions in the scenes.

	Music at the ball	*Music at the confrontation between Basil and his father*
a)	serves as a prelude to the calamity	accompanies the confrontation almost in its entirety
b)	originates inside the home/heard outside in the street	originates outside in the street/heard inside the home (thus a mirror image, with a window as the passageway both times)
c)	dance music is complemented by the 'glare of light' = *visual*	the organ grinder is complemented by 'trees rustling', 'mighty murmur from a large thoroughfare', children's voices, Basil's own 'silence', 'roar of distant carriages' = *sonic*
d)	music and social class complement one another, as the ball takes place at the home of Margaret's wealthy aunt	music and social class contradict one another, as the music of a lowly organ grinder invades the home of one of England's oldest aristocratic families

There is, however, another way to hear the organ grinder's 'ordinary street sounds'. Though Basil describes the music as 'lively', 'clear and cheerful', we can also hear it as intrusive, taunting and even as a source of torment. And who would better enjoy the tortured anguish of this aristocratic family than Robert Mannion, whose own father (as Mannion explains in a letter to Basil) went to the gallows when Basil's father would not intervene on his behalf?[6] Heard this way, the organ grinder is the ultimate *Doppelgänger:* he is both Mannion's 'voice' and the living specter of a character (Mannion's father) who died before the novel begins.[7] As such, he is a terrifying figure, and perhaps the scene as a whole stands as Collins's most aberrant allusion to music.

In the end, Collins has provided music appropriate to each occasion. In the first, the piano-harp duo and ballroom music together underscore Basil's (and the wealthy aunt's) privileged position; in the second, the street music of the lowly organ grinder (heard in realistic terms) foretells Basil's soon-to-be-altered circumstances. Music of privilege gives way to that of London's immigrant street musicians, who, already in 1851, if we accept Henry Mayhew's estimate, numbered about one thousand and were as often as not deemed undesirable with respect to both their music and their manners (they

[6] Mannion's father had forged a document using the name of Basil's father (his patron). Rather than help him, Basel's father initially testified against him, coming to his aid only when it was too late (228).
[7] As Goldman points out (352), the death penalty for forgery was abolished in 1835.

were sometimes paid just to go away).[8] Thus for those of Collins's readers who *listen* attentively, the change in Basil's fortune is narrated as clearly and precisely by the music as it is by Collins's words themselves; and this—the idea that the drama resides in the music—has been a powerful force in opera scholarship since Joseph Kerman's classic study *Opera as Drama* of 1956.

Finally, although there is clearly no way to identify just what tunes Basil and his father heard, we can, thanks to an informative interview with an Italian organ grinder (typically from what was then the Duchy of Parma) that appears in volume 3 of the 1861 edition of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor,* get an idea of the kind of music that sounded outside their window:

> My organ play [*sic.*] eight tunes. Two are from opera, one is a song, one a waltz, one is hornpipe, one is a polka, and the other two is dancing tunes. One is from '[I] Lombardi,' of Verdi.[a] All the organs play that piece . . . The other opera piece is 'Il Trovatore'[b] . . . The other piece is English piece, which we call 'Liverpool Hornpipe' . . . Then come 'The Ratcatcher's Daughter' . . . After that . . . 'Minnie,' another English piece . . . The next one is a Scotch contra-danse . . . The next one . . . is a polka . . . The next one is . . . a valtz [*sic.*] of Vienna (175–76).
>
> [a] There are two possible excerpts from *I Lombardi* (1843—first performance in England on 12 May 1846, at Her Majesty's Theatre) to which the organ grinder might be referring: the Act 3 trio 'Qual voluttà trascorrere' and the Act 4 chorus 'O signore dal tetto natio', both of which gained popularity outside the opera itself.
>
> [b] Note that Verdi's *Il Trovatore* had not yet been completed when Collins published *Basil;* the opera premiered at Rome on 19 January 1853, with its first performance in England coming on 10 May 1855 at Covent Garden.

In sum: I have twice asked the same question about the music in these climactic passages: just what did Basil hear? And both times I have failed to offer a definitive answer. Indeed, Collins chose not to provide one, likely because the context of the two passages is such that reference to specific compositions and/or composers is not essential either to the plot or to the characters. It is enough to describe the 'right kind' of music. On the other hand, I hope that I have shown that, in his choice of musical references, Collins was thinking much as an opera composer would: the music tells the story. Finally, if the title of my paper, with its reference to 'hearing' *Basil*, now seems at least slightly less odd, I will consider my thinking out loud to have been worthwhile.

---

[8] Mayhew (159). Although reference here is to the 1861 edition, Mayhew had offered the same estimate in his 'Letter 55' to the *Morning Chronicle,* 6 June 1850. In 1863–64, Michael Thomas Bass (1799–1884), Member of Parliament and brewmaster, introduced legislation in the House of Commons that would regulate where, when and under what circumstances street musicians could play; Bass presents his case in his *Street Music in the Metropolis* of 1864, where the list of his supporters includes Wilkie Collins (42); see also Zucchi 84ff., Jensen 234–37.

INVENTORY

The Inventory consists of a list of fifty-six composers and/or compositions cited by Collins in the course of his works. The citations vary widely in terms of specificity: references to pieces in the 'classical' canon may name a composer along with a specific composition, a genre in general or even something less than that, as in 'some of those little melodies of Mozart's (No. 6); occasionally, there is no composer but only a well-known title (No. 7). On the other hand, music of the 'everyday' variety (that is, 'popular' or 'traditional') is always cited by specific title (and without reference to composer or lyricist).

I have organized the citations in two chronologically arranged lists, one each for the classical canon (Part A, Nos. 1–34) and the everyday sort (Part B, Nos. 35–56). In both lists, novels are cited according to the date of their first integral edition, short stories (with one exception) according to their appearance in a collection of such.

If in Part A, Collins does not mention a composer, I have supplied the name (along with dates) in square brackets (surname only if the composer is well known). For excerpts drawn from a larger work (usually an opera or an oratorio), I have, when Collins does not, identified the piece in question. On occasion, I have altered Collins's citation of a piece in favor of a 'standard' title (though I also provide the original version); and, as in the body of the text, references to Collins's works and page numbers therein are keyed to the editions listed in Works Cited, Part 1.

In Part B, titles precede composers and lyricists, whose names appear in that order separated by a slash; if music and words are by the same person, that is noted; 'traditional' refers to what we might call a 'folk' song; and the 'A' number that follows the page(s) in Collins refers to the serial number in Atlas, *Wilkie Collins Songbook*. Finally, this inventory updates and improves that in Atlas, 'Musical References'.

Part A: Classical Music

***Hide and Seek* (1854)**

1. [Handel (1685–1759)], 'See, the Conquering Hero ,, from the oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus,* Act 3 (1747, reused that same year in *Joshua*); played here by a circus band in the presence of Valentine Blyth (42).

2. [Thomas Arne (1710–1778)], 'Rule Britannia', from the masque *Alfred* (1740); Zack Thorpe hums it while toasting muffins at the fireplace (123).

***The Dead Secret* (1857)**

3. Mozart (1756–1791), 'Batti, batti', from the opera *Don Giovanni,* Act 1 (1787); one of two numbers from the opera that are imprinted on the cylinder of Uncle Joseph's music box (144, 146, 219–21); the citations on pp. 219–21 do not refer to the duet specifically, but there can be no doubt which of the music box's two excerpts is intended.

4. Mozart, 'Minuet', from *Don Giovanni,* Act 1; the other number from the opera to which the music box is set (166).

5. [Karl Gottlieb Reissiger (1798–1859)], ['Webers letzte Gedanke'], No. 5 in Reissiger's *Dances brilliants pour le pianoforte* (1822); Collins cites it as the 'Last Waltz of Weber', which varies slightly from the title by which the piece was generally known in England: 'Weber's Last Waltz' (my thanks to the late Oliver W. Neighbour for this observation); Rosamond Treverton plays it for Leonard Frankland (249).

***The Woman in White* (1860)**

6. Mozart, 'some of those little melodies of Mozart's' (145); Laura Fairlie performs them at the piano for a group that includes Walter Hartwright; this seems to be the earliest instance in which Collins differentiates between his love of Mozart and his distaste for the 'modern German' school as personified by the Schumanns (composer Robert, pianist Clara), and which, for Collins, had its origins in Beethoven.

7. [Rossini (1792–1868)], ['Largo al factotum'], from the opera *The Barber of Seville,* Act 1 (1816); cited as 'Figaro's favorite song'; Count Fosco sings it, accompanying himself on the concertina (250).

8. Rossini, *Overture to Guillaume Tell* (1832); Fosco asks if this overture is not 'but a symphony under another name?' (336).

9. Rossini, *Moses in Egypt* (1818); Fosco plays three excerpts from the opera at the piano for Marian Halcombe (336); later he sings 'the magnificent melody of the Prayer ['Dal suo stellato soglio'] . . . in a sonorous bass voice' (587).

10. Donizetti (1797–1848), *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833); Walter Hartwright and Professor Pesca attend a performance of the opera; Collins describes the music as 'delicious' (588–89).

***No Name* (1862)**

11. Beethoven (1770–1827), 'Symphony' [No. 7] (1813); Mr Vanstone describes the music as 'Crash-Bang for forty minutes with three stoppages by the way'; the combination of the duration (obviously approximate), the number of 'stoppages' (three 'stoppages' = four movements) and some Mary Magdalen-related number symbolism point more strongly to the Seventh than to any other symphony; this corrects Atlas, 'Musical References; see Atlas, *Wilkie Collins Songbook.*

12. Mendelssohn (1809–1847), ‘Songs’; ‘Magdalen [Vanstone] trifled away half an hour at the piano; and played, in that time, selections from the Songs of Mendelssohn, the Mazurkas of Chopin, the Operas of Verdi, and the Sonatas of Mozart’ (69); the Mendelssohn surely refers to his *Lieder ohne Worte* (‘Songs without Words’, vols. 1-8, 1829–1845).

13. Chopin (1810–1849), ‘Mazurkas’ (as in no. 12).

14. Verdi (1813–1901), ‘Operas’ (as in no. 12).

15. Mozart, ‘Sonatas’ (as in no. 12); Nos 12–15 do not permit more specific identifications.

***Armadale* (1866)**

16. Weber (1786–1826), ‘waltz in the opera *Der Freischütz*’ (1821); a reference to the well-known waltz in Act 1, with which a band serenades a listener in the spa town of [Bad] Wildbad (11).

17. Beethoven, [unspecified piano music]; Lydia Gwilt writes: ‘I have hired a reasonably good piano. The only man I care two straws about . . . BEETHOVEN—keeps me company in my lonely hours’ (162); that Collins associates Miss Gwilt with Beethoven is not a compliment to either of them.

18. Bellini (1801–1835), [*Norma* (1831)]; though the opera is not specified, Miss Gwilt refers to the Act I ‘chorus of Druids’ (‘Ite, sul colle Cruidi’) (556).

***Man and Wife* (1870)**

19. Mozart, ‘Adagio, Sonata No. 15’ for piano and violin; Julian Delamayn plays the sonata with Mrs Glenarm, to whom he says: ‘We will begin with the Adagio’; Collins writes that Julian ‘soared to the seventh heaven of musical delight’ (35, 37). To correct Atlas, ‘Musical References’: there are three Mozart sonatas for piano and violin that have at one time or another been designated ‘No. 15’: K.526 in A major (1787), K.454 in B-flat major (1784) and K.30 in F major (1766, when Mozart was ten years old); (1) we can eliminate K.526 on the grounds that it is designated No. 15 only in some present-day editions (for example, that issued by G. Henle in 1995); (2) K.30 is most unlikely, since works from Mozart’s childhood were not part of the repertory, amateur or professional, in Collins’s time (it appears as No. 15 in *Mozart’s Werke*, Ser. XVIII, Band 1); (3) Collins is surely referring to the Sonata in B-flat major, K.454, which is designated No. 15 in two important nineteenth-century editions, those issued by C.F. Peters and Breitkopf & Härtel, both of which include thematic indices that agree in labeling K.454 No. 15 (note that this sonata is No. 32 in the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*); the only possible objection (quickly dismissed) is that the slow introduction with which the sonata begins is marked ‘Largo’, not ‘Adagio’, as Julian Delamayn states; Collins, though, would likely have recalled only that the opening of the work was slow; my thanks to Joel Lester for his insights into the question. (A note on the ‘K’ [sometimes ‘KV’] numbers: these are the standard numbers used to identify Mozart’s works and

derive from the first truly comprehensive attempt to catalogue them in chronological order: Ludwig von Köchel's *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis* of 1862, to which the 3rd and 6th editions [1937 and 1964, respectively] offered major revisions.)

***The New Magdalen* (1873)**

20. Verdi, 'La donna e [*recte* è] mobile' from the opera *Rigoletto,* Act 3 (1851)*;* Julian Gray whistles it in the street (68).

***Poor Miss Finch* (1873)**

21. Beethoven, [unspecified pieces for piano]; Madame Pratolungo plays them for Lucilla (26).

22. Chopin (as in no. 21).

23. Mozart (as in no. 21).

24. Schubert (1797–1828) (as in no. 21); Nos. 21–24 do not permit more specific identifications.

***The Frozen Deep* (1874, the original play, 1857)**

25. [Emanuel Aloys Förster (1748–1823)], *Mozart's Celebrated Air in A with [10] Variations* (publ. after 1834); given the title with which the piece circulated, Collins quite understandably attributed it to Mozart himself; Lucy Crawford plays it for Clara Burnham (48); this corrects Atlas, 'Musical References' (per Losseff 539); note that the citation did not appear in the original 1857 stage work on which Collins collaborated with Dickens.

***The Law and the Lady* (1875)**

26. [Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782–1871)], 'Castanet Song' ('La belle Inès fait flores', which is accompanied by castanets), *Le* [Collins: *The*] *Domino noir,* Act 2 (1837); sung by Miss Hoighty at a gathering at the home of Major Fitz-David; she aspires to become an opera singer (266).

27. Bellini, 'Come per me sereno', *La sonnambula,* Act 1 (1831); Miss Hoighty was singing this when the major heard her for the first time (72).

***Jezebel's Daughter* (1880)**

28. Gluck (1714–1787), *Armida* [Fr. *Armide*] (1777); Collins locates the performance in Frankfurt; David Glenney finds it 'wearisome for lack of melody' (73–77).

29. [**?**], 'My heart's relief is crying freely'; a German song, sung by Fritz Keller as he and David Glenney leave a concert at Vauxhall Gardens (10); I have not been able to identify the piece, and its inclusion in Part A is somewhat arbitrary,

influenced by the reference to a ‘concert’ and the rather *un*-‘everyday’ nature of the lyrics; given the song’s German origins (and assuming that it is not a total fabrication), perhaps the opening line was something close to ‘Frei zu weinen erleichtert mein Herz’ (with ‘befreit’ or ‘entlastet’ working just as well as ‘erleichtert’); my thanks to Nils Neubert for the hypothetical reconstructions.

***The Black Robe* (1881)**

30. Mozart, ‘Quartette’; likely one of the string quartets (there are twenty-three), though possibly a flute quartet (4) or the often-played oboe quartet (these feature flute or oboe together with violin, viola and cello); performed in the Picture Gallery, which has been set aside for chamber music during the course of a ball hosted by Lady Loring (90).

31. [Nicolas Isouard (1773–1818)], cited as ‘Nicolo’, *Joconde* [*Joconde, ou Les Coureurs d’aventures* (1814)]; Bernard Winterfield praises both the composer and the opera after hearing it in Paris at the Opéra Comique (151).

‘Miss Dulane and My Lord’ (1887, in *Little Novels*)

32. Arne, ‘Ariel’s Song’ [‘Where the bee sucks, there suck I’, from *The Tempest*, Act 1, scene 5], which Arne set as part of a 1746 revival of the play at Drury Lane; Matilda Dulane had once sung it in the music hall (220).

***The Legacy of Cain* (1889)**

33. Rossini, ‘My Heart is Light and my Will is Free’; an adaptation in English of the barcarole ‘Oh mattutini albori’ from the opera *La donna del lago*, Act 1 (1819); Selina Jillgall sings it when she needs to lift her spirits (220).

34. [**?**], ‘Here we are all alone in the wilderness’; the reference is to a chorus in an unidentified oratorio attended by Eunice Gracedieu, who thinks that it is ‘unendurable’ owing to its excessive repetition of text; she wishes that the composer had allotted ‘the poor music a more generous allowance of words’ (57); note that the line is not from any of Handel’s oratorios or the three such works by Mendelssohn (popular in England) or any of the 304 occurrences of ‘wilderness’ in the King James Version of the Old and New Testaments; perhaps Collins fashioned it himself.

Part B: ‘Everyday’ Music

***Mr Wray’s Cashbox* (1852)**

35. ‘Be Gone, Dull Care’, [traditional English]; Squire Colebatch sings the song in a ‘cracked tenor’ voice (138/A 8a–b).

***Hide and Seek* (1854)**

36. ‘Drops of Brandy’, [traditional Irish]; Valentine Blyth whistles it on two occasions (29, 49/A No. 9).

37. ‘Let the Toast Be, Dear Woman’, [George H.B. Rodwell (1800–1852)/Edward Fitzball (1792–1873)]: one of the tunes played by a circus band and heard by Valentine Blyth (42/A 10).

38. ‘Love’s Ritornella’, [Thomas Simpson Cooke (1782–1848)/James Robinson Planché (1796–1880)]: Collins cites it as ‘Gentle Zitella’, which words form part of a recurring refrain; another of the tunes played by the circus band (42/A 11).

39. ‘The Girl I Left Behind Me’, [traditional English/Irish?]; Peggy Burke, an Irish circus rider, whistles it (62/A 12).

40. ‘The Lass o’ Gowrie’, [traditional(?) Scottish, though likely composed by Neil Gow (1727–1807)/Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne (1766–1845)]; Zach Thorpe sings it while toasting a muffin (125/A 13a-b); Lady Nairne’s text is a contrafactum, set to the Scottish tune *Loch Erroch Side,* which itself had earlier lyrics by James Tytler (1745–1804).

‘The Biter Bit’ (1858): there are two versions of the story: ‘Who is the Thief . . .’, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 1858); revised as ‘Brother Griffith’s Story of the Biter Bit’, in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859); the latter version replaces the three specific references that follow (Nos. 41–43) with the generic ‘the tunes of certain popular songs’.

41. **‘**My Mary Ann’, [M. Tyte (fl. mid-1800s)/Barney Williams (1824–1876)]; Mr Jay, a suspected thief, hums the song while being spied upon by the ‘wanna-be’ detective Matthew Sharpin (228/A 14).

42. ‘Bobbin’ Around’, [William J. Florence, music and words (1839–1891)]; as in No. 41(228/A 15).

43. ‘Old Dog Tray’, [Stephen Foster, music and words (1826–1864)]; as in No. 41(228/A 16).

***The Woman in White* (1860)**

44. ‘La Carolina’, [Guglielmo Luigi Cottrau, music and words (1797–1847); born in Paris, Guillaume Louis]; Marian Halcombe tells us: Count Fosco ‘sat down at the piano, and played the air of the lively Neapolitan song, “La mia Carolina,” twice over’ (279); the song appeared c. 1840 in Cottrau’s *Passatempi musicali*, published incrementally beginning in 1824; Collins might have heard *Carolina* either during his family’s Neapolitan sojourn in 1837 or when he returned there in 1853 (the 1863 visit is too late for *Woman*); not accounted for in either Atlas, ‘Musical References’, or Atlas, *Wilkie Collins Songbook* (the page reference to Collins after Chatto & Windus, 1896).

***No Name* (1862)**

45. ‘Tom Bowling’, [Charles Dibdin, music and words (1745–1814)]; Old Mazey sings it; this is by far Dibdin’s best-known song; the original title: ‘Poor Tom, or the Sailor’s Epitaph’ (464/A 17).

***Armadale* (1866)**

46. ‘The Last Words of Marmion’, [John Clarke-Whitfield (1770–1836)/Walter Scott (1771–1832)]; Collins cites it as ‘The Death of Marmion’; it is part of a medley of songs (Nos. 46– 49) with which Augustus Pedgift, Jr., entertains the picnic party onboard a boat on the Norfolk Broads; Collins describes it as consisting of ‘declamatory and patriotic bursts of poetry, set to the bold and blatant music which the people of England loved dearly at the earlier part of the present century, and which, whenever they can get it, they love dearly still’ (251/A 18); the text is drawn from Scott’s 1808 *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (canto 6, stanza 32, lines 20–29).

47. ‘The Battle of the Baltic’, [Frances Arkwright (1787–1849)/Thomas Campbell (1777–1844)]; as in No. 46 (251/A 19a–b).

48. ‘The Bay of Biscay’, [John Davy (1763–1824)/Andrew Cherry (1762–1812)]; as in No. 46 (251/A 20).

49. ‘Nelson’, [John Braham (1774–1856)/S.J. Arnold (1774–1852)]; as in No. 46 (251/A 21).

50. ‘The Mistletoe Bough’, [Henry Rowley Bishop (1787–1856)/Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797–1839)]; having completed the medley of four patriotic songs (Nos. 46–49), Pedgift, Jr., asks ‘Will you have a little sentiment by way of variety?’; he then proceeds with Nos. 50–52 (252/A 22).

51. ‘Poor Mary Anne’, [traditional Welsh/Amelia Opie (1796–1853)]; the earliest-known lyrics for the song are the Welsh ‘Ar hyd y nos’; Opie’s English-language contrafactum dates from c. 1796, and was likely the poem with which the song was known to Collins and his readers; the song is best known today as ‘Sleep, my love, and peace attend thee/All through the night’, lyrics by Harold Edwin Boulton (1884); as in No. 50 (252/A 23).

52. ‘Eveleen’s Bower’, [traditional Irish/Thomas Moore (1779–1852)]; the music-making ends with Pedgift, Jr., accompanying Allan Armadale, with Mrs Pentecost helping them along in comic fashion; as in No. 50 (252–53/A 24).

***The Moonstone* (1868)**

53. ‘The Last Rose of Summer’, [traditional Irish/Thomas Moore]; Sergeant Cuff whistles it softly to himself on several occasions, most poignantly while looking out the window deep in thought (126, 131, 136, 151, 170; not in Atlas, ‘Musical References’, or Atlas, *Wilkie Collins Songbook*).

***My Lady's Money* (1879)**

54. ['Alice Gray', Virtue (Mrs Philip) Millard (1786–1854)/William Mee (1788–1862)]; Old Sharon sings 'a song of sentiment, popular in England in the early part of the present century'; though Collins omits the title, 'Alice Gray', he quotes the opening lines: 'She's all my fancy painted her;/she's lovely, she's divine;/but her heart it is another's/and it never can be mine' (61, A 25); line 1 was parodied by Lewis Carroll ('She's all my fancy painted *him* [my emphasis]', in *The Comic Times* [8 September 1855]), but never used in *Alice in Wonderland;* it was quoted by Mark Twain (still Samuel Langhorne Clemens) in a letter dated 4 May 1862, while he was prospecting for gold in the Nevada Territory.

***Heart and Science* (1883)**

55. 'We're Gayly Yet', [traditional Scottish]; sung by the ten-year-old Zoe (314–15/A 26).

***The Guilty River* (1886)**

56. 'The Nervous Man', [Jonathan Blewitt (1782–1853)/John Francis (fl. 1830s)]; after Cristel Toller sings the first verse, Gerard Roylake calls it a 'stupid comic song' and says that it exhibits 'vulgarity', thus pointing to the initial class difference (later reconciled) between them (91/A 27).

Works Cited

Primary Sources: Wilkie Collins

Armadale (1864): Penguin Classics. Ed. John Sutherland. London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Basil (1852): World's Classics. Ed. Dorothy Goldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

'Biter Bit, The' (1858): in *Mad Monkton and other Stories.* Ed. Norman Page and Kamal Al-Solaylee. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Black Robe, The (1881): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994.

Dead Secret, The (1857): New York: Dover, 1979.

Fallen Leaves, The (1879): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994.

Frozen Deep, The (1874, the original play produced in 1857): in *The Frozen Deep and Mr Wray's Cash-Box*: Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1996.

Guilty River, The (1886): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1991.

Heart and Science (1883): Broadview Literary Texts. Ed. Steve Farmer. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1996.

Hide and Seek (1854): introduction by Norman Donaldson. New York: Dover, 1981.

'I Say No' (1885): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995.

Jezebel's Daughter (1880): Pocket Classics. Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995.
Law and the Lady, The (1875): World's Classics. Ed. Jenny Bourne Taylor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Legacy of Cain, The (1889): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995.
Man and Wife (1870): World's Classics. Ed. Norman Page. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
'Miss Dulane and My Lord', in *Little Novels* (1887): New York: Dover, 1977.
Moonstone, The (1868): Signet Classics. Introduction by Frederick R. Karl. New York: New American Library, 1984.
My Lady's Money (1879): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990.
New Magdalen, The (1873): Pocket Classics. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1993.
No Name (1864): World's Classics. Ed. Virginia Blain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
Poor Miss Finch (1873): World's Classics. Ed. Catherine Peters. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
Woman in White, The (1860): Penguin English Library. Ed. Julian Symons. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974.

Secondary Sources

Atlas, Allan W. 'Musical References in the Works of Wilkie Collins: An Inventory'. *The New Collins Society Newsletter* 3:1 (Winter 2000) 18–24.
Atlas, Allan W. 'Wilkie Collins, Mr. Vanstone, and the Case of Beethoven's 'No Name' Symphony', *Dickens Studies Annual* 33 (2003) 217–40.
Atlas, Allan W. *A Wilkie Collins Songbook.* Recent Researches in the Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 88. Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2023.
Briggs, Jo. 'Gavarni at the Casino: Reflections on Class and Gender in the Visual Culture of 1848'. *Victorian Studies* 53:4 (Summer 2011) 639–64.
Brown, James D. and Stephen S. Stratton. *British Musical Biography: A Dictionary of Musical Artists, Authors and Composers born in Britain and its Colonies.* London: William Reeves, 1897; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971.
Cellarius, Henri. *Fashionable Dancing*. London: David Bogue, 1847.
Cottrau, Guglielmo Luigi. *Passatempi musicali.* Naples: B. Girard, [c. 1840].
Ehrlich, Cyril. *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
Jensen, Oskar Cox. *The Ballad-Singer in Georgian and Victorian London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
Kawataba, Mai. *Paganini: The 'Demonic' Virtuoso.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013.
Kerman, Joseph. *Opera as Drama*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1956; rev. ed., 1988.

Kitson, Richard. '[Introduction to] *The Musical World* from 1836 to 1865', in *Répertoire international de la presse musicale* (*RIPM*). Ann Arbor, 1996–1997, pp. ix–xix; https://ripm.org/pdf/Introductions/MWO1836-1865introEnglish-pdf.

Köchel, Ludwig Ritter von. *Chronologisch-thematisich Verzeichnis der sämtlicher Tonwerke Wolfgang Amadé Mozarts*, 6th ed. Ed. Franz Giegling, Alexander Weinmann and Gerd Sievers. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1964 (1st ed., 1862).

Losseff, Nicky. 'Absent Melody and "The Woman in White"'. *Music & Letters* 81:4 (2000) 532–50.

Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour and the London Poor,* vol. 3. London: Griffin, Bohn, 1861; reprint New York: Dover, 1968.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Sonaten für Klavier und Violine,* Band 3. Ed. Wolf-Dieter Sieffert. Munich: G. Henle, 1995.

Mozart's Werke. Ser. XVIII, Band 1: *Sonaten und Variationen für Pianoforte und Violine.* Ed. Otto Goldschmidt, Joseph Joachim *et al.* Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879.

Musical World, The. 26:1 (4 January 1851) – 31:52 (24 December 1853).

Neue Mozart-Ausgabe. Serie VIII, Werkgruppe 23: *Sonaten und Variationen für Klavier und Violine,* Band 2. Ed. Eduard Reeser. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965.

Powers, Richard. 'Polkamania and the Mid-Nineteenth Century Dances', Presentation at the *37th Festival, Early Dance Circle Online*, Friday 18–Sunday 20, October 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYJp7X8mWLo.

Richardson, Philip J.S. *The Social Dances of the Nineteenth Century in England*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1960.

Wilson, Cheryl A. 2009. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman.* Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Wilson, Cheryl A. 2016. 'The Arrival of the Waltz in England, 1812'. *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History.* Ed. Dino Franco Felluga. Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net (April 2016); https://branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=cheryl-a-wilson-the-arrival-of-the-waltz-in-england-1812.

Zucchi, John E. *The Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Street Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Paris, London, and New York*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

No Name as a Generic Hybrid: The Coming-Out of Magdalen Vanstone

K.A. Kale

The first few chapters of Wilkie Collins's *No Name* (1862) have the flavour of a Jane Austen novel. In this article I argue that the similarity is not merely an indication of Collins's versatility but the key to reading the work. The novel has sparked lively debate as a consequence of its unconventional heroine and its social commentary.[1] Vicky Simpson argues that Collins uses the central quest to examine rigid Victorian family structures, whereas Anna Jones provides a reading of Magdalen as a self-determining masochistic heroine. This article enters the discussion by suggesting how *No Name* can be regarded as a generic amalgam—a melodrama which sits atop the substructure of the long-eighteenth-century coming-out novel. (I define a coming-out novel as one which deals with the introduction of a young girl into the social world, and which culminates in her marriage.[2] Examples include Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), *Cecelia* (1782), and *Camilla* (1796); Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda (*1801); and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818), of course.)[3] Collins plays with the coming-out novel's conventions through characters and events which can be interpreted radically differently depending on the reader's genre assumptions. By creating this multi-layered narrative prism, Collins not only imbues his novel with a dream-like quality, but also interrogates social conventions and ideals of femininity, courtship, and domesticity enshrined by literary tradition.

This article also shows that the substructure of *No Name* can itself be divided into two layers, an actual and a hypothetical, so that *No Name* is effectively a three-layered construction. The surface layer is the obvious melodrama full of horrific events; the second consists of the events of the first layer but seen with the expectations and conventions of the coming-out novel

[1] As Beth Massie's research shows, Collins was writing in the aftermath of cultural fears that sentimental courtship novels promoted unrealistic expectations, while authors like Austen parodied the courtship novel's excesses.

[2] The coming-out novel is a specific kind of courtship novel, and I define the latter as a novel which is concerned with the heroine's journey to marriage. Different critics may reasonably disagree about whether or not a particular courtship novel is also a coming-out novel, but this does not affect my argument.

[3] Southam (62) states that 'there is a good case for Mr. Emden's theory: that Jane Austen added the Gothic element to a story [*Northanger Abbey*] which was originally concerned with a young girl's entry into society, not unlike the adventures of Catharine Percival [in 'Catharine, or the Bower,' one of Jane Austen's juvenilia].' Mudrick (48–51) argues that *Northanger Abbey* is itself a deconstruction of the Gothic novel, but this does not affect my argument.

in mind, and viewed with a humorous eye; and the third is counterfactual, involving a different potential life trajectory for the heroine, projected in accordance with the expectations and conventions of the coming-out novel. I shall show how reading the text on the second level adds greatly to the comedy which Collins has already sprinkled on the first, and also how the contrast between the events that hypothetically might be reasonably expected on the third level, and the actual disasters on the first, adds to the horror of the melodrama.

After I have completed this formalist analysis, I shall discuss, as a corollary, what Collins gained by writing a deconstruction of the coming-out novel rather than a pastiche, and also how Magdalen Vanstone should more appropriately be judged by the standards of Jane Austen's heroines than those of Collins. The latter is not because I have reason to believe that Collins must have been influenced by Austen, but because Austen's heroines demonstrate substantial development during the course of their stories, more so than the heroines of most other courtship novels. Joseph Duffy states:

> *Emma* is not simply a portrait of society having for its focal point of reference the activities of a clever and wilful girl; nor is it a portrait of that girl in her reaction against society. Society is always secondary to the career of the novel's chief performer and her subject. The theme of *Emma* is the passage of its heroine from innocence to experience—from dreams to consciousness; and Highbury and its environs is the arena wherein she achieves this knowledge of reality. The novel is the record of a dramatic engagement with experience that moves its protagonist relentlessly through fantasy to reality.
>
> (Duffy, 'The Awakening,' 40)

Similarly, although on the first level *No Name* is the story of Magdalen's attempts to regain the family fortune, on the second its theme is the 'passage of its heroine from innocence to experience.' By casting his coming-out novel in the form of a melodrama, Collins is able to take his protagonist on a journey in the opposite direction to Emma Woodhouse's (and indeed Catherine Morland's), and move her from what would generally be called reality to what would generally be called fantasy.

Although a more traditional discussion of Collins's novels can be found in his biographies,[4] in this article I am taking a formalist approach which derives from that of Dennis Porter. We both analyse works within particular genres (in his case detective fiction, and in my case the Victorian melodrama and the long-eighteenth-century coming-out novel) in terms of the plot functions of the character-types found within these genres. My approach is different from Porter's, however, in that I shall use the technique to analyse a

[4] See: Robinson; Peters; Klimaszewski; Ackroyd; and Lycett. A formalist discussion of Austen's novels can be found in Jenkyns.

single work, *No Name*, in terms of the conventions not of one genre but of two, and, furthermore, I shall show how the two perspectives enrich each other.

* * * * *

In the text Collins's Captain Wragge is 'characterised, very remarkably, by eyes of two different colours … both sharply intelligent.' (25). The difference in eye colours has no function in the plot, but it is symbolic of the text, which is characterised, very remarkably, by genres of two different kinds, both utilised with a sharp intelligence. Earlier I have shown how Wilkie Collins's 1866 novel *Armadale* changes genre from melodrama to marital tragedy mid-way through (Kale, 'Could Lydia Gwilt'). Here I argue that two different genres (in this case, melodrama and the coming-out novel) are present simultaneously rather than consecutively, and thus that *No Name* exemplifies a different technical exercise within a pattern of variations.

Collins breaks off from narrating his story to give a brief disquisition on closure in its specific form within the mystery genre, which he presents as an immutable law of nature but which is actually, in its wider and more general form, a convention of melodrama (dramatic closure) as well as the courtship novel (marital closure):

> Nothing in this world is hidden for ever. The gold which has lain for centuries unsuspected in the ground, reveals itself one day on the surface. Sand turns traitor, and betrays the footstep that has passed over it; water gives back to the tell-tale surface the body that has been drowned. Fire itself leaves the confession, in ashes, of the substance consumed in it. Hate breaks its prison-secrecy in the thoughts, through the doorway of the eyes; and Love finds the Judas who betrays it by a kiss. Look where we will, the inevitable law of revelation is one of the laws of nature; the lasting preservation of a secret is a miracle which the world has never yet seen.
>
> (Collins, 34)

This passage contains the key to why *No Name* is underrated. As Collins indicates in his preface, '[t]he only Secret contained in this book, is revealed midway in the first volume' (6). The mystery he refers to, along with the subsequent revelation, has the twin functions of supplying momentum to the early part of the book, and of providing contrast with the rest of the action. In the discussion of *Armadale*, I have argued that the reason that some readers may find that novel disappointing is that the prologue appears to herald a melodrama, whereas the book changes genre midway to a marital tragedy (Kale, 'Could Lydia Gwilt'). Similarly, in *No Name*, although the initial mystery does perform two important structural functions, it raises expectations in the reader if not specifically of a mystery novel, then at least of a tale with the definite closure associated with the mystery genre. In the later part of *No Name* the reader is led to hope that Magdalen will regain her anticipated

inheritance, which she is morally though not legally entitled to, yet there is no obvious morally acceptable way for her to do so. Collins does not resolve this dilemma: the route eventually taken by Magdalen is not a moral one, and so there is no neat resolution at the end comparable to the satisfying overthrow of a villain or the ultimate revelation of a secret.[5] I do not take any position on whether Collins consciously or subconsciously utilized the structure of the coming-out novel, or merely happened to reinvent the form independently—my interest is in the conflict and clash between the two genres, in how the structure of the coming-out novel can provide alternative interpretations for some of the specific melodramatic events and narratorial comments in *No Name*, and conversely in how *No Name* can illuminate the conventions of the coming-out novel. When I discuss how scenes or statements in the text could be interpreted in the context of the coming-out novel or the courtship novel, I am referring to a hypothetical generic coming-out novel or courtship novel, and not to specific precedents in particular texts.[6]

A coming-out novel has three conventions: a marriage-plot, an initially naive heroine, and the social and moral education of this heroine as she learns to conform to society. The first convention is that the heroine's story culminates in a marriage to an appropriate suitor, and one which the reader is expected to assume will be happy. By contrast, Magdalen has extreme distaste for her marriage, and this marriage does not represent the closure of her story. The second coming-out convention is the figure of the ingénue—a naive, innocent young heroine who is about to be introduced to society. Her ignorance highlights the education she will receive. Although Magdalen starts out as a sheltered girl, she rapidly evolves into a defiant, enterprising woman asserting power—a very different heroine from the typical ingénue. The third convention is the heroine's learning to conform to social expectations. Magdalen however resists moral correction by figures such as her governess Miss Garth and the family lawyer Mr Pendril. Unlike other ingénues, Magdalen asserts her identity through deceit and resisting social scripts. Courtship novels conventionally emphasize formal courtship rituals such as balls and social visits, take a positive view of the heroine's main romance, and portray women as waiting

[5] Magdalen is amoral but interesting; in *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen gives the role of Heroine to Fanny Price, who is highly moral but dull, and this also disappoints the reader's expectations, albeit in a different way. *Mansfield Park* is therefore another, albeit less elaborate, example of a novel in which a character function is cast in an unexpected way.

[6] As an aside, however, it is interesting to observe that Magdalen's eventful stay at Admiral Bartram's house, St Crux, is reminiscent of Catherine Morland's at Northanger Abbey, as both involve explorations in forbidden parts of the buildings and culminate in summary expulsions. Other similarities are that both Northanger Abbey and St Crux are owned by military men (General Tilney and Admiral Bartram respectively), while the Chaperones in both novels are jettisoned by the narrative before the Heroines visit the great houses. Bartram's name may also be a conscious or subconscious echo of the Bertrams in *Mansfield Park*.

passively for men's attentions and hoping to attract them by their virtues. Magdalen by contrast runs away from her family, engages in a manufactured flirtation with Noel Vanstone, and aggressively pursues him.

In what follows I shall use capitalisation to indicate general character functions to avoid confusion with particular characters in specific texts, thus 'Hero', 'Chaperone', and so forth. I shall define these functions during the course of my exposition where the terms are not self-explanatory; these definitions are based upon a reading of multiple works in the genres under discussion, and are analogous to those of Porter's character functions (Detective, False Detective, Witness, Suspects, and False Suspects) in his analysis of the detective story. At the first level of the text of *No Name*, Magdalen Vanstone fulfils the role of Hero in the melodrama, attempting to remedy an injustice, even though she is of the wrong sex, Noel Vanstone is the Villain, who must be outwitted, and Mrs Lecount is the cunning Villain's Accomplice.

* * * * *

I shall now discuss the second level of the text. In the coming-out novel *Belinda*, character functions include that of the Heroine, the Heroine's Rival, the Chaperone, the Hero (whose role is to marry the Heroine) and the False Hero (whose role is to provide a potential alternative mate for the Heroine).[7] In *No Name*, these character functions are all present but the roles are cast unusually. Magdalen Vanstone, the Heroine, is very strong-willed and active in the plot, and pursues the Hero instead of being pursued by him; Captain Wragge, who fulfils the role of the Chaperone to guide the Heroine in her progress though the world to the marriage with the Hero, is not merely of the wrong sex, but unusually intellectual and meticulous in his duties, as well as being amoral—he is more what we would today call a mentor than a chaperone; Mrs Lecount, the Heroine's Rival, in addition to being as intellectual and meticulous as Wragge, is very much older than the Heroine and is a rival to her financially rather than emotionally; the Hero, Noel Vanstone, is a feeble man, who is manipulated by the Heroine and the Chaperone as well as by the Heroine's Rival; and the False Hero, Frank Clare, is a feckless young man, as unworthy of Magdalen as Noel Vanstone. Early in the book, Magdalen makes a comment which works at two levels, foreshadowing this abstract issue of assignment of characters simultaneously to different roles within two different genres of novel which share the same plot, as well as, more obviously, her skill in disguising herself which is crucial to the melodrama plot at the first

[7] In this particular novel, the functions of the Heroine's Rival and the Chaperone are fulfilled by the same individual, Lady Delacourt, but this does not affect my use of *Belinda* for the illustration of these roles.

level of the text: '[t]he thing's simple enough. I'll act Julia and Lucy both together' (60).

The extradiegetic convention of romantic love in the courtship novel which decrees that there is one destined mate for the heroine, and that he and only he will do, is diegetically incorporated at the melodramatic level of *No Name*: Magdalen is pursuing a specific man for a specific reason which has no connection with romantic love.[8] The text shows that she finds her goal of marriage with Noel Vanstone both morally and personally repulsive, and this deconstructs the convention of the courtship novel which decrees that the heroine's marriage to the hero must be perceived as unequivocally desirable.[9] Throughout the novel, Magdalen vacillates from her purpose of regaining her family's fortune. On the first level of the text, the melodrama, these vacillations are an unwanted frustration, a set of internal obstacles to the protagonist's achievement of her goal which are added to the various external obstacles; but on the second level, that of the coming-out novel, these are desirable as saving the romantically desirable heroine both psychologically from further internal conflict, and morally from the corruption of her character. Thus Magdalen is riven by internal psychological conflicts between two sets of forces which originate with her roles in two different generic forms.

Collins hints at a possible alternative development of *No Name* (in what I call the third, counterfactual level of the text) which would have been more compatible with the coming-out novels named above, and which would have involved exactly the same cast of characters but with the assignment of characters to functions permuted and the roles filled in a more orthodox fashion. In this development, the Chaperone would have been the worthy Miss Garth, the Vanstone sisters' former governess; the Heroine's Rival would have been Magdalen's older sister, Norah; and the Hero would have been Captain Kirke, who becomes Magdalen's second husband at the end of the novel as it stands. Captain Wragge would then have been a Villain, trying either to swindle Magdalen (who would have been her father's joint heiress) or to dupe her into marrying Noel Vanstone, who would be a False Hero, and who would play the same role of unwanted suitor towards Magdalen as Mr Collins does to Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This alternative development would have been a straightforward pastiche of the coming-out novel rather than a deconstruction; but because in *No Name* as it stands the

[8] Elsewhere (Kale, 'Yes and No'), I have shown how Collins in his later novel *'I Say No*' either deliberately or unwittingly uses the related technique of using an extradiegetic principle to enable the reader to make a deduction about a diegetic event in the totally different context of a mystery plot.

[9] Elsewhere (Kale, 'The Romance of Mystery'), I argue that Smith by different means also deconstructs the courtship plot, by splitting the role of the Hero into two and also including two characters who oppose the closure involved in the courtship novel for reasons which originate in their personalities and which are different in the two cases.

characters are appropriate for a coming-out novel but their functions (on the second level of the text) are wrong, it has a disorienting quality.

Unlike Collins's well-known mysteries *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, at the first level of the text *No Name* is a sustained exercise in dealing with mysteries and secrets from the point of view of the insiders and the conspirators, those in the know, rather than from the viewpoint of the baffled onlookers. The key to understanding this aspect of the book lies in the witty exchange between George Bartram and his uncle the Admiral:

> 'Are you actually resolved to bind me to that incomprehensible condition?'
> 'I don't call it incomprehensible,' said the admiral, irritably.
>
> (Collins, 645)

At the first level, *No Name* is also a character-study of a heroine who resembles a runaway locomotive running amok throughout the novel while many of the other characters spend much of the book attempting to get her under control. Magdalen is perhaps the best Hero (though not, for the reason of her sex, the best hero) of all Collins's melodramas. She is more like a career-woman in a twentieth- or twenty-first-century novel than a typical Victorian heroine (and Collins does not judge her by the standards of Victorian morality); and she is juxtaposed on a comedic novelistic substructure which has its origins in the long-eighteenth-century. Also, although at the surface level *No Name* more resembles the picaresque narratives of Smollett, in which a character travels around the country meeting diverse characters, than a typical Victorian melodrama in which the hero must uncover a secret or outmanoeuvre a villain or group of villains, the story of Magdalen's travels is underpinned by a plot which is as tightly knit as any of Collins's others. Thus we have a forward-looking, post-Victorian character combined with an old-fashioned, eighteenth-century fictional substructure; and an old-fashioned, eighteenth-century travelogue held together not merely in the obvious way by unity of character but also by a highly-disciplined Collins plot.

The second level of *No Name* functions as a deconstruction of the coming-out novel, a deconstruction which questions the desirability of the institution of marriage that is the closure of its plot, and also the nature of the heroine's worldly education in such books. It gives a different emotional tone to the incidents in the melodrama, often making them humorous through their bizarre and incongruous quality, and also, on other occasions, often making them more horrific than the melodramatic level alone does. Collins's adroit use of wit and irony is at least as skilful as his deployment of melodramatic effects, and this has the effect not only of making the horror on the surface level of the text appear more intense by contrast, but also of leaving the reader torn between the desire for a continuation of the comedy and the desire for the resolution of the plot, just as Magdalen is diegetically torn between her scruples and her desire for vengeance. If Magdalen is the runaway locomotive

of the first level, who has broken loose from the conventions governing the Victorian woman, Wragge at the second level is the chaperone pushing with gusto against the expected boundaries of his formulaic role in a variety of ways, and—crucially—doing so in a series of actions which are always diegetically justified by the melodrama plot, and always consistent with his character as a scoundrel. Finally, Magdalen's secondary existence as potential heroine of a coming-out novel gives her an interest independent of her function in the melodrama plot, and this, together with her development through the course of the book, makes her perhaps the most realistic of Collins's characters.

Elsewhere, in discussing *'I Say No,'* I have argued that Collins frequently deals with questions of interpretation of evidence in his work (Kale, 'Yes and No'). In the case of *No Name*, this question involves the interpretation of the whole text rather than of any specific incident within it, and relates to the reader's emotional reaction to the events—as an involved, horrified, and moralistic Victorian or a detached, analytical, and amused Georgian—rather than any doubt about the events themselves.

A quirk of Collins, which he shows throughout his work, is that his strong women characters overshadow his relatively feeble heroes, though not his villains, or the lawyers who are minor characters—he appears to be either unable or unwilling to combine centrality of interest with masculinity and morality. Another quirk is that he gives sympathetic and thoughtful portrayals of those on the fringes of society. In *No Name*, Collins either artfully or coincidentally utilises these two quirks as strengths. Magdalen is the centre of interest throughout the book, and the notional Villain of the melodrama plot is as weak as the heroes in many of his other novels; although the weakness of Noel Vanstone is only an incidental detail in the melodrama (a stronger Noel Vanstone would merely have made Magdalen and Wragge's task harder), it is crucial for Collins's deconstruction of the courtship plot, as this deconstruction requires a worthless Hero. Magdalen is unusual for a Collins character because she commences the novel as a respectable member of society (who could easily have been a heroine in a Trollope or Austen novel), but then engages in a series of disreputable acts. Wragge is the kind of character who in Collins's other books might well have been the Villain, but here functions as the central character's helpmate.

* * * * *

I shall now examine various passages from the novel in some detail to show how they support the arguments above.

A double-layered example of proleptic irony is found on page 53: 'Miss Garth was prophetically pitying Magdalen's unfortunate husband.' At the first level of the text, this sentence specifically foreshadows Magdalen's odd marriage to Noel Vanstone, whereas at the second level, Miss Garth's thoughts

more generally refer to the problems which Magdalen's strong personality would cause in any marriage, and thus to her unsuitability to fill the role of Heroine in a courtship novel.

When Magdalen chooses not to attend Miss Garth's interview with Mr Pendril, we are shown her being trammelled by social conventions and restraints which are more appropriate for governing the Heroine of a coming-out novel than the protagonist of a melodrama: 'If my elder sister decided to keep away, how could I come?' (143–144).

Although the deaths of the two Vanstone parents in succession, followed by the revelations first of the two Vanstone sisters' illegitimacy and then of their disinheritance are shocking and surprising both for the reader and for the sisters, they do not prevent Magdalen from moving to London (as she subsequently does, for a brief period before running away), and would not have prevented her from becoming a governess (as her sister does) and meeting a man who does not have the character flaws of Frank Clare. Thus Magdalen's own decisions and not the prior catastrophes are responsible for the path she takes in life.

When Magdalen discovers that her relative has only offered her and her sister the derisory sum of one hundred pounds each, she makes a statement which is ironic at the first level of the text but which could be made, verbatim, as a non-ironic statement about a benefactor in a coming-out novel: 'Norah,' she said, 'if we both of us live to grow old, and if you ever forget all that we owe to Michael Vanstone—come to me, and I will remind you.' (157).

After Magdalen runs away to York, we are reminded of her potential as a heroine in a conventional coming-out novel (the third, counter-factual layer of the text, involving a different potential life trajectory) and of the conflict with her actual position: 'There she stood—not three months since the spoilt darling of her parents; the priceless treasure of the household, never left unprotected, never trusted alone—there she stood in the lovely dawn of her womanhood, a castaway in a strange city, wrecked on the world!' (193–94).

Magdalen's first encounter with Captain Wragge at York emphasises both the ingenuousness expected of the Heroine of a coming-out novel, and also Wragge's potential for educating her in the ways of the world, which will be fulfilled later on in the book: Collins refers to 'her little experience of society' and presents Wragge as 'one of the failures [of civilization which,] … with all her quickness, she was puzzled how to deal with …' (197). Subsequently, Captain Wragge's Chronicle of Events refers to visits to Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Preston, and Lancaster, then seven other large towns on the way to Birmingham (246–47). This indicates that Magdalen is getting a far more thorough worldly education (the attainment of which, with marriage, is one of the two goals of the heroine of the coming-out novel) than

such a heroine normally would. So in this respect the melodrama plot is making her better-suited to being the heroine of a coming-out novel.

On two occasions in the novel (191–98 and 248–58), Wragge considers allying himself with Magdalen's adversaries if this were more profitable for him than continuing to help her. Taking the part of the Heroine's family or the Heroine's Rival against that of the Heroine for financial motives is far from being a standard action for a Chaperone, and shows how Collins is playing with generic conventions.

Collins briefly takes the reader back to the mid-eighteenth century, the setting of the best-known coming-out novels, when the action moves to Vauxhall Walk:

> And here—most striking object of all—on the site where thousands of lights once sparkled; where sweet sounds of music made night tuneful till morning dawned; where the beauty and fashion of London feasted and danced through the summer seasons of a century—spreads, at this day, an awful wilderness of mud and rubbish; the deserted dead body of Vauxhall Gardens mouldering in the open air.
>
> (Collins, 260) [10]

> … the date at which they [the buildings opposite] had been erected was inscribed on one of them, and was stated to be the year 1759.
>
> (Collins, 261)

Magdalen goes to observe her sister Norah, and witnesses her being treated with contumely in public, whereupon her response to her changes: 'The thought of her sister, which had turned her from the scene of the meditated deception, which had made the consciousness of her own disguise hateful to her—was now the thought which sanctioned that means, or any means, to compass her end; the thought which set wings to her feet, and hurried her back nearer and nearer to the fatal house.' (273–74). Originally in this episode Magdalen is acting as the near-paragon of virtue who is the heroine of the courtship novel, and is loyal to her sister's values of conformity and obedience, but after seeing the reality of her sister's life, she again acts as the self-willed protagonist of a melodrama. Thus again we see the conflict between Magdalen's roles in the two generic forms being played out.

Throughout the dramatic confrontation between Magdalen and Miss Garth at Vauxhall Walk (275–95), Magdalen is in disguise. Although at the first level of the narrative this is yet another tense scene which is essential for the development of the plot, at the second level it could be viewed as a surreal

[10] Park (23) lists some of the venues for Burney's heroine's formative experiences as 'pleasure gardens, masked balls, holiday resorts, and theatres'. Magdalen has already experienced theatres (both as an actress and as a patron), will soon experience a transmogrified version of a masked ball, and will later in the novel go to Aldeborough, a Victorian holiday resort. By referring to the eighteenth-century pleasure garden Vauxhall Walk, Collins is making the point that Magdalen is unable to cross genres and enter the long eighteenth-century coming-out novel.

variation of a masked ball in a coming-out novel (surreal because in this case only one of the parties is disguised) in which the heroine and the heroine's rival meet and clash, and indeed Mrs Lecount uses an appropriate word, in a sentence which has meaning at two levels: 'We have been favoured by a clever masquerade …' (296).[11] Not only have both Magdalen the character and Collins the constructed author used the idea of a masquerade cleverly in this particular scene, but the narrative as a whole is a coming-out novel masquerading as a melodrama.

Magdalen's subsequent letter to Miss Garth also contains a sentence which works on two levels: 'You may depend on my never making the general Sense of Propriety my enemy again: I am getting knowledge enough of the world to make it my accomplice next time.' (318). This is a sentence which could be uttered by the heroine of a coming-out novel, and in such a novel it would indicate that her worldly education is proceeding. A few pages later, when Wragge is jocularly describing the fictitious mother of 'Miss Bygrave' (which is Magdalen's alias for the contemplated deception), he states that '[s]he was supposed to be the most corpulent woman in England', and this indirectly draws attention to the fact that Magdalen is never hyperbolically described by the narrator in absolute terms as the most beautiful girl in England, as she might well be in a courtship novel.

When Collins summarises the progress of Wragge's plot in the melodrama, he does so in terms which have an obvious counterpart at the second level of the text: 'He had sown the seeds of variance between the housekeeper and her master; and he had given Noel Vanstone a common interest with Magdalen and himself.' (403). Thus, in the terms of the coming-out novel, the Chaperone had sown the seeds of variance between the Heroine's Rival and the Hero; and he had given the Hero a common interest with the Heroine and the Chaperone.

Collins then uses the progress of the melodrama to question the nature of the relationship between the Chaperone and the Heroine in the coming-out novel, even though these share the same goal of promoting a marriage to a particular man: 'She [Magdalen] had shown the same disinclination to remain any longer than was necessary in the captain's company, throughout the three days of her seclusion in the house.' (405).

Collins again makes a statement which works at both levels of the text, hanging carefully on a single hook the suspense of the melodrama and the trivial domestic detail of the coming-out novel: 'There—hitched carelessly on the innermost peg—there, with its white spots, and its double flounce, was the brown Alpaca dress!' (462). Collins's use of Magdalen's dress as evidence of identity, like his use of the moles on her neck (412), ties together the morally

[11] For background on the role of the masked ball in eighteenth-century culture and fiction, see Castle.

ambiguous adventuress of the melodrama with the ingénue of the coming-out novel who could be reasonably be expected to take a vapid interest in her personal appearance; and this is not to the disadvantage of the former.

Wragge then undertakes a visit the second purpose of which is necessary at the level of the plot, and an appropriate action in a melodrama, but bizarre for a chaperone who has just arranged the marriage of the heroine and hero: 'His second object was to provide, beforehand, for destroying all traces of the destination to which he might betake himself, when he left Aldborough on the wedding-day.' (479).

Collins again deconstructs the notion that the marriage, which is one of the two goals of the coming-out novel, is a desirable end by referring to 'the horror that was maddening her [Magdalen]; the horror of her marriage' (485). A few pages later, we are told that 'She was not usually patient with children' (487), and this statement serves several purposes. It functions on the level of characterisation, at the first level of the book, to help show that Magdalen is a flawed human being and not a model of perfection; it functions on the level of the plot, also on the first level of the book, to indicate that she would not have been happy in her sister's occupation of governess; and it functions on the second level, to question the appropriateness of any marriage for her which leads to children, even one to a hypothetical courtship-novel hero who has no flaws, and hence to question her suitability in the role of the heroine of a coming-out novel.

Collins presents a scene in which Magdalen contemplates suicide (496–500), and this also works on two levels. On the level of the plot it is utilized as an element of sensation and suspense, but at this level is vitiated because the reader must suspect that the heroine of a fiction is likely to survive. On the second level of the text, however, the point of the scene is that Magdalen's character has been corrupted to the extent that she is considering suicide in order to avoid her forthcoming wedding: this both renders her morally unfit to be the heroine of a coming-out novel and also makes her reject one of its two goals, that of marriage.[12]

Collins then takes the reader to the time after the marriage to Noel Vanstone: 'Personally, his marriage had altered him for the worse … If the ten or twelve weeks since his marriage had been counted by his looks, they might have reckoned as ten or twelve years.' (536). In a letter to Miss Garth, Magdalen also indicates that she is unhappy in her marriage: 'I had been suffering for many weary weeks past, such remorse as only miserable women like me can feel' (586). Both these quotations contradict the coming-out novel's implicit acceptance of marriage as a goal desirable for both parties.

[12] The contemplation of suicide could also be regarded as a significant and unusual life experience which contributes to Magdalen's maturity.

The next stage in the plot involves Magdalen's stay at a great house—not by invitation and to further her worldly education, as in a coming-out novel, but clandestinely in the guise of a servant. The reader is told that she is 'strong in the ready presence of mind under emergencies which her later life had taught her' (621), and this indicates that she is getting a far better practical education as an adventuress than she would in a conventional round of coming-out activities. Something similar is true of the subsequent observation that 'Into the space of little more than a year, she had crowded the wearing and wasting emotions of a life' (655) and her subsequent comment to herself, 'I shrank from nothing to get here' (663), which ironically underlines that she has not 'shrank' but expanded from a 'nothing', a girl passively dependent upon the actions of a potential future husband, to one who does not shirk difficulties.

* * * * *

Having concluded my detailed textual analysis, I shall show how this analysis illuminates the genre of the coming-out novel, focusing in turn on the character of Magdalen, the function of Captain Wragge, and, much more briefly, the status of Noel Vanstone.

First I shall consider Magdalen's character, and how Collins is able to develop it in his generic hybrid in ways in which he would not have been able to if he had chosen to write a straightforward pastiche of the coming-out novel. Cecil Emden (286) considers Catherine Morland to be 'the most entrancing ingénue in English fiction.' Magdalen would be a rival for this accolade on the basis of the first few chapters of *No Name*, but only if her subsequent adventures are ignored. Joseph Duffy ('The Awakening,' 42) observes of Emma Woodhouse, 'Her too well-insulated life requires a challenge, and love is the surest form this challenge can take.' Magdalen's challenge is to regain the family fortune. These two quotations in conjunction show the ambivalent nature of Collins's presentation of Magdalen. John Mathison (150) observes that Catherine Morland is a very different character at the end of *Northanger Abbey* to what she is at the beginning. Magdalen's adventures are both good and bad for her, bad because they corrupt her innocence, and good because they give her the challenge (and the mentor) that her intellectual and dramatic powers need for their full development. Duffy goes on to say, 'at this late stage of the novel Emma may not be a better woman than she was at the beginning, but she is a different one' ('The Awakening,' 51). Exactly the same could be said of Magdalen at the close of *No Name*. Frank Kearful makes a similar point:

> In Chapter III, when Catherine meets Henry Tilney, *Northanger Abbey* begins to be transformed into a novel of education, as for the next several chapters Catherine will be encountering new people, new situations, and new problems, each providing a different opportunity for

> her to become a mature person. She will follow, then, a general pattern repeated in all Austen's later novels with the possible exception of *Mansfield Park*: a young girl in some important respects immature undergoes a series of experiences leading to major self-discoveries and discoveries about others, which, cumulatively, bring about a new orientation of the heroine toward herself and her environment.
>
> (Kearful, 517)

John K. Mathison states of Jane Austen's novels in general:

> In each of the novels we are introduced to a heroine in some way or ways immature, one who has not yet become the person she is inherently capable of becoming, and who has, judging from the circumstances in which she is found, a good chance of failing ever to develop into a person genuinely adult. With each, the immaturity is the consequence of the failure on the part of parents, or those in the place of parents, and of the environment.
>
> (Mathison, 139)

If we take Mathison's first sentence as a definition of maturity, we can see how subversive Collins's novel is.

Without the tragedy of the Vanstones' early deaths, Magdalen would indeed have failed to 'become the person she is inherently capable of becoming', but this would not be because of the absence or inadequacy of her parents (remember that we are here considering the counterfactual, third level of the novel in which they do not die) but solely because of the constraints of her society. Her initial situation is more idyllic than that of any of Austen's heroines apart from Catherine Morland. Without the challenges of the melodrama plot, she would have developed into an adult who was a good wife and merely dutiful mother (recall that she is impatient with children) but nothing more. Mathison (140) defines success as follows: 'It is a character's achieving maturity that makes her a heroine.' Under this definition, Magdalen succeeds at the second level of the novel as she would not have done at the counterfactual third level. Mathison (140) goes on to say, 'Since the parents [in Austen's novels] usually accept uncritically the prevailing attitudes of their time and place, one can say that they are specific instances of the general environment.' This applies also to Mr and Mrs Vanstone, and to Miss Garth, but certainly not to Wragge, who is an outsider in Victorian society, and thus offers an unusual learning experience for Magdalen. Mathison (143) observes of Catherine Morland's journey to maturity, 'There are genuine obstacles in her way, as well as necessary aids, some of which appear obstacles.' The same could be said of Magdalen, but in a surprising and seemingly paradoxical way which is only apparent from reading *No Name* as a generic hybrid. Her happy family background is an obstacle to the development of her dramatic talents, and her unhappy marriage will be an aid to her not subsequently idealising the

institution of marriage. Throughout his article Mathison shows how Catherine's adventures contribute to her development, and a comparable analysis could be made in detail, *mutatis mutandis*, for Magdalen's. Duffy makes the point that Maria and Julia Bertram 'unlike their brothers or their cousin, have not been influenced by any educational environment outside the Park' ('Moral Integrity,' 75). Duffy's concern is with moral education, but the same argument about the need for outside influences applies to Magdalen for the development of her dramatic talents.

Secondly, I shall analyse Captain Wragge's function. In the coming-out novel, the Chaperone is an ancillary figure, at most an adjunct or foil to the heroine. In *No Name*, the Chaperone threatens to upstage the Heroine, and William Baker's study of Collins's manuscript suggests that Collins had to delete material before publication in order to stop Wragge from dominating the book (Baker, 200–7). Magdalen has assertiveness which is unusual for a woman and which would normally be found in a man, and Noel Vanstone is effeminate. Mrs LeCount is also unusually assertive for a woman, despite her lowly status as a servant. At first sight, Wragge appears to be the only one of the four main characters who does not cross gender boundaries, since he is highly masculine. However, he does so at the second level of the text, as he is performing the function of Chaperone, which is a role usually taken by a woman. At a formal level, this takes Collins's theme of muddying conventional gender roles, which is apparent both in *No Name* and in his other works, to its logical conclusion. At the diegetic level, having the role of Chaperone filled by a male avoided 'Burney's treatment of the culturally problematic mature woman who has eluded direct male control' (Straub, 'Fanny Burney's *Evelina*,' 231). His motivation is financial gain rather than protecting Magdalen's virtue or reputation, which departs from ideals of self-sacrifice and morality.

Wragge's intellect and cunning surpass the efforts of traditional female chaperones, which suggests that perhaps the Chaperone should be active rather than merely reactive in her approach. Mathison (141) observes that neither Mrs Allen (Catherine Morland's chaperone) nor Mrs Jennings (the elder Dashwood sisters' chaperone during their visit to London) have a 'clear, articulate grasp of the world.' Kristina Straub refers to 'failures of the mature women in the text to nurture or defend Evelina' (*Divided Fictions*, 26). These deficits certainly do not apply to Wragge, if nurturing is taken to refer to developing Magdalen's skills as an actress and aiding her goal of marriage to Noel Vanstone, rather than to overseeing her moral growth. Wragge assists Magdalen's deceptions and unorthodox pursuit of independence, rather than guiding her toward socially acceptable feminine submission, which reverses typical gender assumptions about women. Finally, the fact of his being a man challenges the notion that an ingénue needs female supervision and guidance.

Straub indicates that 'in pointing out where Mrs. Selwyn fails Evelina, Burney seems to suggest potential success, if only the mature woman were less blinded by the attractive light of male power' (*Divided Fictions*, 28). The success which Magdalen is pursuing requires not so much immunity to the 'attractive light of male power' but the freedom of action of a Victorian male and a certain amount of amorality. Straub goes on to say: 'Judged in terms of her usefulness to Evelina, Selwyn is a flawed but valuable character; her potential could, however, only be fully realized in a social context where masculine power is not the primary, indeed, the sole object of human desire—for women, the only source of economic and psychological security.' (*Divided Fictions*, 28). By contrast Wragge fully realises his potential as Magdalen's Chaperone.

Thirdly, Magdalen's pursuit of a Hero who is less than a perfect husband suggests that in general, Heroines should be more critical of their future spouses, and recognise their flaws as well as their strengths. Conversely, Noel Vanstone has landed what would—were it not for her hostile agenda—be a marital prize for him, and this suggests that in general, Heroes should be more appreciative of qualities in their wives which are unconventional for Victorian women, such as assertiveness, resourcefulness, and practical ingenuity.

* * * * *

In conclusion, judged by the yardstick of Collins's best-known works, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, *No Name* may be a disappointment as a suspense novel. Judged instead as a successor to the long-eighteenth-century coming-out novel by such authors as Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen, it is more appropriately regarded as a highly inventive deconstruction of that genre of fiction presented in the guise of a melodrama.

Works Cited

Ackroyd, Peter. *Wilkie Collins*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2012.

Baker, William. 'The Manuscript of Wilkie Collins's *No Name*', (Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia) *Studies in Bibliography* 43 (1990) 197–208.

Castle, Terry. *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction*. Stanford, CAL: Stanford University Press, 1986.

Collins, Wilkie. *No Name* (1862), ed. Virginia Blain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Duffy, Joseph M., Jr. 'Moral Integrity and Moral Anarchy in *Mansfield Park*', *ELH* 23:1 (March 1956) 71-91.

Duffy, Joseph M., Jr. 'The Awakening from Innocence', *ELH* 21:1 (March 1954) 39–53.

Emden, Cecil S. ‘The Composition of Northanger Abbey’, *The Review of English Studies* 19:75 (August 1968) 279–87.
Jenkyns, Richard. *A Fine Brush on Ivory: An Appreciation of Jane Austen*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004.
Jones, Anna. ‘A Victim in Search of a Torturer: Reading Masochism in Wilkie Collins’s *No Name*’, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 33:2 (Spring 2000) 196–211.
Kale, K.A. ‘Could Lydia Gwilt Have Been Happy? A New Reading of *Armadale* as Marital Tragedy’, *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* NS2 (1999) 32–39.
Kale, K.A. ‘The Romance of Mystery and the Mystery of Romance: Charlotte Smith’s *Ethelinde*, Wilkie Collins’s *‘I Say No’*, the McGuffin, and Narrative Closure’, *Studies in Religion and the Enlightenment* 3:1 (Fall 2023). doi: 10.32655/srej. 2023.3.1.2.
Kale, K.A. ‘Yes and No: Problems of Closure in Collins’s *“I Say No”*’, *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* NS1 (1998) 44–46.
Kearful, Frank J. ‘Satire and the Form of the Novel: The Problem of Aesthetic Unity in Northanger Abbey’, *ELH* 32:4 (December 1965) 511–27.
Klimaszewski, Melisa. *Wilkie Collins.* London: Hesperus Press, 2011.
Lycett, Andrew. *Wilkie Collins: A Life of Sensation*. London: Hutchinson, 2013.
Massie, Beth. *Courting Disaster: Women, Romance, and Novels in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Honors Theses, University of Richmond, Spring 2006.
Mathison, John K. ‘*Northanger Abbey* and Jane Austen’s Conception of the Value of Fiction’, *ELH* 24:2 (June 1957) 138–52.
Mudrick, Marvin. *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952.
Park, Julie. ‘Pains and Pleasures of the Automaton: Frances Burney’s Mechanics of Coming Out’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40:1 (Fall 2006) 23–49.
Peters, Catherine. *The King of Inventors*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1991.
Porter, Dennis. *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1981.
Robinson, Kenneth. *Wilkie Collins: A Biography*. London: Bodley Head, 1951.
Simpson, Vicky. ‘Selective Affinities: Non-Normative Families in Wilkie Collins’s *No Name*’, *Victorian Review* 39:2 (Fall 2013; Special Issue: Extending Families) 115–28.
Southam, B. C. *Jane Austen’s Literary Manuscripts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.
Straub, Kristina. ‘Fanny Burney’s *Evelina* and the ‘Gulphs, Pits, and Precipices’ of Eighteenth-Century Female Life’, *The Eighteenth Century* 27:3 (Fall 1986) 230–46.
Straub, Kristina. *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1987.

The Influence of Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* on Wilkie Collins's *Jezebel's Daughter*

Hilary Newman

Introduction

In a number of his later novels, Wilkie Collins aimed to contribute to what he described as a debate which needed to be had about 'certain important social topics which are held to be forbidden to the English novelist' *(Collins, Jezebel's Daughter,* Dedication, 5–6; *hereafter 'JD')*. In *Jezebel's Daughter* itself Collins considered the best environment for the care and treatment of the mentally ill. Collins reveals the major text by which he was influenced by attributing its reading to his main character, Mrs Wagner, who 'discovered, while arranging her late husband's library, a book which had evidently suggested his ideas of reformation in the treatment of the insane. In a letter to her nephew David (the narrator of the novel) she actually quotes in full the title and author of the book: '"Description of the Retreat, an institution near York for insane persons of the Society of Friends. Written by Samuel Tuke."' She adds that she 'had communicated with the institution; had received the most invaluable help; and would bring the book with her to Frankfort, to be translated into German, in the interests of humanity' (*JD,* 143–44). *Jezebel's Daughter* is set in 1828, fifteen years after Tuke's book appeared. This article will examine the ideas about mental illness as they were explored in Tuke's book and how Collins employed them in his novel. Collins presented Jack Straw as one of 'two interesting studies of humanity' in *Jezebel's Daughter*, the other being Madame Fontaine; in the former character, Collins explained, 'you have the exhibition of an enfeebled intellect, tenderly shown under its lightest and happiest aspect…' (*JD,* 7). Authorial approval is given to Mrs Wagner's moral treatment of Jack Straw. *Jezebel's Daughter* had been rewritten as a novel after its initial disastrous performance as a play, *The Red Vial*. In *The King of Inventors*, Catherine Peter's has argued that this novel provided Collins with 'more space than the play to explore the psychology of a madman cured by substituting kindness for restraint and harsh treatment, and these episodes are the best part of a poor book' (Peters, 397). My first section will adumbrate the familial and historical contexts of the Tukes. This will be followed by sections on Jack Straw in Bedlam; Jack Straw domesticated with Mrs Wagner; and Jack in the Deadhouse. Hopefully, we will discover through

these approaches the reasons why the York Retreat had such a big impact on Collins's novel, *Jezebel's Daughter*. Finally, a conclusion will suggest that there are some aspects of Tuke and Collins's texts which may disturb the modern reader.

The Tuke Family, the Retreat and Moral Management

The end of the eighteenth century saw a break with what had been commonly held views about insanity. Mary R. Glover succinctly states the eighteenth century's view of lunatics: they were treated as if they were 'a species of animal, filthy, comic, often dangerous' (Glover, 4). Andrew Scull has commented that previously 'madmen were chained and whipped in asylums … the doors of Bethlem were open to the public, and the inmates exhibited before the impertinent curiosity of sight-seers at a mere penny a time' and that 'every treatise on the management of the mad advocated such treatment' (Scull, 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered' in *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen*, 107). Elaine G. Breslaw summarised the situation: the treatment of the mentally ill then 'depended on fear, depletion procedures, physical abuse, food deprivation and physical restraint' (Breslaw, 143).

In 1796, William Tuke, a prominent Quaker, established the Retreat for those in the Society of Friends who suffered from mental illness. The succeeding three generations of Tukes would be closely involved with the institution. Samuel Tuke described the origins of the Retreat: a mentally ill member of the Society died under unclear circumstances in York Asylum and as a reaction Quakers debated forming an institution in which would be practised 'a milder and more appropriate system of treatment', than that which was the usual custom at that time. It was financed 'by annuities, donations and annual subscriptions' (Tuke, 81). It was difficult to put together the necessary financial backing, but this was eventually successful. The instituion's establishment was based on a humanitarian compassion for the mentally unwell. Several times in his *Description of the Retreat*, Samuel Tuke expressed his profound pity for the insane. For example, he wrote that lunatics 'are truly objects of great sympathy and compassion' (Tuke, 26) and that madness is a malady which is 'in many instances, the most deplorable that human nature is subject to' (Tuke, 39). The establishment and the way it responded to the mentally ill was very much influenced by the Quakers' spiritual beliefs.

Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* transformed a small Yorkshire Quaker institution for mentally ill Friends into a place of pilgrimage for many contemporaries. The visitors were a cross-section of educated society and came from a variety of countries, mainly in western Europe and America. They included social reformers, those employed in public life, physicians responsible for the mentally ill, and even interested individuals. Why did Tuke's book attract so much attention? It was written by a layman without medical training

and in language accessible to the non-specialist. It was empirically rather than theoretically based. So, although such medical treatments enumerated in the previous paragraph were used at the Retreat early on, the lay superintendent abandoned them when they were not found to be efficacious. As Anne Digby explains: 'With a beguiling simplicity Tuke had taken his readers on an intellectual tour in which the subject of insanity had emerged from the dark shadows of traditional usage into the full light of public debate' (Digby, *Madness, Morality and Medicine*, 238–39).

At the Retreat, the emphasis was firmly on the individual who was to be treated in an institution which as far as possible imitated the domestic environment of the home; tellingly Tuke referred to it as 'the Family Establishment' (Tuke, 108). He also stressed that the mental institution should be kept small enough for the superintendent to observe every individual patient (Tuke, 117). Further, the patient should be treated 'as much in the manner of a rational being, as his state of mind will possibly allow' (Tuke, 158). It is obvious that, in *Jezebel's Daughter*, all these aspects of moral management were applied to Jack by Mrs Wagner when she removed him from the large and impersonal asylum that was Bedlam and transported him to her own home.

Tuke had written that there have been cases 'in which persuasion and kind treatment, have superseded the necessity of any coercive means' (Tuke, 146). Tuke also remarked that '[t]he power of judicious kindness' as practised towards the insane 'is much greater than is generally imagined' (Tuke, 168). The Retreat used neither chains nor corporal punishment (Tuke, 141). In one case, Tuke described how a serial lunatic had been brought to the Retreat in chains. These were removed on his arrival and he was brought to the room where the superintendents were eating. He was invited to share the meal with them. After they had eaten, the patient had been escorted to his apartment, where the superintendent told him that it was hoped that he would behave in such a way as to make any coercion unnecessary. The consequence was that the patient responded by restraining himself and, Tuke tells us, this he was so successful in doing that no coercive methods ever had to be used on him. For Tuke this demonstrated 'the efficacy of mild treatment' (Tuke, 147). Tuke humanely remarks: 'If it be true, that oppression makes a *wise* man mad, is it to be supposed that stripes, and insults, and injuries, for which the receiver knows no cause, are calculated to make a *madman* wise?' The Retreat's superintendent, George Jepson, was of the opinion that 'a state of furious mania, is very often excited by the mode of management' (Tuke, 143–44).

In Collins's fictional Bedlam, the attendants had used fear to control the patients. In the Retreat such an approach was kept to a minimum. Although Tuke admitted it was sometimes necessary, he was deeply ambivalent about its use in the asylum setting: 'There can be no doubt that the principle of fear, in the human mind, when moderately and judiciously excited, as it is by the

operation of just and equal laws, has a salutary effect upon society.' But, Tuke qualifies its universal application: 'where fear is too much excited, and where it becomes the chief motive of action, it certainly tends to contract the understanding, to weaken the benevolent affections, and to debase the mind' (Tuke, 142). The instilling of fear in the mentally ill should not be resorted to unless it is the only method to achieve a *'necessary*' objective. Tuke also warned against the possible consequences of ruling through fear. While it might induce patients to outwardly acceptable behaviour, it will not be conducive of inner change. Another danger of this method is that it threatens to reduce the mentally ill to the status of animals. Although it might be possible to make patients 'obey their keepers, with the greatest promptitude; to rise, to sit, to stand, to walk, or run at their pleasure', this type of obedience is frequently seen in 'the poor animals who are exhibited to gratify our curiosity in natural history … the readiness with which the savage tiger obeys his master, is the result of treatment, at which humanity would shudder' (Tuke, 148).

If chains, whips, coercion and the principle of inspiring fear are largely discarded, what is to replace them in the running of asylums? Tuke stressed the promotion of self-control, self-restraint and self-esteem in the mentally ill in the asylum environment. It was Tuke's belief that lunatics retain some control over their behaviour: their 'intellectual, active and moral powers are usually rather perverted than obliterated' (Tuke, 133). Above all, the aim is to strengthen the powers of reason. At the Retreat it had been discovered that stimulating self-esteem and the esteem of others had achieved better results than by instilling fear. The wish to be esteemed 'leads many to struggle to conceal and overcome their morbid propensities' (Tuke, 157). Further, '[t]his struggle is highly beneficial to the patient, by strengthening his mind, and conducing to a salutary habit of self-restraint; an object which experience points out as of the greatest importance, in the cure of insanity, by moral means' (Tuke, 157–58). From his personal knowledge of his charges, the superintendent will introduce topics of conversation on which a patient is knowledgeable, so that he can shine and win the esteem of others. These methods contribute to the patient's recovery: 'The patient feeling himself of some consequence, is induced to support it by the exertion of his reason, and by restraining those dispositions, which, if indulged, would lessen the respectful treatment he receives; or lower his character in the eyes of his companions and attendants' (Tuke, 159). Tuke also advances the benefits of self-restraint: 'whatever tends to promote the happiness of the patient, is found to increase his desire to restrain himself, by exciting the wish not to forfeit his enjoyments; and lessening the irritation of mind, which too frequently accompanies mental derangement' (Tuke, 177).

As various critics have stressed, although institutions other than the Retreat were moving away from a harsh regime to the practice of what came to

be called ‘moral treatment’ or ‘moral management’, the York Retreat became the primary exemplar of the new approach chiefly due to the publication of Tuke’s book in 1813. William F. Bynum sees the advent of moral therapy as ‘one of the high points in the history of psychiatry… Moral therapy was simultaneously a triumph of humanism and of therapy, a recognition that kindness, reason, and tactful manipulation were more effective in dealing with the inmates of asylums than were fear, brutal coercion and restraint, and medical therapy’ (Bynum, ‘Therapy in British Psychiatry’ in *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen*, 36–37). Roy Porter agrees: ‘Moral management constitutes the individualistic, heroic phase of early psychiatry’ (Porter, 222).

Anne Digby has written that ‘Moral therapy concentrated on the psychological and emotional, rather than the physiological, causes of insanity’ (Digby, ‘Changes in the Asylum’, 218). Louis C. Charland agrees with this comment, while also expanding it: the emphasis is on ‘psychological rather than physical means of treatment’; simultaneously it was discovered that ‘existing physical treatments were often extremely harmful’ (Charland, ‘Moral Treatment in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century’, 2). Previously applied treatments for the mentally ill included inducing vomiting, using evacuants, bleeding, blistering the skin with caustic substances, and cold baths.

Jack Straw in Bedlam

In *Jezebel’s Daughter*, the widow, Mrs Wagner, reminds her nephew, the narrator, David Glenny, and her lawyer that her late husband ‘was a man who thought for himself. He had ideas of his duty to his poor and afflicted fellow-creatures which are in advance of received opinions in the world about us’ (*JD*, 14). Mrs Wagner is determined to implement her late husband’s theories, with which she is in complete agreement. A particular abhorrence of Mr Wagner’s was, as we learn from his widow, ‘cruelty in all its forms’ and he ‘held the torturing of the poor mad patients by whips and chains to be an outrage on humanity’ (*JD*, 20). Mr Wagner had been a governor at Bethlehem or Bethlem Hospital (commonly referred to as Bedlam). From his diary, his widow had learnt that he had ‘determined’ on ‘trying the effect of patience and kindness in the treatment of mad people, at his sole risk and expense’ (*JD*, 21). Mr Wagner had decided which inmate in Bedlam he intended to conduct this experiment on. Now his widow has determined to go to Bedlam herself to assess the lunatic. Mrs Wagner is opposed by the men to whom she states her purpose. David Glenny admits that in these ‘enlightened days’ (he is looking back over a period of fifty years), he is almost ashamed to confess their ‘prejudiced’ and ‘ignorant’ reaction, although many then would have reacted in the same way.

Despite their reservations, David and the lawyer accompany Mrs Wagner to Bedlam. The superintendent there is staggered to learn that the

patient in whom Mrs Wagner is interested is Jack Straw, who is not only not wealthy, but is one of the 'most dangerous lunatics' in the asylum. The atmosphere and treatment of the patients in this asylum are fully revealed to the visitors. Patricia Allderidge has argued that the 'best-known facts' about Bedlam 'will stand up to very little examination' and that the picture of Bedlam 'is not a wholly unrelieved one of deliberate brutality and inhumanity' (Allderidge, 24, 29). Allderidge's essay is called 'Bedlam: fact or fantasy', but in the case of a novelist, certain myths may be the imaginatively accepted ones and facts do not have to be adhered to. This is true of Collins's presentation of Bedlam in *Jezebel's Daughter*. On the route to Jack's cell, aspects of the existence of the patients are conveyed. These descriptions probably belong more to fantasy than fact: 'Cries of rage and pain, at one time distant and another close by, varied by yelling laughter, more terrible even than the cries, sounded on either side of us' (*JD*, 29).

When the superintendent sends for one of the attendants, he seems a caricature: 'he was a hulking, scowling, hideously ill-looking brute' (*JD*, 29). When they reach the door of Jack's cell, the superintendent produces 'a horrible whip of many lashes.' He exhibits 'this instrument of torture with every appearance of pride and pleasure.' The 'brute' volunteers 'cheerfully' that this is what he controls Jack with. Mrs Wagner is so indignant at this, that she leaps to her feet, and her nephew suspects that she herself would have whipped the attendant had not the superintendent intervened (*JD*, 31–32).

When they enter Jack's cell ('a narrow, lofty prison') he is chained and shackled: 'A heavy chain held him to the wall. It was not only fastened round his waist, it also fettered his legs between the knee and the ankle … it was long enough to allow him a range of crippled movement, within a circle of five or six feet … Above his head, ready for use if required, hung a small chain evidently intended to confine his hands at the wrists' (*JD*, 33). Having witnessed the whips and chains, and seeing Jack, with whom she has immediately established a rapport, Mrs Wagner commits herself to trying her late husband's 'perilous experiment' by taking Jack into her household (*JD*, 43). She asks her nephew: 'Are you content, David, to leave such a man for the rest of his life to the chains and the whip?' (*JD*, 44–45).

Tuke admitted that towards those employees in the asylum hierarchy below the superintendent, the attendants, the patient could still behave aggressively and in that case the superintendent intervened, often successfully to calm the lunatic. Collins provided a fictional proof of this when Jack was in Bedlam. Jack's expression alters from 'a quiet childish curiosity' when behind the visitors he spots the brutal attendant: 'Ferocious hatred glittered in his eyes; his lips suddenly retracted, showing his teeth like the teeth of a wild beast.' When Mrs Wagner places herself so as to conceal the attendant the expression

of Jack drastically changes again: 'His eyes softened, a faint, sad smile trembled on his lips' (*JD*, 34).

From the first time he is introduced to the reader and to Mrs Wagner. Collins uses the very terms pertaining to behaviour which Tuke employs, particularly stressing self-restraint. After glimpsing the brutal attendant behind Mrs Wagner and reacting ferociously, he immediately endeavours to regain his self-control, as the narrator observes: 'the unhappy man showed that he was still capable, under strong internal influence, of restraining himself.' He wrings his chain with 'such convulsive energy' that David fears Jack's bones will be forced through the skin on his hands. He drops his head on his breast and quivers. Then he looks up with tear-dimmed eyes. Mrs Wagner instinctively and immediately provides physical comfort by placing her hand on his head (*JD*, 35).

Mrs Wagner praises his work with straw and asks how it first occurred to him to make straw hats with it. Her interest in him flatters him and increases his self-confidence. He confides that an angel visited him in a dream and told him to work with the straw. When telling her the 'greatest blessing in the world' is the daylight, which he repeats three times, he appears to be losing his self-control again. But when he is verging on screaming, he takes 'a tighter turn of his chain and … silence[s] himself.' He then politely tells the superintendent that he is 'quiet' (*JD*, 36). Replying to Mrs Wagner's question whether anybody has ever been kind to him, he replies not until she came, and there appears 'a flash of intelligence in the bright gratitude of his eyes' (*JD*, 36). In accordance with Tuke's perception of the mentally ill person's desire for esteem and self-esteem, Jack asks Mrs Wagner to question him further, so that he can demonstrate how quietly he can reply.

When Mrs Wagner prepares to depart, Jack loses his 'self-control.' He seizes her hands and begs her not to leave him. She betrays no fear and tells him he has a friend in her. He throws himself back into the corner of the cell, crying. He moans that he will never see her again. He refuses to believe her when she promises to return on the following day. She hits on the idea of entrusting her bag with him until the next day, so that he can be sure she will keep her promise. The narrative has already used Tuke's phrase 'self-control', and here 'self-esteem' is used: 'These words more than reconciled him to her departure—they subtly flattered his self-esteem' (*JD*, 41).

Later in the novel, Dr Dormann expresses the fear that the cruel and brutal treatment which Jack had received at Bedlam may have led to his deterioration: 'From all that I can learn, he was only what is called "half-witted," when they received him at the asylum in London. The cruel repressive treatment in that place aggravated his imbecility into madness—and such madness has a tendency to recur' (*JD*, 400).

It should be emphasised how much opposition Mrs Wagner faces to her plans for Jack. Mrs Wagner, initially at least, has no support for her 'perilous experiment' of removing Jack from the crowded asylum and placing him in her own domestic environment. At various stages the other characters' reactions to him are presented. Jack is as well aware as Mrs Wagner that the majority of the household's occupants do not have a high opinion of him. They doubt whether he can refrain from violence. But they recognise that 'Jack possessed the dog's enviable faculty of distinguishing correctly between the people who are, and the people who are not, their true friends' (*JD,* 285–86). Jack knows that Mr Keller does not like having a mentally ill person in his household. He tries to undermine Mrs Wagner's belief in Jack by challenging her for permitting Jack to be responsible for her keys—including that to her own desk. He describes Jack as 'that crazy creature' (*JD,* 286). Although Keller continues to think of Jack as Mrs Wagner's 'crazy attendant', his attitude alters when Mrs Wagner becomes seriously ill: 'For the first time Mr Keller began to pity the harmless little man whom he had hitherto disliked. "Poor wretch! …what will become of him, if she does die?"' (*JD,* 333).

The son of the German partner, Fritz Keller declined being one of those visiting Bedlam: he says he has 'a horror of mad people … they so frighten and distress me, that they make me feel half mad myself' (*JD,* 27). Fritz tries to dissuade Mrs Wagner from going. On hearing David's account and his expectation that Jack will soon be living with them, Fritz expresses compassion for Jack who is 'supremely pitiable' but is 'also a smouldering volcano—and smouldering volcanoes burst into eruption when the laws of nature compel them' (*JD,* 42–43). The lawyer's comment on hearing of Mrs Wagner's plan to domicile Jack in her own house is that 'the dangerous lunatic' will then be at liberty to 'murder Mrs Wagner, and to burn the house down' (*JD,* 61). A servant in Keller's household, Joseph, tells David that Jack (having arrived in Frankfort with Mrs Wagner) is '[p]laying the devil already … with the rules of the house' (*JD,* 195).

Madame Fontaine is persistently unkind to Jack, threatening his precarious sense of well-being by stealing the keys entrusted to him by Mrs Wagner. Madame Fontaine—as the reader discovers—has her own private motives for wishing to enforce the diagnosis of insanity on Jack. The latter could expose her as a poisoner, so she determines on giving him a present to win his confidence and gain an influence over him. She does reflect, however, that: 'As a madman lately released from Bedlam, it might perhaps not greatly matter what he said' (*JD*, 243). Madame Fontaine actually exploits Jack's mental illness for her own ends. Perpetually anxious that Jack may reveal he was poisoned by Madame Fontaine's husband when he worked at Würzburg University, she cunningly and falsely expresses the idea that he is suffering

from '[o]ne of the commonest delusions among insane persons … the delusion that he has been poisoned' (*JD*, 274). Ironically, Jack becomes convinced that it is she who is mad! (*JD*, 268).

So, what are the techniques of moral management which Collins ascribes to Mrs Wagner and which he derived from Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat*? In Mrs Wagner's care, Jack is no longer restrained by chains and the threat of being whipped. Much of Mrs Wagner's treatment of Jack when she has succeeded in removing him from Bedlam reflects the moral management which is contrasted (sometimes by the reader's retrospective comparison with the visit to Jack in that asylum), to the past treatment of lunatics. It is these qualities of moral management—self-esteem, esteem of others, self-restraint and self-control—which seem to have particularly impressed Collins and he frequently draws attention to the efforts of Jack Straw in these directions in *Jezebel's Daughter*. Her treatment of Jack is an illustration of Tuke's stated objectives for the Retreat: 'the attendant on the insane, ought sedulously to endeavour to gain their confidence and esteem; to arrest their attention, and fix it on objects opposite to their illusions; to call into action, as much as possible, every remaining power and principle of mind: and to remember that, in the wreck of the intellect, the affections not unfrequently survive' (Tuke, 162).

Once established in Mrs Wagner's house, Jack contrasts his present conditions to those he experienced in Bedlam. He calls his bedroom 'heaven'—regarding which he says his 'Mistress' agrees; he then shuts his eyes 'with a luxurious sense of self-esteem' (*JD*, 199). Earlier on in the novel, Jack refused the alcohol which he knows will undermine his self-control (and indeed does in the Deadhouse): 'None of your wine-merchant's fire in *my* head; no Bedlam breaking loose again' (*JD*, 213). When Fritz laughs at Jack's statement that there is no cooler head than his own, Jack is 'unruffled.' He has acquired the ability to retain mental control and put down his opponent verbally (*JD*, 213). Mrs Wagner confirms the conclusions drawn by Tuke and Jepson: 'The most certain curative influence that can be exercised over the poor martyrs of the madhouse is, to appeal to their self-respect' (*JD*, 286).

Mrs Wagner always speaks gently and quietly to Jack, though she can inject a salutary touch of sternness into her tone when she feels he is losing his self-control. She tells the cynical Madame Fontaine of her therapeutic approach to, and treatment of Jack: 'I quieted his mind by an appeal to his sense of trust and self-respect, which he thoroughly appreciated' (*JD*, 251). Like the superintendents and physicians in the Retreat with their patients, she has evidently studiously observed Jack in all his moods and knows when she needs to intervene to calm him. When he is giving an incoherent account of a disagreement with Madame Fontaine, he voices the opinion that the Frenchwoman is mad. Mrs Wagner has been watching him attentively and then

taking his hand, quietly tells him that she can see from his eyes that he is getting excited. Initially when she asks him to sit down, he refuses, but then agrees to do so for her. Mrs Wagner is clearly operating a regime similar to the reward and punishment scheme which seems to have operated at the Retreat. When Jack sits down, she awards him a 'good-conduct mark', which she records in her pocketbook (*JD*, 270). Similarly, when he is upset after being rebuked by Mrs Wagner for calling Madame Fontaine mad, Mrs Wagner finally hands over the Frankfort keys to Jack, which she had been withholding until she felt it was the right time to present them to him as a 'special reward for good conduct' (*JD*, 251) '

Mrs Wagner has already applied several of the treatments that were advocated in *Description of the Retreat*. Some of these were implied by commonsense. Tuke approvingly quotes one of the physicians who was involved in the Retreat: 'there is more connexion between a sound mind and a sound body than is generally imagined (Tuke, 116). One of the areas deemed to be important at the Retreat is diet. Tuke alludes to the fact that some mental health practitioners had recommended what sounds like a regime of semi-starvation for the mentally ill. Tuke's institution accepted the advice of a doctor at the Retreat whose experience had convinced him that there are 'very few cases, in which a low diet has produced a good effect.' The empirical conclusion had been that the opposite was the case: those maniacs who refuse food are the most violent and then the most depressed of mental patients (Tuke, 124). Tuke contradicts those who believe the insane can endure hunger without injury. Adequate nutrition can often promote the recovery of the madman. Tuke is not yet satisfied that enough is known of different diets upon the mind. He hopes further experiment will further refine knowledge concerning diet. Meanwhile, the Retreat provided good and ample food.

Wilkie Collins adopted the Retreat's theories about food and diet. When Mrs Wagner and her companions first visit Jack in Bedlam, he is described as having an 'emaciated form' and as being 'haggard' (*JD*, 33); David Glenny also observes Jack's 'wasted figure' (*JR*, 35). The narrator does not see Jack for some time because he is sent to Frankfort on behalf of the business in which his aunt has inherited her husband's part. When Mrs Wagner herself arrives in Frankfort, accompanied by Jack, the latter is described as looking very different; notably, he appears 'fat and happy' (*JD*, 195). Presumably Mrs Wagner has ensured that Jack received sufficient nutrition to attain a healthier weight.

Another borrowing by Collins from the *Description of the Retreat* was Tuke's belief in the therapeutic benefits of work. Tuke recorded that some of the patients are given 'suitable and proper' work, 'in order to relieve the languor of idleness, and prevent the indulgence of gloomy sensations' (Tuke, 51). Later, Tuke returns to the subject: of all the means by which the mentally

ill might learn self-restraint, that of employment is the 'most generally efficacious' (Tuke, 156). Even in Bedlam, Jack himself had found his own form of occupational therapy: he had weaved his straw bed into hats. When Jack commences life with Mrs Wagner, she creates a job for him in London: he becomes 'Keeper of the Keys.' David Glenny recognises this as part of a 'wise plan' of his aunt's; she is 'always cultivating the poor creature's sense of responsibility' (*JD*, 201). We learn the origin of this job later: Mrs Wagner had begun by giving Jack some unused old keys to look after. When he wanted to use them, she gradually issued him with keys of her own (253). She reports that Jack 'is proud of being trusted with anything, especially with keys.' He refers to this task as his 'great responsibility' (*JD*, 251). When his keys are temporarily removed by the scheming Madame Fontaine, Jack is devastated because he feels he has failed in his responsibility. He weeps and refuses to continue as keeper of the keys (*JD*, 308). This type of employment given to Jack is not perhaps a 'real' job. But according to Tuke (writing in 1841) this was of no consequence: '…the introduction of the system of labour into asylums, is not primarily to be contemplated as a means of pecuniary profit, but as a means of promoting the cure and the comfort of the patients.' Tuke adds that '[a]musing occupations…are not to be compared, as regards their beneficial influence on the mind, with those occupations in which a man labours to some useful end' (Tuke's introduction to Jacobi, xxxix).

Samuel Tuke, perhaps disturbingly to the modern eye, compares the mentally ill patient's relationship with the moral manager to that between children and adults. The former and lunatics should both receive 'judicious treatment' from their carers (Tuke, 150). Ten pages later, the relationship between visitors and patients is negatively compared to that between adults and children. It seems that such a relationship might be beneficial between the patient and the asylum staff but not in his everyday relationships. Tuke argues that such an approach degrades the patient's mind and makes him 'indifferent to those moral failings, which, under judicious direction and encouragement, are found capable in no small degree, to strengthen the power of self-restraint; and which render the resort to coercion, in many cases, unnecessary' (Tuke, 159–60). Yet, Tuke returns to the idea of the child/parent relationship, when he writes: 'The study of the superintendents to promote [the patient's comfort] with all the assiduity of parental, but judicious attention, has been, in numerous instances, rewarded by an almost filial attachment' (Tuke, 178).

Likewise, Mrs Wagner, too, does not have an adult-to-adult relationship with Jack. When he cries because she speaks sternly to him, she comforts him 'as if he had been a child' (*JD*, 277). Significantly, after Jack has had a disagreement with Madame Fontaine, Mrs Wagner says she must return to her work and so must Jack. Because he is still disturbed by the encounter, and finds it difficult to occupy himself, she provides him with an occupation, as a

parent might a child. Interestingly, Jack regards Mrs Wagner as fulfilling all roles in his life: she is '[a]ll the relations in the world to me! … Father and mother—and brother and sister and wife' (*JD*, 373). He is actually so dependent on her that it seems doubtful if he could survive without her. Mrs Wagner appears to feel the emotions of an adult to a dependent child, when she is apparently dying. Her (apparent) last words to Keller are: 'Be kind to Jack' (*JD*, 350).

At times of emotional stress, Jack loses self-control. This is consistent with Tuke's observations on the process of regaining sanity, which can either return gradually or suddenly and completely. Tuke compares the slow process of the return of reason to 'the gradual influx of the tide; she seems to struggle to advance, but again and again is compelled to recede.' In other cases, 'the cloud which envelopes the mind is suddenly dispersed, and the patient seems to awake as out of a dream' (Tuke, 180). Jack's recovery of his reason is erratic and intermittent for some months. In his situation, the 'judicious attendant' can help returning sanity. The person who plays this role in Jack's life is pre-eminently Mrs Wagner. It is when she cannot provide emotional sustenance or when he thinks he has failed her, that he breaks down. The first hint of this occurs with his loss of the keys, already alluded to. Mrs Wagner, we are told, gives the distraught Jack fifteen minutes to regain his self-control, which he succeeds in doing. He admits that 'I am afraid I went actually mad, for a little while' (*JD*, 304).

Looking back over the past fifty years to the period in which the action of the novel took place, David Glenny tells us how Jack's life during those years had developed: he had become 'the most popular person in the neighbourhood; a happy, harmless creature, known to every one by the undignified nickname of Jack Straw. Thanks to my aunt's influence, and to the change of scene, no return of the relapse at Frankfort has shown itself. We are easy about the future of our little friend' (*JD*, 414). Thus, Mrs Wagner's 'perilous experiment' has worked out well through her implementation of the principles laid out by Samual Tuke's *Description of the Retreat*—the humane and mild treatment of moral management.

An idiosyncratic characteristic of the Retreat is communicated by Anne Digby: 'One patient, who was diagnosed as suffering from "monomania of pride", was allowed to wear a hat decorated with tinsel and peacock feathers, and was occasionally carried around shoulder high in his self-appointed role of Duke John' (Anne Digby, 'Moral Treatment at the Retreat', 68). Jack shows a similar desire to dress flamboyantly, perhaps because when he is first visited at Bedlam he is described as wearing 'ragged dress' which barely covers him (*JD*, 33). A major part of Jack's interaction with Madame Fontaine concerns her purchase of a pair of gloves for him. The final scene reveals Jack dressed for the wedding of Minna and Fritz; his clothes are so fine that he is mistaken for

the bridegroom: ‘Jack promenades the room, with a superb nosegay in the buttonhole of a glorious blue coat. He has a watch; he carries a cane; he wears white gloves, and tight nankeen pantaloons’ (*JD*, 415).

Jack in the Deadhouse

Because Jack refuses to believe in Mrs Wagner’s death, her body is taken on a couch to the Deadhouse. One of the household servants called Joseph indignantly says: ‘If I had been mad enough to screech out, “She isn’t dead; not one of you shall put her in a coffin!”—I should have richly deserved a place in the town asylum, and I should have got my deserts. Nothing of the sort for Master Jack’ (*JD*, 356–57). It is deeply ironic that in fact Jack is correct—Mrs Wagner is not dead.

Nevertheless, when Mrs Wagner appears to be dead and her emotional support is involuntarily withdrawn, Jack gradually descends into total madness. The process begins when Mrs Wagner’s illness first manifests itself, to which Jack is the first witness: ‘The frightful shrillness of the past days in Bedlam was in his voice, as he screamed for help’ (*JD*, 330). He struggles with his emotions, knowing that if he appears ‘stupid-mad’ to those who are attending to his ‘Mistress’, he will be banned from her presence (*JD*, 332). He attempts to help himself by reciting the prayers Mrs Wagner has taught him. Eventually, though, he loses his self-control: ‘The tumult of contending emotions, against which he had struggled thus far, overpowered his utmost resistance. He ran to hide the hysterical passion in him, forcing its way to relief in sobs and cries, on the landing outside’ (*JD*, 344).

There is a scene in the Deadhouse, which induces in the reader a comparable emotional horror to the kind that might be experienced by the spectator of a Webster tragedy. Jack breaks down into an alcohol-fuelled madness. In this wild and dark scene, Jack is ‘lashed’ into ‘frantic high spirits.’ He utters nonsense about being ‘up in the clouds’ and singing ‘the stars down from heaven!’ (*JD*, 384). He has the wildest fancies about Madame Fontaine: ‘She’s a witch! ... She rode in on a broomstick—she crept in through the keyhole. Where’s the fire? Let’s take her downstairs, and burn her!’ (*JD*, 385).

In the Deadhouse the tables are turned in the relationship between Madame Fontaine and Jack, when he inadvertently poisons Madame Fontaine with her own poison. Not yet aware of what he has done, Jack again becomes wild and incoherent: ‘The fire of the brandy leaped into flame—the madness broke out in him, with a burst of by-gone fury. He sprang, screaming to his feet.’ (*JD*, 389). He again becomes incoherent, indulging in mad fantasies about the moon and enacting an uncontrolled dance.

At the height of his psychotic episode, he becomes physically exhausted and out of necessity rests. He gradually grows calm again, as he awaits the awakening of Mrs Wagner, to whom he utters an invocation. His state of torpor

disappears; he speaks: 'The tones were slow and mechanical—the tones of a man searching his memory with pain and difficulty; repeating his recollections, one by one, as he recovered them, to himself' (*JD*, 391). Ultimately, 'The light of vivid expression showed itself in his eyes. Their vacancy was gone …' (*JD*, 392).

Earlier Collins's doctor directly faced the decision of whether to use force to remove the distraught Jack Straw from the Deadhouse, where he insists on staying to see his 'Mistress' revive. Jack has clearly stated that he will physically resist any forceful attempt to return him to Keller's household. This puts the doctor in a difficult position. We learn that for both humane and psychological reasons Dr Dormann's decides not to use coercion: his 'delicacy of feeling' opposes it, as does 'the danger of provoking that outbreak of madness' that he has already cautioned Keller about (*JD*, 372). When it is discovered that Mrs Wagner is indeed alive, after appearing to be dead, Jack is ecstatic, but for all that, the doctor later tells David that there is one person he is anxious about: Jack. Dr Dormann would evidently be of the moral management party in the debate concerning the treatment of the mentally ill. The doctor says his main hopes for Jack's future life lie with Mrs Wagner. Earlier, she, too, had suggested that Jack had deteriorated in Bedlam: 'I have cured him of all the worst results of his cruel imprisonment in the madhouse' (*JD*, 250–51).

Concluding Thoughts

To end, I would like to draw attention to several elements of Jack's care which may not have been intended by Collins, but which may disturb the modern reader. Firstly, Tuke had criticised the use of fear as a controlling technique for treating the mentally ill. Tuke had invoked the image of the tamed tiger, to which he likened the repressed patient, and disapproved of it. Yet the moral management of Jack by Mrs Wagner may have had this very effect. His relationship with, and feelings for, Mrs Wagner are sometimes described in a canine image. At their very first meeting, when Jack is reassured, that Mrs Wagner will really return on the following day, he lies at her feet 'like a dog' (*JD*, 40). As we have seen, Jack is compared to a dog who knows who his friends are, and primary among these is Mrs Wagner (*JD*, 285). After the brief disappearance of the keys entrusted to him, Jack is soothed by his 'Mistress.' He 'then laid himself down in his doglike way on the rug' (*JD*, 304). Secondly, according to the regime at the Retreat, the externally imposed control of the mentally ill was to be gradually replaced as it became internalised as self-control. This process does not appear to take place with Jack. As long as he is with Mrs Wagner, he is grateful, affectionate and perfectly harmless. But in her absence, he relapses: though he is neither 'violent' nor 'alarming', he lays down on the mat outside her door and refuses 'to eat, drink, speak, or move,

until she returned' (*JD*, 144). He hears her return sooner than anybody else and then 'his joy burst out in a scream which did certainly recall Bedlam' (*JD*, 144). While Collins has shown the externals of moral management, he has not shown the transformation of Jack Straw into an independent person, capable of self-control, which was the overriding objective of the system. It is ironic that when we complete the comparison of Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* with Collins's *Jezebel's Daughter*, we may feel bound to share the reservations about moral management which were expressed in the twentieth century by Foucault: that it represents 'a more insidious system of coercion' (Wright, 24). Further, there is an outstanding moral issue which remains at the end of the novel. The narrative has to deny to the people of this fictional world that Jack has been cured, to protect Minna and Mrs Wagner from full knowledge of the extent of Madame Fontaine's villainy. Nevertheless, Collins attains an unusual achievement in making a psychologically disturbed character play so important a part in the development and resolution of the complex plot of *Jezebel's Daughter*.

Works Cited

Allderidge, Patricia. 'Bedlam: fact or fantasy?'. In *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*. Volume II: *Institutions and Society*, ed. W.F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd. London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985.

Breslaw, Elaine G. *Lotions, Potions, Pills and Magic: Health Care in Early America*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

Bynum, William F. 'Therapy in British Psychiatry'. In *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era*, ed. Andrew Scull. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

Charland, Louis C. 'Moral Treatment in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century'. In *Serious Mental Illness: Person Centred Approaches*. (eds) Abraham Rudnick and David Roe. London: CRC Press, 2016 [1960).

Collins, Wilkie. *Jezebel's Daughter*. 1880; New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, c.1895 [*The Works of Wilkie Collins*, Volume 27].

Digby, Anne. 'Changes in the Asylum: The Case of York, 1777–1815', *Economic History Review* NS36:2 (May 1983) 218–39.

Digby, Anne. *Madness, Morality and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat: 1796-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Digby, Anne. 'Moral Treatment at the Retreat, 1796-1846'. In *The Anatomy of Madness, Essays in the History of Psychiatry*: *Volume II Institutions and Society*, ed. W.F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd. London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985.

Glover, Mary R. *The Retreat York: An Early Experiment in the Treatment of Mental Illness*. York, England: The Ebor Press, 1984.

Jacobi, Maximillian. *On the Construction and Management of Hospitals for the Insane*. Translated by John Kitching, with Introductory Observations &c. by Samuel Tuke. London: John Churchill, 1841.

Peters, Catherine. *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Porter, Roy. *Mind-Forged Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency*. 1987; London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Scull, Andrew. 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered: Some Sociological Comments on an Episode in the History of British Psychiatry.' In *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era*, ed. Andrew Scull. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

Tuke, Samuel. *Description of the Retreat, An Institution near York for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends.* 1813; Charleston, SC: BiblioLife Reprint, n/d.

Wright, David. *Mental Disability in Victorian England: The Earlswood Asylum 1847-1901*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

From ‘my friend’ to ‘an irreclaimable scoundrel’: Verdicts on Stefan Poles in Context

Graham Law

Close Encounters

Perhaps the most sensational narrative introduced in recent scholarship concerning the life and letters of Wilkie Collins is not *The Woman in White* or even *The Moonstone* but that of the enigmatic Stefan Poles, pseudonym of Rafał Tugendhold (1840–1875). I first encountered this young Polish exile nearly a quarter of a century ago, while working with Bill Baker, Andrew Gasson and Paul Lewis towards the four-volume edition of the letters eventually published in 2005 under the title *The Public Face*. There the correspondence shows that, although Collins was initially impressed by Poles, referring to him as a friend and employing him as theatrical agent from around May 1873, he became suspicious of his intentions while away on the North American reading tour, and finally came to view him as a rogue. By the time that the considerably expanded digital edition appeared in 2018 as *The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins*, we had accumulated quite a bit of additional information about this doubtful figure, which was collated in the introductory note to the only extant letter from Collins to Poles, written just a couple of days before the author embarked for New York ([1376] 11 September 1873). Since that note is far too lengthy to include here, and virtually all the information included features elsewhere in the article, I can perhaps begin by quoting the brief obituary notice introduced there. This was inserted by Wilkie Collins’s old colleague Edmund Yates in his ‘Atlas’ column for *The World*, the society weekly in which one of Wilkie’s ‘little novels’ had recently been serialised:[1]

> The flame of a strong, wayward, mysterious life has been snuffed out. Stefan Poles, who had made himself known to M. Thiers, to Printing-house-square, and to the British Museum, has died miserably in Middlesex Hospital, friendless and raving in an unknown tongue, and been buried by charity. A photograph of the ghastly unshaven face, with the glazed left eye still open, was taken after death. It bore a strange resemblance to one

[1] ‘The Clergyman’s Confession’, *The World* (4-18 August 1875), reprinted as ‘Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman’ in *Little Novels* (1887).

> Tugenhold, a "converted" Jew and Russian spy, son to the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw, who was censor of the Press there previous to the last uprising.
>
> ('What "The World" Says', *The World*, 24 November 1875, 14)[2]

In what follows I will try to clarify not only the obscurities of the opening sentences, but also the falsehoods underlying the anti-Semitism that pervades the rest.

Since 2018 I have had a couple of further close encounters with Poles, which, while not significantly contradicting the account in the *Collected Letters*, do help to fill several of the gaps and add some nuanced detail. The first was while preparing a graduate course concerning the contributions written by overseas authors, and/or on foreign subjects, found in mid-Victorian periodicals. Then, largely because my teaching assistant that year happened to hail from Warsaw,[3] I began to look through the articles concerning Poland published in Dickens's weekly *All the Year Round*, where of course a number of the items in Wilkie's *My Miscellanies* (1863) had first appeared. The second encounter was in connexion with biographic and bibliographic research on the Scottish critic E.S. Dallas, the most astute reviewer at *The Times* during the sensation fiction boom, who in late October 1860 had alerted the public to the error in the time scheme of *The Woman in White* when it first appeared in three volumes. The objectives of this article are: first to explain what more was learned about Poles through those two close encounters; then to offer a new synthesis concerning his adventures in the form of a biographical narrative in five episodes; and lastly to judge from that whether Wilkie was warranted in giving his final verdict on the Polish emigré as 'an irreclaimable scoundrel' ([1575] to Tindell, III p. 104). The general rationale is that, although we do not now know, and may indeed never know, the full story of how precisely Stefan Poles wronged WC to cause him to make this judgment, what can be done is to place the incident in the context of other verdicts relating to the exile, whether public or private, contemporary or historical.

Newspaper reports of the libel case which Poles brought against *The Times* newspaper in early 1874 (see 'A Brief Life') suggest that, throughout the exile from his homeland, Stefan Poles typically supported himself by writing for the periodical press, in several different countries and in various languages; however, the only specific contributions I have been able to identify confidently so far are a couple of autobiographical narratives published in *All*

[2] The paragraph in the *World* clearly received a good deal of attention, since it has been found reprinted in at least thirty other journals, from the *Andover Chronicle* (3 December 1875, 7a) to the *Woodford Times* (4 December 1875, 7c), and most notably including *The Times* (see 'A Waif', 26 November 1875, 7f).

[3] Here I must offer my grateful thanks to Iga Łosiowska for her kind assistance in handling materials in Polish for this article.

the Year Round in London in the 1860s.[4] Altogether sixteen articles concerning Polish affairs were published in Dickens's weekly miscellany between April 1862 and July 1865, a period dominated by news of the January Uprising against Russian rule. Competent in the Polish language and familiar with modern Polish history, Krzysztof Gluchowski seems to have been the first scholar to study this material closely, as recorded in the article 'Dickens and Poland' published in *The Dickensian*. There, Gluchowski tended to assume that the thirteen earlier articles (up to January 1864) must all have been contributed by a single unidentified British author, probably with links to the Foreign Office; he noted that one of the baker's dozen was attributed tentatively by Oppenlander to 'John Harwood', but was not able to follow this up (47–48). At the same time, he inferred that the three later articles all came from the same Polish hand, that of Stefan Poles. The first and by far the longest of these ('From the Pen of a Pole', 18 June 1864) describes the clandestine return to Warsaw of a young Polish political exile on the orders of the National Government; the second ('In the Polish Cause', 12 November 1864) gives a brief account of the three young Swedish students who, as touched on briefly in the first article, travelled to Poland to support the rebellion; the third ('The Great Bear and the Pole Star', 15 July 1865) provides an inside view of an unsuccessful Polish plot to assassinate Grand-Duke Constantine, the brother of the Tsar. This opens characteristically: 'I am a Pole, wicked enough to love my country, desiring to be her own free citizen, and doing what I may to sting the heel of foreign despotism till it lift itself from off me and my countrymen.' (591). Gluchowski demonstrates unquestionably that 'From the Pen of a Pole', the first of the three later narratives, was translated and abridged from *Tio dagar i Warschau* (Ten Days in Warsaw) a pamphlet of ten chapters in over 80 pages, published in Swedish at Stockholm around February 1864, with the author clearly identified as Stefan Poles. However, he does little to link Poles to the other two narratives. He might have, but did not, identify another Swedish pamphlet with a similar signature, *Polska Expeditionen och Stephan Poles* (The Polish Expedition and Stephan Poles), issued at Malmo the previous year, to which there are a couple of cross-references in 'The Great Bear and the Pole Star'.[5] But, most importantly, he does not account for the

[4] Among the more amicable letters in the early pages of his late pamphlet *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman* (1875), Poles thanks the parson in question (H.R. Haweis) for looking over some of his recent journal contributions devoted to 'slight criticisms of music': 'They have been mostly written after *minuit,* when half asleep. But my musical connection with the Press gives me the *entree* to all concerts, operas, etc., in London.' (9). There are no further details, but perhaps the reference might be to a metropolitan weekly such as the *Musical World.*

[5] 'The Great Bear and the Pole Star' had in fact been attributed to Poles in the British press shortly after his death, in a column typically entitled 'Our London Letter', which was syndicated in a number of provincial weeklies, including the *North Wilts Herald,* where on 18 December 1875, 6e, it included a paragraph giving a 'few details of the career of Stefan Poles, whose death was announced the other day',

fact that 'In the Polish Cause' is specifically identified in its opening paragraph as merely the 'outline' of a report in the Stockholm newspaper *Aftonblad* (321). In fact, the 'annotated set' of *All the Year Round* recently discovered by Jeremy Parott suggests that neither of Gluchowski's inferences concerning the Polish material found there is quite correct. Firstly, Parrott's annotations assign the thirteen earlier articles to six different journalists, all veteran local contributors to Dickens's weeklies with no particular association with Poland.[6] Secondly, though the annotations confirm that the first and last of the three later articles can be confidently assigned to 'Stefan Poles', the second should be attributed not to him but to another and unfamiliar name. [7]

All the same, despite Gluchowski mistaken assumptions, his identification of the two autobiographical narratives undoubtedly authored by Poles remains significant, since they clearly constitute the most attractive and sympathetic works to be issued in English by the Polish exile. Moreover, though Gluchowski was unable to ascertain precisely how such materials had come into the hands of the editors of *All the Year Round*, he did suggest helpfully that the most likely explanation lay in Dickens's long-standing connexion—via Angela Burdett Coutts, whose cousin was the founder—with the British Literary Association of the Friends of Poland (47–49). Furthermore, his article does alert us to Poles's two early pamphlets published in Sweden, which, it should be noted, were written not only to promote the cause of Polish independence but also as an act of self-justification or self-defence.[8] Before turning to the relationship of Poles to Dallas, however, we should briefly note a couple of further pamphlets published by the emigré, also not mentioned in *The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins*. First, following up a reference in Boase (II col. 1571), I have located a volume probably published in late 1864 at Vienna/Liepzig under the title *Zwei Regierungen in Warschau: Reiseskizzen von Stephan Poles* (Two Governments in Warsaw: Travel Sketches by Stephan Poles), which proves to be a German adaptation of 'Ten Days in Warsaw', but offering rather more in the way of autobiographical detail.[9] The second is of an

---

including his authorship of the *All the Year Round* article in question; at the same time, many of the other biographical details supplied there seem rather questionable.

[6] According to a personal communication from Jeremy Parott, there were: five articles by John Berwick Harwood (1828–99), four by George Walter Thornbury (1828–76: *ODNB*), with single contributions by Dudley Costello (1803–65: *ODNB*), Edmund Ollier (1827–86: *ODNB*), the Revd. Edmund Saul Dixon (1809–93), and John Palgrave Simpson (1807–87: *ODNB*).

[7] Again according to the personal communication from Jeremy Parott, this is likely to have been a Danish-born telegraph operator living in Aberdeen, who would have had the ability and the means to read the original article in the Stockholm newspaper.

[8] There are physical copies of both in the British Library, each bearing the same accession date, 23 August 1865. According to Leśniewski, the two pamphlets were likely to have been initially 'written in German and translated into Swedish' (32).

[9] There is also a physical copy of the German version in the British Library, the accession date being 22 September 1871.

entirely different character. Announced on its cover as issued 'for Private Circulation Only' but at the same time advertised in the *Athenaeum*,[10] *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman* was the third and final self-justifying pamphlet published by Poles himself in the mid-1870s from his Soho residence at 20, Great Marlborough Street, not long before the end of his brief and troubled life from emphysema close by at the Middlesex Hospital in Mortimer Streer.[11] To each of these two publications we shall return.

Over the last couple of years I have been working concertedly with Jenny Bourne Taylor to try to provide a clearer and more accurate picture of the life and writings of Eneas Sweetland Dallas (1827–79), often regarded as the most unjustly neglected among the theorists and practitioners of Victorian critical journalism (Taylor 189-91). The main results are to be found in two volumes published at the beginning of 2024: an annotated anthology of a selection of his contributions to *The Times*, and the first scholarly edition of his best-known work, *The Gay Science*, an innovative attempt 'to settle the first principles of Criticism' (I v). The first demonstrates that between mid-1855 and early 1871 Dallas contributed close to 300 articles filling rather over 600 columns of *The Times* (xlvi–lxvii). His cornucopia of reviews there covered not only the drama, poetry and of course fiction,[12] but also the visual and plastic arts, biography, travel, history, philosophy, theology, politics, sociology and popular science; in addition he contributed a significant number of editorial leaders, obituaries, and general articles of current interest, plus reports as correspondent in Paris, in particular during the International Exhibition of 1867. While Dallas's work for *The Times* clearly represents his largest and most diverse body of journalistic writing, the second volume edited by Law and Taylor includes a comprehensive Primary Bibliography, which, over and above the material in *The Times*, lists more than 200 further articles of various genres appearing in a wide range of quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily journals over the three decades between 1850 and 1880 (xx–xxxiv). Altogether, this plethora of contributions to the periodical press represents in intellectual terms an investigation of striking verve and originality into key issues of modernity, including the radical developments in periodical publication over the Victorian

[10] The advertisement seems to have appeared once only in the issue of 8 May 1875, 606a, where it was stated that a copy would be sent to anyone forwarding to the author 'a receipt for 5*s*. on behalf of the Silent Pavement Fund round the Hospital for Women, Soho-square, and signed by the Secretary'.

[11] There appears to be only a single copy of this pamphlet held by a library in Britain (the Bodleian at Oxford); however, I was able to obtain a digital facsimile of the copy in the National Library of Sweden at Stockholm (Kungliga Biblioteket), which proves to include an inscription on the title page in Poles's own hand stating that it was 'presented by the Publisher'.

[12] In addition to *The Woman in White*, Dallas also contributed critical notices of *No Name* (with a novel by Mrs Henry Wood, on 22 January 1863), and *No Thoroughfare* (the special Christmas number of *All the Year Round* written jointly with Dickens, reviewed on 27 December 1867).

period (Law 1-8). Nevertheless, the most substantial and significant body of material newly attributed to Dallas in this edition of *The Gay Science*, is the more than 150 reports that Dallas filed during the Franco-Prussian War and its revolutionary aftermath as 'Special Correspondent' in Paris for the *Daily News*. This was an increasingly influential liberal rival to the conservative *Times*, to which over the same period he contributed a total of only four reports as 'Occasional Correspondent'. As a peace treaty was finally negotiated and the siege of the city finally came to an end, it was in the course of his continuing duties as *Daily News* correspondent that Dallas ran into our ubiquitous Polish exile towards the end of March 1871.

Recommended on account of his familiarity with the political press in the French capital by George Crawford, another correspondent for the *Daily News* stationed at Versailles, Poles began to work regularly for Dallas at 'a salary of 300f. a month' (see, e.g., 'Law Intelligence', 3d). While it was noted that he had had a special success in accessing a 'facility for the transmission of news to London by means of a special wire', he more generally served 'as a scout in procuring … information from the different public offices' (*ibid.*). This proved to be a rather risky business during the ten-week period of confused and tenuous control of the city by the Communards. Then even Dallas himself, who, as a representative of the London press was generally received respectfully at both the Prefecture of Police and the Hôtel de Ville, was among a group of foreigners arbitrarily arrested while drinking coffee at midnight outside Peters's Café Américain, treated abusively, and incarcerated overnight ('The State of Paris', 6b–c). Of course, the Polish exile's position was much more vulnerable than that of his British employer, and the danger seems to have become even greater immediately after the fall of the Commune, with the restoration of a Republican government keen to exact revenge. Then in only ten days around 40,000 Parisians were reputed to have been arrested on suspicion of sedition by the military police and imprisoned at Versailles (Lissagaray, 395–407).

As shown in rather greater detail in the 'Brief Life' that follows, Poles was arrested three times without charge or trial within the six-week period between mid-April and late May, the first and last by the Republican authorities based at Versailles, and in between by the forces of the Commune in Paris itself. And on each occasion the period of incarceration grew longer—from merely a single night to nearly two weeks and finally to over six months—while the treatment became more brutal: during the third imprisonment he seems to have been tortured with some regularity. It was even reported in the Paris press in mid-July that Poles had died in his cell, whereupon Dallas penned a pathetic epitaph: 'Poor Poles, thrashed to death at Versailles' (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 12). When Dallas ended his stint as Paris correspondent and returned home in late September, he

was apparently unaware that the Polish exile was still alive and in prison; Poles himself finally managed to bribe his way out of gaol only in early December 1871 and headed straight to London. Though both seem then to have resided in or around the Soho district, there is no record of Dallas and Poles meeting up again until February 1874, when the former was called to give evidence during the latter's libel case against *The Times*, with its offices on Printing House Square. The Scottish journalist was facing his own problems—seriously ill during much of 1872-73, he had been able to do very little writing and was afterwards caught up in a sordidly acrimonious divorce which attracted a good deal of adverse publicity when it came to court in May 1874—and was perhaps unable or unwilling to do much to assist his former assistant. Poles was probably thinking of Dallas when, in his late pamphlet *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman*, he wrote bitterly that the parson of the title (Rev. H.R. Haweis) was 'not the only brave Englishman who has been glad to encourage a foreigner to risk freedom in a task he desired to see accomplished, but without risk to himself' (18).

A Brief Life: Rafał Tugendhold / Stefan Poles (1841-1875)

1. Childhood and Youth, 1841–1860

Not much is known of the upbringing of Rafał Tugendhold. Born in Warsaw in 1841 he was the son of Jakob Tugendhold (1794–1871), a Jewish rabbi and writer hailing from near Krakow, who in 1819 was placed in charge of the Board of Jewish Elementary Schools in Warsaw, and in 1852 became director of the Rabbinical School, though he never held the position of Chief Rabbi. Although back in 1831 Jakob Tugendhold had been an exception among the Jewish community in supporting the Polish insurrection and even joining the revolutionary National Guard, his educational duties increasingly led him into collaboration with the Russian authorities, and he came to serve as official censor of Hebrew publications. This position encouraged both orthodox traditionalists and the increasingly assimilated and secularized Jewish intelligentsia to view Rafał Tugendhold's father as something of a turncoat.[13] The son's autobiographical accounts, where the pen-name Stefan Poles may have first been employed,[14] show that he had at least two brothers, one probably elder who became a doctor and one younger who joined a patriotic Ulan (cavalry) regiment and died fighting against the Russian army in August

[13] Generally on the life and work of Jakob Tugendhold, see Mahler, 210–13, Wodziński, 16–22, and Genauer and Rabinowitz, 149–54.

[14] It remains unclear when the young man first used the name Stefan/Stephan Poles, and whether the purpose was to create a literary pseudonym, to protect his family from retribution on account of his role as a political rebel, or to conceal his ethnic background. The second name was pronounced as two syllables, and sometimes written 'Polès' or 'Polhès'.

1863 at the age of only fourteen.[15] The main record of Rafał's own youthful experiences is found in his moving account of his clandestine return to Warsaw not long after the death of his younger brother. As we have seen, this narrative appeared in an English adaptation in Dickens's *All the Year Round* around a year later in mid-1864. There, a good deal of space is given to the evocation of the city of Warsaw, including the bronze obelisk erected by the Russians in front of the Saxon Gardens to commemorate those Poles who 'in 1831 betrayed the national cause', a monument which 'I used to pass … every day when I was a boy on my way to school: I and my comrades regarded it with scorn' (Poles 'From the Pen of a Pole', 452). He also reveals that '[s]ecretly, and like a thief' he was obliged to pass by his 'own old home, the house which still contained within its walls those who were dearest to me on earth' (*ibid.* 456); then it was the voice and image of his mother rather than his father or siblings that he fondly recalled. Sadly, this seems to have been the last time the young man was able to visit his homeland.[16]

2. Before and after the Łapiński Expedition, 1860-64

Clearly a gifted linguist with competence in not only Polish and Russian but also French and German,[17] as well as a wide knowledge of European literature, Poles seems to have attended the University of Vitzburgh in Bavaria, where he may have concentrated on music.[18] It is uncertain how long he spent on these studies, although there are indications that he was in Paris during 1862, where he must have met Polish exiles such as Count Albert Potocki. Certainly he was

[15] According to Wodziński (22), at his death on 20 April 1871 Jakob Tugendhold 'left his wife Salomea, [and] seven children', though no further details are provided. According to the Geni genealogical resource, Rafał Tugenhold's mother was Salome (Chaja) Tugendhold née Weinberg (*c.* 1810–1887), and he had two older (Karoline b. 1828 and Rosalie b. 1835) and one younger sister (Sophie b. 1846).

[16] In the tenth and final chapter of Poles's *Zwei Regierungen in Warschau* (Two Governments in Warsaw) (111–19), we find an expanded version of material in 'Ten Days in Warsaw', which is in turn rather more detailed than the content summarized here from 'From the Pen of a Pole'. For example, in rough translation from the German, the Tugendhold family house is evoked thus:

> … how unhappy I felt to have to stay away from the house in which I had spent my childhood years. My father's house is only of average size; it is located between two rows of sturdy old lime trees, which completely conceal it with their shady branches and twigs. Just behind there is a small garden… It is the kingdom of my sisters; in spring it is decorated with a forest of fragrant lilacs, so that the entire garden seems to be a single bouquet of flowers. In the evening, when the day's studies were over, the windows were opened wide; my older sister Rosa sat down at the piano and we danced on the grass; then we had our evening meal, which consisted of fermented milk and fruit … (112)

In the following lines (113) Poles dwells on the strictness of his father–'der strenge Vater'–and the boundless love of his mother– 'meine Mutter in ihrer schrankenlosen Liebe'.

[17] In the Preface to his *Sorrow and Song* (1875), Henry Curwen, in acknowledging Poles's assistance in translating from the German of the early Romantic poet Novalis, describes him as 'a linguist … of unrivalled ability' (I xiii).

[18] Among the more amicable letters by Poles in the early pages of *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman* (1875), Poles informed Haweis that he had been a 'violinist from my earliest days …' (9).

in England towards the beginning of 1863, since it was from the port of Southampton that on March 22 he embarked with around 150 armed men for Helsingborg in Sweden aboard the steamer 'Ward Jackson' under the command of Captain Robert Weatherley,[19] on what soon became known as the Łapiński expedition. This was the ill-fated Polish naval force, aiming to attack the Russian army in Lithuania by landing troops on the Samogitian coast, which was led by Colonel Teofil Łapiński with Stefan Poles as his secretarial assistant. While Poles could clearly be annoyingly obsessive as well as acutely intelligent, according to the most reliable account of his life, Adam Leśniewski's 'A Certain Fiasco or the Role of Stefan Poles in the Polish Uprising of 1863', which is based on sources in Polish and Russian as well as English, the failure of the expedition was due to a complex of factors well beyond the secretary's control. Nevertheless, unfounded rumours, perhaps tainted with anti-Semitism, that Poles was a spy for Russia became rife and he has gone down in the history of Poland, both domestic and external, as a traitor to the patriotic cause. All the same, his participation in the Polish uprising via the Łapiński expedition eventually led to a death sentence from the Russian authorities which effectively banished him from his homeland and rendered him a political refugee for the remainder of his short life.

3. 'A wanderer on the face of the earth', 1864–1870

Thus, in the words of the Attorney-General, Sir Henry James, in his opening remarks to Poles's libel action against *The Times* in the Court of the Queen's Bench on 9 February 1874, the young man of necessity became 'a wanderer on the face of the earth' (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 5). Fortunately in these circumstances, Poles seems to have been gifted with what the actor Frank Archer later described as 'the most persuasive, insinuating manners' (156), though less happily he seems also to have been subject to periodic bouts of depression and paranoia. Initially, he clearly returned 'as a political agent to sympathisers in Sweden, where he was received by persons of very high literary and social position' (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 5); these included both the feminist author Fredrika Bremer (1801–65), who wrote Poles a warm letter of literary recommendation, and the Irish-born Lady Ann Mary Hamilton of Ovesholm (1830-66), whose indiscrete correspondence with Count Manderström, the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, somehow ended up in Poles's hands and may have been turned into a

[19] When Poles was gathering evidence for his libel case against Count Potocki and his companions, the London evening paper *The Sun* carried the following personal advertisement: 'Mr. Robert Weatherley, Captain of the steamer Ward Jackson in the year 1863, would confer a great favour by communicating with Mr. Stefan Poles, 20, Great Marlborough-street, W.' (21 October 1874, 1c).

long-term source of income through blackmail (Leśniewski, 36).[20] Next, given the two autobiographical pieces published in *All the Year Round* in 1864–65, he may once more have resided in London and come into contact with the Literary Association of the Friends of Poland,[21] though this was not mentioned in the court case. Indeed, it might well have been Poles himself who deposited the copies of his two Swedish pamphlets at the British Museum in August 1865. Thereafter, according to the court reports, Poles 'contributed to several German and French Journals, and acted as correspondent in the United States of America to papers published in his own country' (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper* 5). Elsewhere, we find the details that he may have been based respectively in Hamburg and Chicago, and in Paris have contributed to both a 'desk dictionary' and *L'Événement Illustré*, a daily newspaper that proved short-lived (April 1868 to January 1869).[22] The commencement of hostilities in the Franco-Prussian War during the summer of 1870 seem once again to have drawn Poles back to France, where a good deal more detail concerning his activities has been preserved.[23]

4. War and Revolution in France, 1870–1871

The press reporting of the examination and cross-examination of Poles during the *Times* libel case suggests that he played

> a very prominent part on the side of France in the late war in which that country was engaged with Prussia. A legion of Poles was being formed in Lyons to assist the French arms, and the person chiefly entrusted with that duty was an Irish Pole named O'Beirne. In consequence of some irregularity, however, that enterprise was not very successful …
>
> (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 7–8)

At the end of the war, Poles made his way to Paris, where he soon established contact with the then special correspondents for the *Daily News*, in turn George Crawford at nearby Versailles and E.S. Dallas in Paris itself, and began to work for them as a paid scout, messenger and general assistant. As we have

[20] On account of his claims to intimacy with the nobility of Sweden, Poles seems to have been given the label the 'illustrious foreigner' by Wilkie Collins; see [1564] to William Tindell, 6 October 1875, Baker et al., III 99.

[21] Ironically, in the spring of 1874 Major Charles Szulczewski (1814–84), Secretary of the Literary Association for the last thirty years, wrote to the press concerning 'Stefan Poles' suggesting that the Polish emigré community was bound to be dubious of any proposal coming in the 'questionable shape' of a person formerly known as 'Hyalmes Möller Tugenhold' (see, e.g., Szulczewski, 3f); generally on Szulczewski, see Gluchowski, 49-51, and Kutolowski, 87.

[22] Among the more amicable letters in *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman* (1875), Poles recalls the German pianist Marie Krebs playing for him 'some seven or eight years ago at Dresden' (6).

[23] In the Preface to his pamphlet on the *Times* libel case, Poles wrote that he was then 'preparing a circumstantial narrative, in which, without passion or prejudice, I relate the part I have taken, in many strange adventures in France …' Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 12; however, this seems never to have been published.

seen, this proved a hazardous task, quickly resulting in three periods of imprisonment. In the *Daily News* of 17 April 1870, Crawford reported the brutal arrest by the 'Bonapartist police' in the Avenue de St. Cloud, Versailles, of Poles (described as 'a young officer of a disbanded corps, out of uniform') in the course of his performing a service for the two British journalists, though he was fortunately released after only a few hours (Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 28–29). In the same paper on 9 May, Dallas recounted Poles's second arrest, this time by the forces of the Commune as 'a spy from Versailles' while seeking information at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris; here the journalist's assistant ('a friend of mine') was released without charge only after at least twelve days spent in miserable conditions of solitary confinement at the Mazas Prison, near the Gare de Lyon, which appeared to have adversely affected his mental stability (*ibid.* 30–31). Yet far worse was to come. Under the Commune Dallas had requested Poles to help protect from the mob the valuable movable property of Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877), the veteran statesman who had negotiated the Peace Treaty marking an end to the Franco-Prussian War. Ironically, as evidenced by the documents included in the pamphlet on the libel case against *The Times*, in late May Poles was accused of stealing the Thiers papers and detained in a series of locations: at Versailles in the notoriously airless 'Fosse-aux-Lions' dungeon under the Orangerie,[24] at the Military Hospital there, and later again in Paris inside the Mazas Prison. While in the 'Lion's Den' in particular he seems to have been treated cruelly—in late June, for example, he claimed to have been 'gagged, fastened with ropes to the iron skeleton of an orange-tree box, and thrashed with a heavy piece of wood until, bleeding all over, I entirely lost my consciousness' (*ibid.* 12). Despite repeated appeals to Thiers, who at the beginning of August 1871 was formally declared President of the Third Republic, Poles was only able to bribe his way out of prison early in December 1871. Obviously far from in the best of physical or mental health, he then fled immediately to London where, as we have seen, his former employer had already been back for a couple of months.

5. Back in London, 1871–75

As noted before, there is no record of Dallas meeting Poles again until he gave evidence during the *Times* libel case in early 1874, where the Polish exile was awarded a pittance of £50 in damages. According to his testimony then, he had initially earned his keep in London by working as an assistant to a West End photographer, though within a year he seems to have begun offering his services as agent to well-known figures in the worlds of literature and music. Georgina Weldon, then associated with the French composer/conductor

[24] At the beginning of his 1875 pamphlet attacking *The Actual Condition of the British Museum*, Poles recalls his period of imprisonment in 'my den in Versailles—narrower even and more pestilential if possible than some that I shall have here to describe' (6).

Charles Gounod, states that 'Stefan Polès ... who had never been an agent in his life, got himself introduced as such by a young communist, Camille Barrère' (*Gounod in England*, 78). There is evidence, for example, that he made use of the letter of recommendation from Fredrika Bremer to approach the poet Mary Howitt (1799–1888) who had translated the Swedish writer's best known novel *Hertha* (1856); Charles Reade and Mary Braddon also seem to have been approached, while the first recorded mention by Wilkie Collins was in a note to his lawyer William Tindell penned on 5 June 1873, to be 'presented to you by my friend Mr Polès who has kindly undertaken to ask you a question for me' regarding the agreement to stage *The New Magdalen* at the Olympic Theatre ([1350] II 406). The last was in a letter to Tindell of 12 November 1875, a week after Poles's death, where, while donating a couple of pounds towards his burial (perhaps arranged by the cleric H.R. Haweis), Collins also offered the private opinion that 'the money would have been more appropriately bestowed on a living object of charity, not an irreclaimable scoundrel' ([1575] II 398). And Collins was not the only one to have become exasperated after initially receiving a favourable impression: Gounod claimed that Poles had tried to extort £480 from him, and eventually inserted a notice in the press declaring that he did not 'transact any business through the agency of M. Stefan Polès' (Gounod, 823a).[25] On the other hand, it was hardly fair to complain that hitherto the young Pole 'had never been an agent in his life', since, as James Hepburn shows, the profession hardly existed at that point and Poles was a pioneer in having his name listed as a such in the *Post Office Directory* (*The Author's Empty Purse*, 47–49; '"The Author's Empty Purse" Revisited', 630–31). And, if Poles had assumed that he would be free from persecution in liberal England, he was sadly mistaken. On 31 January 1873 had appeared the libellous letter in *The Times*, written by its accredited Paris correspondent Charles Austin, falsely accusing 'M. Polhès' both of purloining the papers of Thiers for purposes of extortion and of passing himself off as the Paris correspondent of that bastion of the English establishment, which had pointedly declined to retract and apologize when the injustice was pointed out ([Austin], p. 4b; Poles, *Stefan Poles v. "The Times" Newspaper*, 3–4).

Moreover, from spring 1874, after Poles had publicly supported the offer of an amnesty from the Russian authorities for most Polish political exiles in Britain, he was subjected to a campaign of anti-Semitic abuse in the press and elsewhere orchestrated by Count Potocki, now resident in London at Great

[25] While there is no specific evidence in the letters regarding this, given the severity of his final judgment, it seems likely that Collins considered that Poles had in some manner been guilty of theft or fraud while acting as his agent. However, according to information from Paul Lewis concerning Collins's account at Coutts Bank, only four relevant transactions are recorded: three debits to Poles (£15 on 4 June 1873, £7 on 15 July 1873, and £5-10s on 12 September 1873); and a single credit from Poles (£30 on 4 April 1874).

Russell Street. Potocki was twice arraigned in court cases concluding in May and December 1874. In the first Potocki was convicted of posting threatening and abusive letters at Poles's home in Soho; when translated in court an extract read, 'We are waiting from Paris the arrival of two gentlemen, who took part in the expedition of [Łapiński], to thrash thy skin, and to show thee that not each filthy Jew has the right of speaking publicly in these days.' (e.g., in 'The Police Courts', 3c). In the second, Potocki eventually pleaded guilty to libel in publishing at Whitefriars a pamphlet, attributed only to 'Polish Patriots', falsely accusing Poles both of being a Russian spy and of pocketing subscriptions collected for the relief of his compatriots, circulating it among the Polish community in exile, and even lodging a copy at the British Museum. Further, Leśniewski has produced conclusive documentary evidence from the Central State Historic Archive (CGIA) in Moscow, that it was not Poles but Potocki who had acted throughout as a spy and agent-provocateur for the Russian authorities. Among Poles's final messages to an unjust world were the two pamphlets published under his name at the beginning and end of March 1875, respectively, *The Actual Condition of the British Museum* and *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman*.[26] The former criticised the management of the institution as well as the physical conditions in which employees such as Emanuel Deutsch were forced to work; as reviews such as that in the *Lancet* suggested, the argument was by no means unjustified, though, animated by resentment that the libellous Polish pamphlet had been inserted in the library, its tone was extremely intemperate. The latter represented simply an act of personal vengeance; this was a 'budget' of his correspondence with or about Haweis, the friend of Deutsch who had initially supported the issuing of Poles's British Museum pamphlet but soon repented. The brief 'Preliminary' bizarrely read:

> Time after time during the last three years, I have found people anxious for my alliance terminable at their good pleasure, when they have ceased to have need of the foreigner. Because I will have no more of this, … I publish this correspondence as a warning that I am a most disagreeable person to have dealings with on such terms as these. (Poles, *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman*, [3])

Among the reprinted letters themselves we can find equally disturbed and disturbing passages, such as when Poles apologises to Haweis for not returning a document because 'I have had no one I could send to you, for finding myself surrounded by spies and traitors I am driven to distrust everybody' (13). While it is not known what specific medical treatment Poles underwent in his later

[26] The most detailed discussion of the circumstance in which these extraordinary publications were produced is found in McCrimmon, 186–93, where it is argued that William Ralston was not only the British Museum employee who supplied Poles with much of the inside information for the first pamphlet, but also the correspondent disguised as 'A. F.' in the second. However, McCrimmon's account does contain several significant factual errors, such as the statement that E.S. Dallas was the journalist responsible for the letter to *The Times* libelling Poles (191).

years,[27] given the nature of his final publications it is difficult not to conclude that he was by then at least on the verge of insanity. Thus, Leśniewski's comprehensive and considered analysis arrives at the conclusion that Poles was less a traitor or a scoundrel than a sufferer from paranoid delusions, whose condition was hardly improved by the periodic injustices he was subject to.

Verdicts

It should be remembered that even Wilkie Collins's last judgment on Poles as 'an irreclaimable scoundrel' was grudgingly counter-balanced by the charitable donation of a couple of pounds towards his interment. More importantly, we need to approach his troubled life not only in narrower personal terms but also in its broader social and political context. Firstly, it needs to be recognized that the surge in Britain during the early 1860s of liberal sympathy with the Polish rebellion against Russian imperial power—as witnessed equally by the hosting of the Łapiński expedition and the devotion of so much space to the issue in the columns of *All the Year Round*—had largely dissipated by the following decade (see Kutolowski). With the Crimean War now a distant memory and Tsar Alexander II of Russia about to pay a cordial visit to Queen Victoria, the general reaction in the press to the public quarrel between Potocki and Poles over the issue of an amnesty around spring 1874 seems to have reflected a mixture of exhaustion and exasperation. And, of course, to begin with neither Collins's published works nor his private letters offer much to suggest that he had shared Boz's interest in and sympathy with the January Uprising. On the other hand, Wilkie's writings, whether fictional or discursive, hardly ever exhibit the 'othering' of Jewish people and culture, whether to provoke ridicule, disgust or horror, that too often mars Dickens's work;[28] indeed, there has recently appeared a detailed examination of how Collins 'transcended rather than embraced' the decidedly 'prejudiced atmosphere' that enveloped him (Gasson and Baker, 81). In the story of Poles's life briefly told here, we can discern a toxic anti-Semitism not only in the alien script of the poison-pen letter of Count Potocki, but also in the distasteful obituary comments penned by Yates which repeat libels from the Potocki pamphlet. This is by no means,

[27] Among the more amicable letters in *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman* (1875), Poles mentions finding a copy of Haweis's recent book *Music and Morals* 'in the waiting room of Dr. Andrew Clark, to whom I went to offer a guinea in exchange for the sweet and bitter that he might have to say about my health.' (10). The reference must be to the Scottish physician Andrew Clark (1826–93: *ODNB*), who specialised in pulmonary rather than psychiatric conditions, and two of whose patents suffered from 'the effects of the stifling air' in the offices of British Museum (*The Actual Condition*, 12). Again citing a report from Potocki held in the CGIA Archives in Moscow, Leśniewski states that in the summer of 1875 Poles 'became seriously ill and … was placed in a psychiatric hospital' (38).

[28] In private, as Gluchowski has shown (48-50), Dickens indeed found it difficult to resist 'othering' the Polish exiles also; in a letter to Serjeant Talfourd of 1 May 1846, for example, he mocked Szulczewski, the secretary of the Polish Literary Association, as '[a] gentleman with two thirds of all the English consonants in his name, and none of the vowels' (House et al., IV 543–44).

of course, to suggest that, in his final verdict on our Polish exile, Wilkie simply echoes the discriminatory attitude exposed by Yates; yet, at the same time, given the wide press coverage in 1874 of, most notably, the Potocki libel case, including in journals such as *The Times* and *Echo* to which he is known to have subscribed, Collins could hardly have been unaware of Poles's ethnic background. Perhaps, though, in the London literary world of the 1870s, the young exile may have appeared almost as alien under his adopted Slavonic name of Stefan Poles as he would as Rafał Tugendhold.[29]

Works Cited

Advertisement for *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman*. *Athenaeum* (8 May 1875) 606a.

Archer, Frank. *An Actor's Notebooks*. London: Stanley Paul, 1912.

[Austin, Charles, as 'A "Times" Correspondent']. 'Sham Correspondents' (Letter to the Editor), *The Times* (31 January 1873) 4b.

Baker, William, et al., eds. *The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins* [Past Masters edition]. 6 vols: Charlottesville, Virginia: InteLex Corporation, 2018. URL: https://pm.nlx.com.

Baker, William, et al., eds. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters.* 4 vols; London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005.

Boase, Frederic. *Modern English Biography*. 6 vols; Truro: Netherton, 1892–1921.

Budrewicz, Aleksandra, 'Obrazki z Polski na łamach "All the Year Round" Charlesa Dickensa' (Images from Poland in the Pages of "All the Year Round" by Charles Dickens), *Niepodległość i Pamięć* (Independence and Memory) 21:1-2 (2014) 117-38.

Curwen, Henry. *Sorrow and Song: Studies of Literary Struggle*. 2 vols; London: Henry S. King, 1875.

Dallas, E.S. *The Gay Science*. 2 vols: London: Chapman and Hall, 1866.

[Dallas, E.S.]. 'The State of Paris', *Daily News* (23 May 1871) 6a–c.

Gasson, Andrew and Baker, William. 'Forgotten Terrain: Wilkie Collins's Jewish Explorations', *Jewish Historical Studies* 48 (2016) 177–99.

Genauer, Eli, and Rabinowitz, Dan. 'The Brothers Tugendhold and Jewish Censorship in the Nineteenth Century', *Hakirah: The Flatbush Journal of Jewish Law and Thought* 27 (Fall 2019) 147–63.

Gluchowski, Krzysztof. 'Dickens and Poland', *Dickensian* 98:456 (Spring 2002) 44–51.

Gounod, Charles. Announcement, *Cosmopolitan* (25 September 1873) 823a.

Hepburn, James. *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

[29] All the post-Brexit jokes about plumbers etc. suggest that the Victorians hardly hold a monopoly on the 'othering' of Polish immigrants.

Hepburn, James. '"The Author's Empty Purse" Revisited', *Sewanee Review* 117:4 (Fall 2009) 628–40.
House, M., Storey, G., and Tillotson, K., eds. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. 12 vols, Pilgrim ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–2002.
Kutolowski, John F. 'Mid-Victorian Public Opinion, Polish Propaganda, and the Uprising of 1863', *Journal of British Studies* 8:2 (May 1969) 86–110.
Law, Graham. *The Periodical Press Revolution: E. S. Dallas and the 19th-Century British Media System.* (Routledge Research in Journalism Series.) London: Routledge, 2024.
Law, Graham, and Taylor, Jenny Bourne, eds. *E.S. Dallas in 'The Times.'* London: Routledge, 2024.
Law, Graham, and Taylor, Jenny Bourne, eds. *The Gay Science*, by E.S. Dallas. Self-published Ebook, 2024. URL: https://glaw.w.waseda.jp/ ESD-GS/ESD-GS.pdf.
'Law Intelligence: Court of the Queen's Bench', *Daily News* (11 February 1874) 3d–e.
Leśniewski, Adam. 'A Certain Fiasco or the Role of Stefan Poles in the Polish Uprising of 1863', *Polish Review* 23:4 (Fall 1978) 18–38.
Lissagaray, Prosper Olivier. *History of the Commune of 1871*, trans. E.M. Aveling. 1876; London: Reeves & Turner, 1886.
Mahler, Raphael. *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment: Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. E. Orenstein and A. Klein. 1961; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985
McCrimmon, Barbara. 'W.R.S. Ralston (1828-89): Scholarship and Scandal in the British Museum', *The British Library Journal* 14:2 (Autumn 1988) 178–98.
Oppenlander, Ella Ann. *Dickens' 'All the Year Round': Descriptive Index and Contributor List*. Troy, NY: Whitston, 1975.
'Our London Letter', *North Wilts Herald* (18 December 1875) 6e.
Parrott, Jeremy. 'The Annotated Set of *All the Year Round*: Questions, Answers and Conjectures', *Dickensian* 112:198 (Spring 2016) 10–21.
Personal advertisement, *The Sun* (21 October 1874) 1c.
Poles, Stephan. *Polska Expeditionen och Stephan Poles* (The Polish Expedition and Stephan Poles). Malmo: HJ. Möllers Förlag, 1863. Digital facsimile: <https://books.google.co.jp/books?id=9LZbAAAAcAAJ>.
Poles, Stefan. *Tio dagar i WarschauI: September 1863* (Ten Days in Warsaw). Stockholm: Hörbergska Boktryckeriet: 1864. Digital facsimile: <https://books.google.co.jp/books?id=5VG1T16P05IC>.
Poles, Stephan. *Zwei Regierungen in Warschau: Reiseskizzen* (Two Governments in Warsaw: Travel Sketches). Vienna/Liepzig: Typografisch-literarisch-artistischen Anstalt, n.d. [?1864]. Digital facsimile: <https://books.google.co.jp/books?id=7RVbAAAAcAAJ>.
[Poles, Stefan]. 'From the Pen of a Pole', *All the Year Round* (18 June 1864) 448–56.

[Poles, Stefan]. ‘The Great Bear and the Pole Star’, *All the Year Round* (15 July 1865) 591–93.
Poles, Stefan. *Stefan Poles v. “The Times” Newspaper: Action for Libel*. London: Stefan Poles, 1874.
Poles, Stefan. *The Actual Condition of the British Museum: A Literary Expostulation*. London: H.S. Warr, 1875.
Poles, Stefan. *Parson, Lawyer, and Layman: A Budget of Letters, from various hands*. London: Stefan Poles, 1875.
‘The Police Courts: Marlborough-Street’, *Daily News* (21 May 1874) 3c.
[Poulsen, Emmanuel Sophus]. ‘In the Polish Cause’, *All the Year Round* (12 November 1864) 321–323.
Szulczewski, Charles. ‘The Amnesty to the Poles’ [Letter to the Editor], *Morning Post* (21 May 1874) 3f.
Taylor, Jenny Bourne. ‘*The Gay Science*: The Hidden Soul of Victorian Criticism?’, *Literature and History* 10:2 (Fall 1984) 189–202.
Weldon, Georgina. *My Orphanage and Gounod in England.* London: Music and Art Association, 1882.
Wodziński, Marcin. ‘Jakub Tugendhold and the First Maskilic’, *Gal-Ed: On the History of the Jews in Poland* 18 (2002) 13–41.
Yates, Edmund [as ‘Atlas’]. ‘What the World Says’, *The World* (24 November 1875) 14.

‘She had put on the dress which I used to admire more than any other she possessed’: Reading Dress and Making Meaning in *The Woman in White*

Emma Butler-Way

‘Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than to merely keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world’s view of us’ (Woolf 92). So declares the narrator of Virginia Woolf’s 1928 novel *Orlando*, which follows the eponymous protagonist as he/she navigates three hundred years of existence. Clothing is both personal and public, and the decision to wear—or not to wear—a particular garment is also a decision to portray a certain image to onlookers; clothing tells a story as much as a story’s narrator does. Importantly, sartorial reading is very similar to any other kind of reading: the reader will always interpret something different to what the wearer, or author, originally intended to communicate. I would argue that writers of sensation fiction made the most of this idea to fuel the sensation and scatter unspoken but recognisable clues throughout the narrative, via dress. Tara MacDonald (2023) has recently explored sensation fiction through the lens of affect theory, paying particular attention to the bodies within the novels: ‘the body holds the clue’ to the transmission and experience of plot, sensation, and affect (10). It is not just the body, however, that causes sensation(s), but also the clothes which adorn it, simultaneously concealing and revealing it. In Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1860), dress is read twice: by the narrator(s), and by the reader(s). With the exception of instances in both Marian Halcombe and Mrs Catherick’s narratives, in which both women describe their own gowns—Marian, with practicality in mind, and Mrs Catherick with pride—every other description of another woman’s dress is through the eyes of an external interpreter. What is communicated to the reader, therefore, is not necessarily the characters’ ‘intentions’, but how Collins has his narrators interpret and represent their intentions as contingent parts of the wider narrative.

Regarding the gendered nature of reading in the Victorian era, it is generally accepted that where women readers were seen to be weaker, and highly susceptible to the dangers posed by various ‘sensations’ caused by reading, ‘male readers were supposedly made of sterner stuff, with masculine rationality on their side’ (Allen 409)—something which lent them an authority denied to women. If, as Leigh Summers states, ‘it was believed, by the

Victorian middle and upper classes at least, that costume could be read as easily as any text' (19), then this supposedly innate and gendered authority extends into sartorial reading. However, this authority is critiqued in sensation fiction, for example in Ellen Wood's *Parkwood* (1857), which Janice M. Allan describes as 'the condemnation of the reading—or, indeed, misreading—practices of men' (16). Within these contexts, then, I argue that *The Woman in White* can be seen as an exploration of authoritative narratorial (mis)reading, through the specific lens of male sartorial perceptions; as such, while there are compelling, female-narrated sartorial scenes (most notably Marian's disrobing ahead of spying of Sir Percival Glyde and Count Fosco), the focus of this article is on Hartright's first narrative, and how he assigns meaning to the female characters that he interacts with through his readings of dress.

The relationship between sensation fiction and fashion in a broader sense has been much explored, and all return to Henry Mansel's oft-cited 1863 response to the genre in which he declares that: 'the public want novels, and novels must be made—so many yards of printed stuff, sensation-pattern, to be ready by the beginning of the season' (483). Recent studies exploring where the Victorian sartorial and literary worlds intersect include *Fashion and Material Culture in Victorian Fiction and Periodicals* edited by Janine Hatter and Nickianne Moody (2019), Madeline C. Seys's *Fashion and Victorian Popular Literature: Double Threads* (2017), Christine Bayles Kortch's *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women's Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism* (2009), and Clair Hughes's *Dressed in Fiction* (2005), to name but a few. Casey Sloan's 2016 article 'Possessing Dresses: Fashion and the Female Community in *The Woman in White*' is a particularly important piece that addresses the use of fashion in Collins's novel, especially in terms of dress serving as a mode of communication between female characters (thus problematising the idea that men were more authoritative readers). Building upon such scholarship, this article explores the notion that identity in *The Woman in White* is controlled dually through dress and the narratorial interpretation thereof. The structure of the novel, as a series of accounts compiled like legal evidence, is curated entirely by the first narrator, Walter Hartright. With a few notable exceptions, the majority of extended descriptions of women's dress appear in Hartright's first narrative: we receive each woman as she has been filtered through his interpretive lens. What this article seeks to do, therefore, is highlight the importance of the novel as a production of Hartright's making, and foreground the importance of his sartorial interpretations therein.

Interpreting Laura and Marian's Material Manipulation

The Woman in White makes clear from its title alone how important dress is to both the narrative and how identity is both perceived and received. Throughout

the novel, the one character who is consistently referred to by her clothing—as 'the woman in white'—is Anne Catherick; even after her name is revealed, Hartright refers to her as 'the woman in white' a further thirteen times. This eponymous 'woman in white' is no doubt the most important figure in Hartright's narrative, but as the title of the novel refers to a description, rather than a name (in the way that M. E. Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* and *Lady Audley's Secret* do, for example), emphasis is placed upon the importance of the image over that of the individual identity of the woman. After all, the title can also be applied to Anne's doppelgänger and half-sister, Laura Fairlie who is placed in the asylum in Anne's stead, an exchange facilitated as much by their dress as by their similar appearance; were the novel instead called *Anne Catherick*, or *Laura Fairlie*, the significance of their duality as 'the woman in white' would be lost.

Hartright's first description of Laura is framed around her dress, and as a narrator, he rarely looks beyond his interpretations of the external, sartorial indicators of her character. Importantly, however, this description is not of Laura, but of a watercolour portrait he painted of her 'at an after period' (Collins 52). The painting is not, then, from life, but from his memory—his imagination. Hartright describes this portrait as showing 'a light youthful figure, clothed in a simple muslin dress, the pattern of it formed by broad alternate stripes of delicate blue and white' (52). By favouring the portrait over the 'real' Laura, Hartright offers an artist's impression that obscures Laura's 'true' appearance, whatever that might be. The reader never sees the 'true' Laura, as she is only ever described by biased narrators who use her to fulfil certain roles (pupil, love interest, victim, sister, wife, mother): she is a 'blank canvas onto which the observer's desires and fantasies can be sketched' (Reynolds and Humble 53), and as such can possess no image—or voice—of her own. Indeed, in his discussion of nude European oil paintings, John Berger refers to the 'spectator-owner' (55), an idea that casts the observer in the role of protagonist: the subject of the painting is not the model, or the scene, but the person consuming it. While Hartright is a watercolourist, and Laura is most certainly clothed, this notion of spectator-ownership nonetheless applies here. Hartright, as both the spectator and the owner of the painting, not to mention the creator of it as well, is in complete control of how Laura is (re)presented; he shows the reader the Laura that he wants them to see. In a similar vein, albeit discussing film, Laura Mulvey argues that:

> woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. (343)

As this article explores, Hartright assigns meaning to the women he encounters through his interpretations of their dress; though there are attempts by Laura to make meaning through her dress, which will be discussed presently, Hartright's power and authority as the narrator of her life supersedes those attempts, and through denying her a narrative voice, ensures that she remains a 'silent image' that rather bears the meaning attributed to her. When Hartright first provides a reading of Marian, however, he does so through his appreciation of 'the rare beauty of her form … perfection in the eyes of a man' (Collins 32) before expressing his horror at her 'ugly!' face (33). This visual discrepancy so disturbs Hartright that he likens the sensation to 'the helpless discomfort familiar to us all in sleep, when we recognise yet cannot reconcile the anomalies and contradictions of a dream' (33). His inability to reconcile Marian's figure and her face alerts to readers that as an interpreter, particularly of women, he is fallible. Nonetheless, his authority within the text as a maker of meaning remains unchallenged through his curation of the narrative; indeed, despite his initial horror, Marian swiftly becomes 'soft' and 'womanly' when she speaks (33); Hartright overwrites his discomfort and repulsion by asserting that Marian is as he first interpreted her to be through her 'unaffected grace' and 'comely' figure (32). The female characters that Hartright encounters are shown to exhibit some sartorial agency, both in his and other narratives, but only after he has first introduced them and assigned them meaning.

Emily Allen suggests that Laura is 'the hole at the centre [of the narrative] —the vanishing lady whose identity is up for grabs' (405); and up for grabs it is—not just through the overt exploitation of her similarity to Anne by Sir Percival and Count Fosco, but also perhaps more insidiously by Hartright as he writes her story and denies her a voice in it. Rachel Ablow argues that it is 'Walter Hartright's almost unique ability to identify his wife' that sits at the centre of *The Woman in White* (158); while she may be a 'vanishing lady', Laura's identity is only restored through Hartright's words—and there is no guarantee that the woman he identifies as Laura is in fact her, and not Anne. Hartright's identification of—and differentiation between—Anne and Laura is achieved primarily through sartorial means that appear, through his pen, to identify them both as independent of their physical or physiognomic attributes. He manipulates not just the written but the sartorial evidence to make certain that we accept his word for who is who; he ensures they 'bear meaning' for, and in, his story, rather than 'make meaning' for themselves.

The second time Hartright writes Laura's dress is towards the end of his first full day at Limmeridge. He is struck, upon entering the drawing room, 'by the curious contrast, rather in the material than in the colour, of the dresses which [Laura, Marian, and Mrs Vesey—Laura's former governess] now wore':

> While Mrs Vesey and Miss Halcombe were richly clad (each in the manner most becoming to her age), the first in silver-grey, and the second in that delicate primrose-yellow colour which matches so well with a dark complexion and black hair, Miss Fairlie was unpretendingly and almost poorly dressed in plain white muslin. It was spotlessly pure: it was beautifully put on; but still it was the sort of dress which the wife or daughter of a poor man might have worn, and it made her, so far as externals went, look less affluent than her governess. (58)[1]

This is the first time Marian's dress is mentioned by Hartright—up to this point, his descriptions of her have been focussed on her figure, her hands, and her facial features. While this complementary nod to her dress emphasises the high-esteem in which he holds her, Hartright nonetheless represents Marian through her form and colouring, though glossing over her less-feminine features, here. His interpretation of Laura's identity, however, is inextricably woven together with her mode of dress and represented through material, rather than bodily, definitions. Interestingly, this description is the first indication given to the reader than Laura might have more substance than her initial, watery description suggests, and more individual agency than Hartright's narratorial control implies. In a diluted rehearsal of his first impression of Marian, Hartright's reaction to Laura's attire, here, while more assured than his first description of her, is coloured by a disappointment that she does not fulfil his expectations. While Marian is certainly not as wealthy as Laura, she evidently has the means for what could be called a 'suitable' wardrobe. Laura's decision to belie her wealth by dressing down her status, however, draws attention to the wealth that she is so keen to disguise, as the 'poor' nature of her dress creates an uneasy juxtaposition between what Hartright knows, and what he sees. His assertion that she is 'unpretendingly' dressed is challenged by the revelation that Laura quite clearly chooses to dress that way to give an appearance of a lower financial status: she is actively endeavouring, through her dress, to distance her personal identity as a devoted sister and pupil from her social (or legal) identity as a wealthy heiress. Hartright claims, however, that this 'curious contrast, on the wrong side, was due to her natural delicacy of feeling and natural intensity of aversion to the slightest personal display of her own wealth' (58), suggesting that Laura possesses an inherently selfless attitude, dressing not for herself, but for others. It is worth reiterating, here, that these observations and interpretations are filtered not only through Hartright's gaze, but also his retrospection. At the time he is writing this account, Laura is, or soon will be, his wife; rather than considering a more subversive and agentive interpretation of Laura's sartorial choices that might indicate an active denial or rejection of her wealth, then,

[1] It is interesting to note that Hartright appears to have no trouble recalling Laura's appearance here.

Hartright writes for Laura a self-effacing and self-sacrificing motive that is more in keeping the with the domestic ideal. This emphasis minimises the meagre show of autonomy that Laura enacts, foregrounding instead the goodness and purity expected of both her narrative archetype and the ideal Victorian wife.

In her discussion of female community in the novel, Casey Sloan draws attention to this scene in particular, and posits that:

> Walter's immediate misread of Laura's choice of dress embodies the tension between reading *The Woman in White* as a novel adhering to the standards of male-dominated family structures or as a novel gesturing towards the importance of class-defying communities of women linked by affection and the language of a distinctly female subculture. (809)

The 'delicacy of feeling' with which Laura chose her dress is thus an act of solidarity meant as a communication between sisters, rather than her aversion to displaying her wealth, as Hartright assumes. Once he realises he is falling in love with Laura, Hartright acknowledges that 'I always noticed and remembered the little changes in her dress that I had noticed and remembered in no other woman's before' (Collins 100); for him, his (belief in his) ability to read her dress—to understand its nuances—is confirmation of their bond. It is interesting, then, that after Laura is rescued from the asylum, he offers not a single description of what she wears despite her identity being in a state of flux and as such, surely, in need of the sartorial distinction he relied on in his first narrative—particularly as she now resembles Anne more than ever. Discussing the importance of identity in the novel, Jonathan Loesberg suggests that though Laura's legal identity has been stolen, her psychological (i.e. personal, or inherent) identity remains—and that is how Hartright and Marian are able to recognise her during and after her time at the asylum (119). It can be argued, therefore, that as Anne—the holder of Laura's legal identity—is dead, and Hartright asserts that Laura's 'psychological identity' is in place, there is no need for him to also (re)construct her sartorially: as far as Hartright is concerned, Laura's legal identity is what needs to be reclaimed, rather than the visual distinction between her and Anne.

Hartright's early descriptions of Laura's clothing indicate that she often wears white muslin. Once the likeness between her and Anne has been revealed, however, and it is discovered that Anne is staying at a nearby farm, Hartright describes Laura as wearing different coloured gowns: rather than wearing light, white muslins, she is instead shown in heavier, darker silks. Not only does this change create a clear distinction in Hartright's mind between Anne and Laura, but the two times that Laura is described as wearing a dark silk also occur after Hartright discovers that she is engaged to Sir Percival. From a symbolic standpoint, this overt change to the 'plain black silk' (Collins 100) and a 'dark blue silk' (133) from the light white muslins of earlier scenes

suggests that Hartright no longer sees Laura as the paragon of virtue that he had initially believed her to be, as she had kept from him that she was engaged to another.[2] As I will discuss at greater length in the next section, there are strong correlations between the colour white and innocence; Clair Hughes, however, also suggests that 'white, like black, is a denial of colour—but paradoxically while these non-colours can be denying and self-effacing, they are also dramatic' (*Dressed in Fiction* 71). With this in mind, Laura and Anne can be considered dramatic absences in their starkly contrasting garments. The bold contrast of their black/dark blue and white gowns respectively may signify their separate identities, but they both remain, nonetheless, narratively obscure figures. Anne remains a blank page that is slowly being filled in as the story progresses (Daly 35)—there are still parts of her character for Hartright to uncover, to (re)write; Laura, however, is now out of reach of his pen. She has distanced herself physically and emotionally from him; soon after this scene, they are separated entirely, and he is unable to continue writing her story.

Sloan describes Marian and Laura's relationship with fashion as a conscious manipulation of an inescapable system, rather than an enforced subjection to an ultimately patriarchal, or narrative, tool, highlighting the presence and importance of female agency throughout the novel. She suggests that:

> a reading of female identity in [*The Woman in White*] as determined largely by male relationships rightly responds to contemporary sociopolitical restrictions, but this paradigm fails to account for potential sources of self-affirmation, communal support, and positive models of selfhood for Victorian women. (802)

Sloan further argues that Marian and Laura use dress throughout the novel as one of those 'positive models of selfhood'. While there is little doubt that dressing is a tangible form of communication between women, and one that is 'a viable discourse that cements a sisterhood of characters and helps them to consolidate a supportive female community in the face of threatening male dominance, [and…] serves to signal threats to personal identity' (802), I would argue that Sloan's assertion that it is a distinctly *female* subculture (809) neglects to acknowledge the male experience of reading dress in the novel as a significant reading of fashion (however inaccurate it may be). Dress is not a language foreign to those who are not a part of the sub-culture, but one that is multifaceted and comprehensible through more than one interpretation or channel; as *The Woman in White* is constructed entirely at Hartright's

[2] As I mention in the next section, there is the implication that, while Hartright narrates such a symbolically coded change from light to dark, Laura is generally quite fluid with her dress choices, as Hartright refers to the 'dark blue silk' as the one which he admired more than any of her other gowns. The significance here, however, is in the fact that Hartright does not tell us this at the time: through his retrospection, he constructs an image of Laura that is inherently tied to the colour white, and all its implications, until such a time as she no longer wholly embodies them.

discretion, his sartorial readings cannot be ignored. There is no escaping that Hartright reads Marian and Laura's dress choices as displays meant for a man's consumption: Marian's figure, 'undeformed by stays' is 'perfection in the eyes of a man' (Collins 32), and Laura's dresses are described in terms of how they might relate her to a male family figure. Indeed, during the final evening Hartright spends at Limmeridge, he states that, '[Laura] had put on the dress which I used to admire more than any other that she possessed—a dark blue silk, trimmed quaintly and prettily with old-fashioned lace' (133). Hartright's interpretation of this decision is that Laura, aware that this is Hartright's last evening at Limmeridge, dressed specifically for his benefit and visual pleasure. Even if his interpretation may be incorrect, this impression is important in the wider context of the narrative. It is because the text is so much about what a 'man's resolution can achieve' (3)—as set out in the opening lines of the novel—that the male experience of female fashion cannot be dismissed. *The Woman in White* is framed as a story of male perseverance and success: it is the narration of Hartright's hero journey, and women are ultimately pushed into the background. In some ways, as it is really Hartright's story of his interactions with these women (in white), his interpretations of this 'female subculture' are actually more significant than any subtle sartorial messages which may have been broadcast between the female characters—especially when we consider Ablow's assertion that we only have his word for anything that happens in his portions of the narrative.

'Arl in white—as a ghaist should be!': Anne Catherick's Haunting White Dress

Madeliene Seys suggests that 'in Victorian literature and culture, white clothing represents the passivity and blankness of the ideal woman, portraying her as a virginal, pure, and innocent bride, and maternal and submissive angel in the house' ('Muslins' 192), and, as Andrew Maunder confirms, 'Laura Fairlie is exactly the passive, "angelic", child-like, open-hearted and innocent woman of the mid-Victorian domestic ideal' (18). I have discussed above how Hartright writes this into his representation of Laura, though Laura's own sartorial actions can be considered in a different, more complex light and slight indications of her sartorial agency come through, despite Hartright's narrative control. When it comes to Anne, however, there is very little nuance allowed to her, or her sartorial choices; to borrow Mulvey's phrase, she is unable to 'make meaning' for herself, and must instead bear all that Hartright assigns her. Throughout his first narrative, Hartright takes care to show the reader that Anne Catherick is, in every sense of the phrase, Laura's poorer double. Where Laura's hair is 'so faint and pale a brown—not flaxen, but almost as light; not golden, and yet almost as glossy' (52), Anne's is merely pale, and of a 'brownish-yellow hue' (20); where Laura wears white muslin, Anne wears a

costume of 'white garments' comprised of un-specified and inexpensive material (20-21). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar propose that, 'Anne Catherick's white dress … suggests the pathos of the Victorian woman-child who clings to infancy because adulthood has never been a viable possibility' (619). Unable to fulfil her 'duty' as a young Victorian woman, Anne is caught in the liminal space between adulthood and childhood, clinging to the memory of her brief stay at Limmeridge to an obsessive extent—an obsession manifested in her insistence on always wearing white. As discussed above, Hughes argues that white is a denial of colour (*Dressed in Fiction* 71); that notion can be extended here to be a denial of identity, which is something that Hartright notes about Anne within that first meeting: to him, she has no identity until the uncanny nature of her existence is resolved by the acknowledgement of her likeness to Laura. Even then, however, the whiteness of their two gowns blurs the lines between them, and they both become liminal beings of dubious identity until Laura begins to dress in darker silks.

Hartright's 'meticulous documentation of clothing' throughout his (first) narrative is striking (Reynolds and Humble 55), and it is this authorial detail that enables the duality of Anne and Laura to be realised by his pen to the extent that it is. Foreshadowing his later description of Laura when Anne's name is finally revealed, he describes the first woman in white thus:

> There, in the middle of the broad bright high-road—there, as if it had at that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from heaven—stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments … her dress—bonnet, shawl, and gown all of white—was, so far as I could guess, certainly not composed of very delicate or very expensive materials. (Collins 20–21)

This memorable introduction is one that leaves a lasting impression on Hartright, and ensures that Anne's identity is as one with her clothing: she is established as 'the woman in white' before she is identified as 'Anne Catherick'. Soon after Hartright's arrival at Limmeridge, the mysterious woman in white's name is revealed, and Hartright's strange notion that something was 'unaccountably out of place' in Laura's appearance is solved (54). Marian reads Hartright a letter that her mother sent to her second husband—Philip Fairlie—which informs him of the arrival of Mrs Catherick and her young daughter. As this letter is being read, Laura drifts ethereally along the terrace outside the room, dressed all in white. It is revealed in the letter, after Hartright describes Laura's 'snowy muslin dress', that Mrs Fairlie gave Anne some of Laura's old white dresses after which Anne declares that henceforth she will always wear white (63–64), drafting the pattern for their later shared identity as 'the woman in white'. Meanwhile, Laura once again passes by the window, and Hartright once again draws attention to 'the white gleam of her muslin gown … in the moonlight', declaring that 'a sensation, for

which I can find no name—a sensation that quickened my pulse, and raised a fluttering at my heart—began to steal over me' (64). This sensation, triggered by Laura's gleaming white dress, takes hold of Hartright to the extent that he is not wholly aware of his reply to Marian, as he is so 'concentrated on the white gleam of Miss Fairlie's muslin dress' (65). When the final line of the letter, which reveals that Anne and Laura are almost identical, is read, it all becomes clear to Hartright. He states:

> There stood Miss Fairlie, a white figure, alone in the moonlight; in her attitude, in the turn of her head, in her complexion, in the shape of her face, the living image, at the distance and under those circumstances, of the woman in white! The doubt which had troubled my mind for hours and hours past flashed into conviction in an instant. That 'something wanting' was my own recognition of the ominous likeness between the fugitive from the asylum and my pupil at Limmeridge House. (66)

There are several aspects of Laura's appearance that highlight the similarities between her and Anne, but throughout this whole section of the narrative, Hartright constantly draws his reader's attention towards Laura's white dress, gleaming in the moonlight: he makes clear that this is the image that prompts his recognition of the shared appearance of the women in white.

This process of recognition and realisation—this anagnorisis, even—is one of the most important scenes in the novel: it sets Hartright on the path to solving the enigma of the woman in white and her place in the story by giving her a name and, thanks to Mrs Fairlie's letter, an identity; it also ties Laura's fate to that of Anne's in ways that are as yet unknown and unseen (for the reader, at least), foreshadowing the later events which see Anne be given Laura's identity, and Laura has Anne's placed upon her through the reverse-exchange of dress eleven years later. Furthermore, it signals a significant change in characterisation and representation: this is the scene where the ethereal Woman in White becomes the corporeal Anne Catherick—a woman with a past, an identity beyond her garments, and tangible ties to the 'real world'. The denial embodied by her white gown is, to a degree, revoked. It is interesting, then, that despite now being able to put a name and parts of a history to the strange woman he met on the heath, Hartright continues to refer to Anne, from time to time, as 'the woman in white'. As the only character to do so, I would argue that this is a significant process of identification and classification on Hartright's part. In acknowledging that Anne is more than a spectral mystery, and that her likeness to Laura (variously described as 'ominous', 'sickly', 'fatal') holds a dangerous potential, Hartright starts to lose his control over the narrative—made particularly apparent by his recollection of the 'sensation' that renders him momentarily unable provide a complete account of the moment. In order to regain some control and ensure that the distinction between Laura and Anne is upheld so that they cannot be confused

for one another either by himself or a reader of his account, Hartright continues to refer to Anne by her sartorial image. This severs those newly established ties of similarity, history, and humanity woven by Mrs Fairlie's letter, and as such denies Anne a 'psychological' identity. Indeed, this scene with Laura drifting along the terrace is the last time that Hartright refers to her dressing in white: the next time he describes Laura's dress is to comment on the aforementioned 'plain black silk'. There is now no way in Hartright's narrative for Laura to be confused with, or to become, the ghostly, ethereal Woman in White.

Soon after this scene, and the acknowledgement that Anne is, indeed, a corporeal being, Anne is mistaken for a ghost by a schoolboy, who, seeing her in a cemetery, declares that she was 'arl in white—as a gaist should be […] where a gaist should be' (95). This is not the first time that Anne's appearance is stated as otherworldly, and there is certainly the implication that the whiteness of her dress is less a sign of innocence than of the supernatural—and, 'in a more traditional symbolic register', of death (Daly 32): when Hartright is still trying to recover from the startling appearance of Anne on the high-road he refers to her as an 'extraordinary apparition' (20). Andrew Smith argues that Anne, as she first appears to Hartright, is an 'in-between being […] an abstract presence' (52). Her white dress—of an unidentifiable material—arguably works in the same way as Laura's: its blandness provides a blank canvas onto which an observer can paint their own ideas; Anne is, both sartorially and narratively, an 'empty space that must be […] "filled in"' (Daly 33). The fact that her presence is 'abstract' means that Hartright, unable to fully realise her presence as a human being at first, assumes her a ghostly figure; her sudden, initially inexplicable appearance, coupled with the startling whiteness of her dress, enables the instinctive conclusion that she is an otherworldly apparition. Brittany Roberts suggests that Collins utilises the ghost story paradigm to challenge the concept of haunting, and what it is that actually haunts the Victorian home (64). Anne Catherick, as the ghostly woman in white, drifts through the text; she is the ghost in this story, haunting both Hartright and Sir Percival, and casting a shadow over the life of Laura. Roberts suggests that there are significant overlaps between sensation fiction and ghost stories, and Collins's proficiency as a writer of both is apparent in how the themes of haunting are utilised so effectively in *The Woman in White*. However, Roberts goes on to argue that:

> Collins ultimately departs from the ghost story tradition by refusing to leave this spectre-woman in otherworldly anonymity, refusing to let the reader decide whether she is merely a figure of Hartright's overworked imagination or a real ghost. … In the end, …the woman in white is not *really* an extraordinary apparition, but Anne Catherick, a wronged woman—and the effect of this narrative decision is that discovering and

> understanding 'reality' becomes far more frightening than an encounter with the paranormal. (62)

What is arguably the most 'frightening' aspect of realising that Anne is not a ghost but a woman, is that her identity is so fragile—and that the fragility of her identity and the likeness between her and Laura means that Laura's identity is equally fragile. Anne's identity as 'the woman in white' was forged as a child when Mrs Fairlie gifted her some of Laura's old dresses, yet Anne is not the image of Laura; rather, in direct opposition to how Mrs Fairlie describes the likeness in her letter, Laura becomes, through Hartright's narrative authority and his own readings of dress (or perhaps even in spite of it), the 'living likeness' of Anne.

The continued references to Anne's spectral ethereality—highlighted through both her all-white ensemble, and the times (nighttime, dusk) and locations (cross-roads, cemetery) of her appearances—enable Hartright to separate the corporeal Laura from the ghostly woman in white, ensuring that remain separate beings in his mind. It is only once Anne is dead, and Hartright and Marian are trying to reclaim Laura's legal identity towards the end of the novel, that Hartright refers to her almost exclusively as 'Anne Catherick'. Anne's death confirms her existence as a corporeal being, and through that provides the physical evidence to support the argument that Laura's identity was stolen and given to another; it therefore no longer serves Hartright's version of events to have her simply as an image defined by her dress, or as a spectral presence—she must have a name, a legal identity. The ghostly woman in white has fulfilled her role to draw attention to the secrets of both Sir Percival and Philip Fairlie, and the corporeal Anne must take her place in order that Hartright can fully expose the wrongs committed against Laura and claim her completely as his 'to support, to protect, to cherish, to restore' (477).

Though associated with death, it is generally accepted that the colour white also represents purity and innocence. In her chapter on 'White Muslin' in *Double Threads*, however, Seys argues that while connoting innocence, the colour white also suggests disguise and deception (*Fashion* 40). Seys's discussion of *The Woman in White*, however, rests upon the assumption that Anne is wearing white *muslin* (27, 39), which is where my own reading departs from Seys's. There is no denying that Anne and Laura are a dyad, but a vital aspect of this duality is that there are points of difference, particularly in their dress (Reynolds and Humble 56). As mentioned above, where Laura is described as wearing light and delicate muslins, Anne's white dress is described as 'certainly not composed of very delicate or very expensive materials' (Collins 21). While muslin was indeed 'relatively cheap' (Hughes 'Talk about Muslin' 189), and, granted, there is no guarantee that Anne does *not* wear muslin, there is nothing in the text to suggest that she *does*. The word 'muslin' is mentioned only five times in the novel, all near the start, and all in

relation to Laura. This then brings Seys's specification that Laura continues to wear white muslin after her marriage to Sir Percival into question (*Fashion* 42). Seys implies that Laura, like Anne, only ever wears white until she is placed in the lavender gown from the asylum. As discussed previously, this is not the case. A significant point of differentiation between Anne and Laura is that Laura does *not* only wear white, or muslin; her dress material and colour is always meticulously described (by Hartright, at least)—there is a nuance to Laura's clothing which is never afforded to Anne's. As mentioned, Anne's dress is described in imprecise terms: she wears 'garments' of an unspecified white material; when this vital similarity between Anne and Laura is revealed, however, attention is repeatedly drawn towards Laura's muslin dress. Hartright is detailed in his descriptions of other women's dress, yet he offers no material specificity when it comes to Anne. I would argue that this ambiguity around Anne's dress is just as important as the specificity given to Laura's; this ambiguity—or even narratorial neglect on Hartright's part—suggests that the material of Anne's dress was not worth mentioning, as it is the whiteness of her apparel that is of significance: she is the 'woman in white', after all, not the 'woman in white muslin'. Furthermore, when Hartright realises the likeness between Laura and Anne, it is the 'white' of Laura's gown that is the trigger; none of the remaining features Hartright describes are related to her dress or its material—it is the muslin which sets them apart, and, for Hartright, confirms their separate identities. When Hartright resumes the narrative in the Third Epoch, he does not resume his 'meticulous documentation' of women's garments. As mentioned previously, he only describes one dress—Marian's; as Anne is now dead, however, and he had 'not the shadow of a suspicion' that it was indeed Laura under the white cross alongside her mother (477), there is no need for him to provide any sartorial differentiation between the two women for his own records.

To return to her argument of disguise and deception, Seys suggests that 'the transparency of her dress […] prove[s] that Laura harbours no sensational secrets […] [whereas] Anne's white muslin gowns are opaque […] connot[ing] deception and guilt […] tainted by her illegitimacy [and] her madness' (*Fashion* 39–41). It is my opinion that the symbolism of these dresses is actually the opposite of what Seys suggests. I would argue that the opacity of Anne's dress is not an obscuring opacity, but is—paradoxically—a revelatory opacity: she is as she appears, only hiding the name of the villainous Baronet, and what has happened to her—nothing about her *character* is hidden, only her personal history, the revelation of which posed a significant risk. The transparency of Laura's dress, however, is deceptive. As I have argued above, Hartright initially reads it to signify that she is the wholly innocent and truthful ideal of middle-class Victorian domestic ideology. Despite its transparency, however, Laura's transparent muslin obscures the fact that she is not as free as

implied: she is not transparent about her engagement to Sir Percival, nor is she being wholly transparent about her social status, using a poorer style of garment than her sister's to hide her wealth. However, it is worth pointing out, as Hughes does, that 'because muslin garments soiled easily and had to be washed and changed often, extensive indulgence in this fashion involved the employment of several servants' ('Talk about Muslin' 189); financial wealth was therefore needed to maintain the 'snowy white' muslin that Laura favours.

Perhaps building on the idea that muslin soils easily, a significant part of Seys's argument here stems from this particular statement:

> Anne Catherick's white gowns bear the taint of her madness. Describing her dress in the first part of the novel, the narrator notes that they are darkened 'with the shadows of after events' […]. These 'after events' are the discovery of Anne's madness and illegitimacy and her role in the theft of Laura's identity and her imprisonment. (*Fashion* 41)

I would suggest, however, that this is not what Hartright means by the 'shadows of after events', as the full quote is as follows: 'I trace these lines, self-distrustfully, with the shadows of after-events darkening the very paper I write upon' (Collins 23). At no point does Hartright suggest that there is any kind of taint or blemish upon Anne in the way that Seys suggests, nor does he place blame upon Anne for Laura's fate or imply that she is complicit in it. In fact, this statement from Hartright is referring to his conduct with Anne as he contemplates how far to help her, and if he can promise to allow her to go to London freely. The after-events—which, as Seys rightly says, are the revelations of her history, why she was imprisoned, her illegitimacy, etc.—do indeed have the capacity to shape how Hartright retrospectively narrates his first meeting with her, and how he represents her (which likely accounts for the stringent sartorial differentiation between Anne and Laura that he insists upon throughout his first narrative), but at this point in his recollections, he has moved away from his descriptions of Anne's dress. There is no textual evidence to support the assertion that these 'after-events' are manifested in Hartright's memory as shadows darkening her dress: Hartright clearly states that these shadows are looming over the paper on which he is writing his narrative. Anne's presence in the text is undeniably a lurking shadow of unease and fatality, but her white garments remain spotless, a beacon of innocence shining in opposition to the circumstances that sought to strip her of it.

Conclusion

Walter Hartright's power within *The Woman in White* is extensive and pervasive; his curation of Laura's story, and the clear statement that it is the story of what a 'man's resolution can achieve', can be, if not forgotten, then minimised in analyses that focus on other elements of the novel such as the legal system, representations of gender, or sensation as a genre. As this article

has demonstrated, Hartright uses descriptions of dress through his narrative to control how we perceive the women he comes across, representing them through the lens of his assumptions about their sartorial choices. Collins takes advantage of specific coding to undermine, or cause the reader to question, his narrator's authority, however, and offers Laura, in particular, moments of sartorial agency—as notably discussed by Casey Sloan and her exploration of the 'distinctly female subculture' of fashion in the novel and explored in the first section of this article.

Hartright's narrative control is particularly noticeable in his treatment of the eponymous Wom[e]n in White. Daly suggests that 'whiteness in Collins's novel is not just the emblem of mystery but also the mark of [the] pervasive instability [of identity], and the difficulties of self-possession' (35), and this is something of which Hartright demonstrates a clear awareness. Though he does appear to misread at least one of Laura's white muslin dresses, the symbolism of both her and Anne's white gowns resonate throughout the text. Not only do the white dresses broadcast innocence—and particularly Anne's innocence—but the fragility of their identities is showcased through the liminal absence denoted by the colour white, as well as the suggestions of fatality (in both senses of the word). In order differentiate between these two women in his retrospective narrative—one which is written when Laura very much resembles Anne in terms of health and physical appearance—Hartright relies on dress to separate the two women in white, casting Anne as an inferior shadow in 'nondescript' white garments against Laura's white muslins. *The Woman in White* is, ultimately, a novel concerned with identity insofar as it is dictated by, and exploited through, external controls. Hartright's pen, and his desire to confirm that his wife is who he says she is, is the ultimate power in the novel; it is through him that we read the women, and it is through his (mis)reading of them that we derive meaning from their clothing.

Works Cited

Ablow, Rachel. 'Good Vibrations: The Sensationalization of Masculinity in *The Woman in White*.' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 37:1/2 (Fall 2003 / Spring 2004) 158–80. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30038534.

Allan, Janice M. 'A "base and spurious thing": Reading and Deceptive Femininity in Ellen Wood's *Parkwater* (1857).' *Critical Survey* 23:1 (January 2011) 8–24. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556398.

Allen, Emily. 'Gender and Sensation'. *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. Pamela M. Gilbert. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 401-13.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Woman in White*. London: Harper Collins, 2011.

Crane, Diana. *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Daly, Nicholas. *Sensation and Modernity in the 1860s.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. 2nd ed.; New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2000.

Hughes, Clair. *Dressed in Fiction*. Oxford: Berg, 2006.

Hughes, Clair. 'Talk about Muslin: Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*.' *Textile* 4:2 (Summer 2006) 184–97. DOI: 10.2752/147597506778052287.

Loesberg, Jonathan. 'The Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction.' *Representations* 13 (Winter 1986) 115–138. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928496.

MacDonald, Tara. *Narrative, Affect and Victorian Sensation: Wilful Bodies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023.

Mansel, Henry. 'Sensation Novels.' *Quarterly Review* 113:226 (April 1863) 481–514.

Maunder, Andrew. 'Mapping the Victorian Sensation Novel: Some recent and future trends.' *Literature Compass* 2 (2005) 1-33. DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2005.00140.x.

Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.' 1975. *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, ed. Meenaksi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, 342–52.

Reynolds, Kimberly and Nicola Humble. *Victorian Heroines: Representations of femininity in nineteenth-century literature and art*. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

Roberts, Brittany. 'Ghost Stories and Sensation Fiction.' In *The Routledge Handbook to the Ghost Story*, ed. Scott Brewster and Luke Thurston, London: Routledge, 2018, 59–68.

Seys, Madeleine. *Fashion and Victorian Popular Literature: Double Threads*. 2017; London: Routledge, 2018.

Seys, Madeleine. '"Muslins, confidences, and illicit conversations": fashioning transgressive femininities in George Moore's *A Drama in Muslin.*' In *Fashion and Material Culture in Victorian Fiction and Periodicals*, ed. Janine Hatter and Nickianne Moody. Brighton: Edward Everett Root, 2019, 191–204.

Sloan, Casey. 'Possessing Dresses: Fashion and the Female Community in *The Woman in White*.' *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44:4 (Winter 2016) 801–16. DOI: 10.1017/S106015031600022X.

Smith, Andrew. *The Ghost Story 1840-1920: A Cultural History*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.

Summers, Leigh. *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001.

Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando*, ed. Merry M. Pawlowski. London: Wordsworth Editions, 2003.

Disability and Care Ethics in Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek* and *The Law and the Lady*

Fabia Buescher

Wilkie Collins's fiction abounds in characters who are unusually embodied: Madonna Blyth's deafness in *Hide and Seek* (1854), Rosanna Spearman's deformity in *The Moonstone* (1868), Lucilla Finch's blindness in *Poor Miss Finch* (1872) and Miserrimus Dexter's impaired mobility in *The Law and the Lady* (1875) are central to the novels' plot developments, character constellations and affective energies. In Collins's fictional worlds, both disabled and able-bodied characters are integral to networks of mutual dependence, which form the basis of affective care relationships. In his 'Note on Chapter VII' in *Hide and Seek*, for example, Collins highlights the importance of compassion and empathy in the care environment surrounding the novel's deaf protagonist, Madonna:

> what elements of kindness and gentleness the spectacle of these afflictions constantly develops in the persons of the little circle by which the sufferer is surrounded. Here is the ever bright side, the ever noble and consoling aspect of all human calamity. (*Hide and Seek*, 431)

Collins describes disability as inciting positive emotions such as 'kindness', 'gentleness' and compassion in the disabled individual's social environment. Rather than causing social alienation, disability fosters affective care relationships; the 'sufferer' is constantly surrounded by a 'little circle' of family members and friends. Care relationships, then, are essential to mitigate 'human calamity' since only through mutual emotional and physical support can the novel's characters survive and thrive. Not only in *Hide and Seek* but throughout his other novels as well, Collins's disabled characters are not marginalised or isolated from their social communities but are very much enmeshed in networks of reciprocal care. Indeed, disability does not represent an obstacle to establishing social relations but is often portrayed as fostering emotional intimacy. For example, whereas in *Hide and Seek* Madonna's deafness and her adoptive mother Lavinia Blyth's chronic illness prove to be the foundation of their intimate mother-daughter bond, in *The Moonstone* (1868), Rosanna Spearman's deformed shoulder and Lucy's Yolland's impaired mobility form the basis of their queer love.

Throughout his fiction, Collins demonstrates that disability is not necessarily a negative bodily state; as he writes in one of his letters discussing

Poor Miss Finch, the heroine's 'blindness and her happiness are made to be conditional one on the other. I have written the book expressly to show that happiness can exist independently of bodily affliction' (*The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*, II 314–15). While much has been written on Collins's disabled characters themselves,[1] their various care relationships with their social environment have largely been neglected. In this article, in order to trace Collins's conceptualisation of care-giving and -receiving across his fiction, I will compare his earlier novel *Hide and Seek* with his later work *The Law and the Lady* and examine how care ethics, specifically dependency theory, can illuminate and complicate our reading of the various care relationships that surround these novels' disabled characters.

Since Collins's novels are populated by disabled, often socially transgressive female characters, Collins has become an important figure to both disability scholars and feminist critics alike. As disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson describes, critical disability studies 'understands the human variations we think of as "disability", not as a natural state of bodily inferiority and inadequacy but as a pervasive cultural system that stigmatizes certain kinds of bodily forms and functions' (Garland-Thomson 132). In other words, the binary opposition between disability and able-bodiedness is a culturally constructed narrative that is ideological, rather than biological, in nature and 'supports an unequal distribution of resources, status and power' (Garland-Thomson 132). Throughout his works, Collins's portrayals of disabled characters, consistently associating non-normative embodiment with social success, refute an essentialist view of disability. As Talia Schaffer notes, while some of the most prominent contemporary disability scholars 'perform their analysis of disability from the premise that the disabled body is customarily regarded as socially and physically inferior', in nineteenth century literature, illness and disability could also provide individuals with unexpected power (*Romance's Rival*, 163). As, for example, Madame Pratolungo in *Poor Miss Finch* states, Lucilla's blindness allows her romantic freedom unavailable to many young women that are sighted: 'Instead of her blindness making her nervous in the presence of a man unknown to her, it appeared to have exactly the contrary effect. It made her fearless' (37). While Tamar Heller reads Collins in an anti-feminist way, arguing that rather than committing himself to a feminist critique of the Victorian status quo, Collins is actually preoccupied with his own relationship to the literary canon, enacting a masculine writing that is detached from its inheritance of the female Gothic to assure his works' claim to literary seriousness (8), other feminist scholars celebrate Collins for his progressive portrayal of his disabled heroines. For example, Richard

[1] Collins is central to major studies on Victorian representations of disability, such as Martha Stoddard Holmes's *Fictions of Afflictions* (2007), Heidi Logan's *Sensational Deviance* (2019), Kylee-Anne Hingston's *Articulating Bodies* (2019) and Clare Walker Gore's *Plotting Disability* (2020).

Barickman et al. argue that among his contemporaries, Collins 'is the most directly concerned with issues of women's rights and the most openly irreverent toward Victorian sexual conventions' (111). Similarly, Tamara Wagner claims that Collins depicts his heroines as forming part of an 'encompassing fabric of transnormative rejections of gendered behaviour patterns' by portraying characters and relationships 'that would have been considered subversive' ('Gender', 213).

In this article, I too read Collins's fiction, especially his depiction of disability and care relationships, as feminist. My argument will be informed by the feminist philosophical theory of 'care ethics.' As Fiona Robinson neatly summarises the field,

> [c]are ethics is a critical feminist theory that seeks to reveal the different forms of power that keep the values and activities of care hidden from 'public' view, and to demonstrate the devastating effects that ensue when care is consistently devalued, sidelined, and subordinated to the higher values of profit and military power. As an antidote to the values of neoliberalism, care must be recognized as a social responsibility, an attribute of citizenship, and a basis of feminist solidarity. (308)

In this article, I will demonstrate how Collins insists on the visibility and value of care, depicting his characters as deeply interdependent. For Collins, interdependence is key to the functioning of the various care relationships depicted; common need offers social, emotional and economic value. To some extent, his works thus foreshadow dependency theorists' feminist call for a social and political emphasis on interdependence: as Eva Feder Kittay and Martha Nussbaum argue, interdependence is 'the most fundamental of social relations;' it is necessary for a 'just and caring society' (*Love's Labor*, 117, 4). Care ethicists, then, reframe interdependence as that which possesses greater 'social, moral, and intellectual value' than independence, thereby reshaping our conceptualisation of care-givers and -receivers (Herzl-Betz 35). As Feder Kittay puts it, 'until we accept and even embrace this dependency as the source of our deepest attachments and the kernel of all human social organization, we will not find our way to a fully just and caring society in which gender equality is realized' (*Love's Labor,* 4). While today, as Schaffer points out, care ethics 'remains somewhat utopian in a society that regards caretaking as a labour-intensive, self-sacrificing, low-status exhausting chore' and renders dependence 'a mark of shame' (*Romance's Rival*, 168), the Victorian novel is a medium which reimagines and renegotiates this supposedly shameful dependence, celebrating the idea that 'certain human lots' are 'woven and interwoven' (141), to use George Eliot's words. Indeed, Victorian fiction often describes a care-based system that fundamentally relies on interdependence, offering what Schaffer describes as 'a real-life model' of the organisation of care as often imagined by care ethicists today (*Communities of Care*, 61).

Complicating care ethicists' argument of care as an affectively positive good, in her discussion of Collins's novel *The Law and the Lady*, Rachel Herzl-Betz argues that 'painful, imbalanced, and even masochistic relationships of interdependence usefully challenge and expand normative notions of care' (36). In this article, I will follow Herzl-Betz's plea for a more inclusive approach to interdependence scholarship that makes 'space for the kinds of non-normative care that drew Collins's attention and should continue to draw our own' (42). As I will show, while in *Hide and Seek*, Collins depicts idealised care relationships that are affectively positive, in his later work *The Law and the Lady*, Collins portrays care communities that are more complex and problematic, eschewing care ethicists' and dependency scholars' commonly held definition of care as a generous, benign and morally positive good. In his later fiction, Collins demonstrates the harmful consequences if interdependence is pushed too far. He offers a critique of the dominant ideal in Victorian fiction of caregiving as a pious, self-sacrificial practice by portraying care relationships that involve emotional and physical exploitation.

This article will be divided into two sections, starting with a discussion of the care community surrounding Madonna in *Hide and Seek*, specifically her relationship with her adoptive mother Lavinia, which illuminates dependency scholars' argument for the social and moral value of common need necessary for an inclusive community. In my second section, I will discuss the physically and mentally violent and exploitative care relationship between Dexter and Ariel in *The Law and the Lady*, which offers a grotesquely exaggerated version of interdependence as a selfless ideal. Central to my discussion will be the fraught emotional transactions between Dexter and Ariel. While previous scholarship has largely focused on Dexter's violent behaviour, affect—specifically the dynamic of violence and pleasure—plays a key role for Dexter's and Ariel's care relationship.

Interdependence (Re)imagined in *Hide and Seek*

In his essay 'Laid up in Lodgings' (1856), Collins describes his own experience of illness[2] and reflects on the emotional and medical care he receives:

> Why do I become, in one cordial quarter of an hour, friendly, familiar, and even affectionate with my portress? Because […] I like nothing so well as being pitied; and my portress sweetens my daily existence with so much compassion that she does me more good, I think, than my doctor or my drugs. (76)

Collins emphasises the importance of emotional support to a sick individual's convalescence. In fact, emotions like compassion and consolation from one's

[2] For discussions of Collins's own non-normative body, see, for example, Stoddard-Holmes and Mossman 496, and Lonoff 158–59.

social environment are more beneficial than 'drugs' given by doctors; it is interpersonal contact rather than chemical substances that are key to convalescence, and this idea is also advocated in his novel *Hide and Seek*. While in his essay Collins refrains from offering any details concerning his illness—as he states, it is not 'worth while to occupy time and space with any particular description of the illness from which I have been and am still suffering' (71)—in *Hide and Seek* Collins takes care to research and contextualise deafness and muteness as accurately as possible, 'simply and exactly after nature' (*Hide and Seek*, 431). In order to do this, Collins draws extensively on John Kitto's *The Lost Senses* (1845), an autobiographical account of Kitto's experience of his loss of hearing after an accident. Yet while Kitto represents deafness in a rather ambiguous way—he celebrates literature as a means of overcoming the limitations imposed by his deafness while also lamenting his difficulties with communication, especially with his toddlers—Collins emphasises the Blyth family's cheerfulness. Collins's portrayal of Madonna as experiencing happiness despite her deafness and muteness thus departs from the tradition of depicting a deaf-mute character as 'a sympathetic figure with a terrible and mysterious past […] meant to evoke great pity' as originated by Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (1802), the first English play billed as a melodrama (Stoddard Holmes, '"Bolder With Her Lover"', 63).

Central to Madonna's happiness is her intimate bond with her chronically ill adoptive mother, Lavinia. As the novel shows, the two characters have a deeply interdependent relationship; similar to Collins's own experience discussed above, it is only when Madonna enters the Blyth family as a child that she can experience a fulfilment and Lavinia is endowed 'with a new life' (118). While various critics have persuasively discussed the implications of Madonna's deafness for her sexuality—not only her capacity to be desirable but also herself as a desiring subject—as well as on the mystery plot,[3] the care community in which Madonna is enmeshed has largely been overlooked. In this section, I will examine the care community surrounding Madonna in *Hide and Seek*, specifically her relationship with her disabled adoptive mother Lavinia and adoptive father Valentine, which illuminates dependency scholars' argument for the social and moral value of common need necessary for a caring society. As I will demonstrate, although Madonna at times considers care to be more complex than merely reliant on mutual dependence, in *Hide and Seek*, Collins advocates interdependence as an

[3] See, for instance, Martha Stoddard Holmes's '"Bolder with her Lover in the Dark"' and '"My Old Delightful Sensation": Wilkie Collins and the Disabling of Melodrama', the chapter in *Fictions of Affliction* in which she discusses Madonna with regards to sexual and romantic desire (74–93); Heidi Logan's chapter in *Sensational Deviance* where she notes the ways in which Collins rejects 'both sentimental, pathetic attitudes toward disability and the "medical" viewpoint of seeing people as deficient and in need of fixing' (25); and Heather Hind's article on hairwork and identity, which analyses the mystery plot by focusing on the importance of hair in the Victorian period.

essential means to create a just and inclusive community; one in which disability is constitutive of affective relationships rather than simply a symbolic marker of moral purity and innocence. Indeed, in Victorian fiction, disability often stood in as a symbol of punishment for past sins: Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Nest Gwynn in Elizabeth Gaskell's 'The Well of Pen-Morfa' (1850) or Romney in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), for example, are all punished with a physical disability for their past behaviour. In *Hide and Seek*, however, as Heidi Logan argues, Madonna's disability is not 'a symbolic marker of her illegitimacy—a punishment for her mother's lack of chastity' that 'replicate[s] her mother's sexual "fall"' (47). Disability here is much more than a symbol: Collins is interested in exploring the experience of deafness on its own terms. The novel probes the lived experiences of Madonna and her position in the care community to advocate mutual care and interdependence as a social ideal that counters prevalent ideas of self-help as exemplified, for example, in Samuel Smiles' much-read *Self-Help* (1859).

When Lavinia and Valentine adopt Madonna as a child, Madonna establishes an intimate relationship with Lavinia that is characterised by shared suffering and mutual caregiving. Madonna and Lavinia form the kind of care community which Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha characterises as 'a place of deep healing' (25); a care community in which care is not primarily provided by able-bodied carers but by other disabled individuals. In *Hide and Seek*, Madonna experiences this 'deep healing' as a quasi-spiritual relationship:

> There was something secret and superstitious in the girl's fondness for Mrs Blyth. […] it seemed to be intuitively preserved by her in the most sacred privacy of her own heart, as if the feeling had been part of her religion, or rather as if it had been a religion in itself. […] the child had succeeded where doctors, and medicines, and luxuries, and the sufferer's own courageous resignation had hitherto failed—for she had succeeded in endowing Mrs Blyth with a new life. (117–18)

Although religion does not play any major role in the Blyth household, the intensity, almost transcendence, of Madonna's and Lavinia's emotional bond and their mutual caregiving seem analogous to a spiritual encounter. Like religion, which is often an all-dominant part of a person's life, shaping their ideology, habits and behaviour, the care relationship between Madonna and Lavinia seems to be an all-consuming dyad. As such, the disabled child is portrayed as a bringer of healing, if not a Christ-like saviour figure, succeeding where doctors and medicine have failed. However, such a portrayal of disability risks overly sentimentalising the disabled individual and rendering her a stock character embodying angelic innocence and virtue, solely employed to imbue the novel with moral value. Unlike in Collins's later work, in which he places greater emphasis on a realistic portrayal of his disabled characters,

here disability seems to primarily reinforce mutually affective positive values such as altruism, benevolence and compassion. Similar to other sentimentally portrayed disabled characters that populate Victorian fiction—Dinah Mulock Craik's blind Muriel Halifax, Charles Dickens' chronically ill Tiny Tim or Charlotte Yonge's deaf-mute Theodore Underwood, for example, who all primarily serve to evoke or reinforce other characters' morality and virtue—Madonna's spiritual 'fondness' proves to be a 'sacred' cure for Lavinia's chronic illness.

While I agree with Logan, who argues that Collins might in fact stage an 'ironic parody of melodramatic responses to disability' (29), we nevertheless have to take seriously the significance this scene has for the affective energies in the rest of the novel; the intimacy between Lavinia and Madonna established here is maintained and consolidated throughout as the plot progresses. Indeed, the novel suggests that disability is a necessary bodily state to establish affective bonds; disability is portrayed as the novel's emotional centre rather than simply as a narrative function to further the narrative plot, as David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder famously argue in their influential study *Narrative Prosthesis*. Returning to Piepzna-Samarasinha's notion of care mentioned above, which Kristen Starkowski describes as 'radical care' (184), the successful care relationship between the deaf Madonna and chronically ill Lavinia can be read as a 'radical' vision of caregiving on Collins's behalf. Indeed, Madonna's and Lavinia's mutual caregiving is essential for survival, and it proves to be more efficient and beneficial than the care offered by Lavinia's doctors. Here, emotional care, which is conventionally overshadowed by the rational, masculine medical approach, is depicted as being the only successful cure for Lavinia's melancholy.

In the care relationship Madonna and Lavinia share, it is not only Madonna who provides care to Lavinia, but Lavinia too offers Madonna emotional and social support, most notably by relaying to her the conversations of their hearing friends using the finger alphabet. As such, their care relationship illustrates Schaffer's argument that the Victorian care community is a space where roles are flexible and dynamic so that all members can become both care-givers and -receivers (*Communities of Care*, 173). Lavinia's role as interpreter is essential to prevent Madonna from experiencing social isolation, which was often represented as a defining aspect of deaf experience. As Harriet Martineau describes in her *Autobiography* (1877), participation in group activities such as dinner parties was often difficult because due to their deafness, she and other deaf individuals are excluded from social conversation: 'There we sat with our trumpets—an empty chair on the one hand, and on the other, Mr. J. S. Mill, whose singularly feeble voice cut us off from conversation' (II 60). Martineau's autobiographical style highlights the representational: her descriptions of her friend being 'excessively deaf' (II 60)

and Mill's voice 'singularly feeble' serve to further her narrative of deafness as socially isolating (although in other parts of her writings she describes deafness as empowering). Unlike Madonna, Martineau does not have a friend who translates the conversations to her through the finger alphabet. Martineau's hearing device, the 'trumpet', proves to be an inadequate solution, which demonstrates that in order to achieve a truly inclusive and caring community, interpersonal, rather than mechanical, support is necessary. In *Hide and Seek*, deafness promotes rather than prevents social interaction.

While Madonna's and Lavinia's intimacy is reinforced due to their disabilities, Madonna's biological mother, Mary, is incapable of establishing such an intimate bond with her baby daughter. Perhaps as a symbolic punishment or perhaps as a realistic consequence of her exhausted and starving body, as a fallen woman, Mary is unable to offer Madonna any healthy nourishment. As she desperately whispers in perhaps one of the most famous breastfeeding scenes in Victorian fiction, '"My milk's all dried up"' (81). Unlike Lavinia's chronic illness, which solidifies her care relationship with Madonna, Mary's dysfunctional maternal body proves to be incapable of providing adequate care for her baby. As Wagner observes, in the nineteenth century, 'popular fiction overall supported [the] idealization of maternal breastfeeding as an essential aspect of the mother-child bond' ('Wilkie Collins's Sensational Babies', 132). By preventing Mary from successfully breastfeeding her child, *Hide and Seek* challenges this established cultural and literary pattern, suggesting that biological links are not necessary to establish an intimate care relationship. In the care community, normative structures of biological relationships can be challenged and abolished. Indeed, the Blyth household is depicted as an ideal care community, characterised by a 'self-sacrificing devotion to the happiness and the anxieties of others' (119).

This unconditional, mutual devotion is so deeply ingrained in the novel's care community that it does not allow Madonna's and Lavinia's care relationship to mature. In contrast to other care relationships in Collins's fiction, such as that between Lucilla and Madame Pratolungo in *Poor Miss Finch* or that between Laura Fairlie, Marian Halcombe and Walter Hartright in *The Woman in White* (1860), which are constantly changing and evolving as the novels progress, that between Madonna and Lavinia remains static. *Hide and Seek* does not imagine any possible future in which Madonna is allowed to marry and establish a life of her own even though Madonna is in love with a young man, Zack. For example, when Zack is temporarily sick, Madonna cannot openly act as his caregiver, which is why she selflessly donates to him 'all her savings from her own pocket-money' in secret (394). Later, in a sensational turn in the plot, Zack is revealed to be Madonna's half-brother, so that in the end, Madonna stays in the Blyth household even after she has grown into a young woman; the care relationship between her and Lavinia thus seems

to be infinitely prolonged. It is a care relationship that appears to be infantilising rather than empowering, limiting Madonna's autonomy and self-determination.

There is a further complexity to Madonna's and Lavinia's seeming ideal of unconditional mutual care. Madonna herself does not consider her care relationship with Lavinia to fully rely on shared interdependence but to be engaged, to some extent, with a value system of debt and repayment. Madonna's understanding of care as a good through which she incurs debt is most visible in the novel's depiction of Madonna's relationship with Lavinia in the exhibition scene, when Valentine organises an annual display in his painting room. Because Lavinia feels unwell, she lays 'in her usual position on the couch-side of the bed' while Madonna stands 'at the front window, where she could command a full view of the garden gate' and observes the incoming guests (230–31). As the narrator tells us,

> On this day it was Madonna who devoted herself to Mrs Blyth's service […]. No privilege that the girl enjoyed under Valentine's roof was more valued by her than this; […] she was enabled to make some slight return in kind for the affectionate attention of which she was the constant object. (231)

Here, the novel demonstrates the underlying economic ideology of care and affection. Although there is no monetary value involved in Madonna's and Lavinia's care relationship, Madonna's understanding of care as a 'service' that requires a 'return' nevertheless alludes to Collins's interest in the intersection of care and finance. Madonna experiences the emotional care Lavinia offers her throughout as a good that requires repayment: care becomes commodified. For her, the roles of care-receiver and caregiver do not seamlessly and unconsciously converge and overlap; Madonna is very much aware of her transformation from a care-receiver into a caregiver as she consciously 'devote[s] herself to Mrs Blyth's service'.

Madonna's experience of an internalised sense of guilt suggests that her supposedly ideal care relationship with Lavinia might in fact have a darker undertone. Whereas in other Victorian novels, most notably in fiction by Mulock Craik, Yonge, Gaskell and Eliot, disabled characters and female caregivers tend to be depicted as being endlessly grateful and self-sacrificial, respectively, reinforcing the seemingly 'natural' feminine behaviour in the care setting, Madonna has a more nuanced understanding of the underlying structures of her care relationship with the Blyths. For Madonna, mutual affectionate devotion is not naturalised but has a distinct value in a system of debt and repayment, which suggests a more pessimistic view of their interdependence. The novel thus complicates the typical Victorian care paradigm which considers care to be a sacred good that falls outside any economic relations.

In her 'Letter to the Deaf' (1834), Martineau describes her relationships with her family and friends as painfully limiting and stifling: her friends exhibit 'false tenderness' and turn her deafness into a social stigma (55). While there Martineau claims that in order to maintain a network of care successfully, the care-receiver should 'give the least possible pain to others' (54), a view that necessarily regards care as a potential social burden or sacrifice, Madonna does not consider her role as a 'constant' care-receiver as representing a 'pain' to the Blyths. I would argue that, in fact, Madonna's anxiety around her duty to repay the Blyths for their care foreshadows, to some extent, the feminist vision of care ethicists in the twentieth and twenty-first century. The fundamentally economic understanding of Madonna's conceptualisation of care, particularly her notion of (re)payment, speaks to Collins's interest in the relationship between emotions and value. While caregiving in Victorian fiction is often portrayed as a quasi-divine female practice that enhances the caregiver's virtue and morality, by drawing attention to her duty of repayment, Madonna exposes the nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology of care as labour outside the economic market, not deserving of any repayment. I am not suggesting here that Madonna is a consciously feminist character who explicitly critiques the ideology of unpaid, invisible care work as care ethicists a century later started to do. But I do think it is important that Collins here depicts a scene in which a female care-giver and -receiver foreshadows, to some extent, an understanding of care that care ethicists today have consistently drawn attention to: care as a form of labour that has traditionally not been recognised as such but that is in fact essential for survival and the functioning of society.

Despite hinting at ambiguity in Madonna's and Lavinia's initially idealised care relationship, the novel ultimately leaves it underexplored. As Collins here shows, what might at first be viewed as a balanced and thoroughly positive relationship is in fact more complex. The dynamic of Madonna's and Lavinia's care relationship is not as easily resolved as those in many of the works by Gaskell, Dickens, Yonge and Mulock Craik, where the sickroom is often an idealised 'haven of comfort, order and natural affection' (Bailin 6) that dissolves all ambivalent nuances and makes space for spiritual experiences. *Hide and Seek'*s complication of the care ideal that proliferates in Victorian fiction is taken to an extreme in Collins's later work, *The Law and the Lady*, where he places greater emphasis on the potentially problematic and unhealthy aspects of care and interdependence as Dexter's and Ariel's care relationship is based on manipulation and exploitation and is not allowed any affectively positive transformation. In the *Law and the Lady*, Collins insists on the grotesqueness of care if the ideal of interdependence is taken to an extreme.

Emotion and Exploitation in *The Law and the Lady*

The Law and the Lady is often considered to be one of Collins's minor novels (Herzl-Betz 38), and one of the major reasons for this is arguably the novel's obscure engagement with disability and care as seen, most notably, in the relationship between the physically disabled Miserrimus Dexter, who lacks lower limbs, and his genderfluid cousin and caregiver, Ariel, who appears to be mentally disabled. In stark contrast to the care relationship between Madonna and Lavinia, which is characterised by mutual compassion and emotional generosity, the relationship between Dexter and Ariel is manipulative and exploitative. The novel features several episodes of extreme violence, in which Dexter abuses Ariel in both a physical and psychological way. Nevertheless, Ariel remains emotionally submissive and loyal to Dexter until the very end; Dexter is the only person she truly loves, despite his abusive behaviour.

While Dexter is often depicted as a violent and manipulative character, there are nevertheless deeply emotive instances in which Dexter evokes the readers' sympathy. As Clare Walker Gore notes, the emotional sympathy Dexter generates makes us 'question the basis for the novel's economy of space and sympathy', which allows Collins to claim 'a greater share of both for Miserrimus Dexter, putting sensationalism to affective work' (*Plotting Disability,* 102). In this section, I would like to extend this discussion on affective responses, considering not only the affective potential of Dexter himself but also the emotional transactions in his relationship with Ariel.

Because of her cognitive disability, previous scholars have often interpreted Ariel not as an individual character but as a symptom of Dexter's mental impairment. For example, Martha Stoddard Holmes discusses Dexter's and Ariel's relationship through the discourse of degeneration in which 'he and his developmentally disabled cousin "Ariel" are variant expressions of the same hereditary taint' ('Queering the Marriage Plot', 253–54). In a similar vein, Patrick McDonagh reads Ariel as a 'parasite', arguing that she is responsible for Dexter's descent into madness and ultimate death (253). Yet such a reading does not take into account the nevertheless deeply interdependent aspect of Dexter's and Ariel's relationship, in which Dexter is as much dependent on Ariel as she is on him. In this relationship, Collins explores the slippage between need and desire: Ariel needs to be needed, and Dexter relies on Ariel as a caregiver, helping him with everyday tasks such as brushing his hair or delivering messages. While Dexter is unable to do the latter himself, he would be perfectly capable of brushing his hair on his own. Dexter enjoys having his hair done by a servant-caregiver: for him, it is not only need but also pleasure that underlies his relationship with Ariel. The simile of a parasite—a harmful organism profiting at the expense of others—thus fails to describe the nature of their cohabitation. As I will argue in this section, Dexter's and Ariel's relationship is much more complex and multi-faceted than these critics have

argued.[4] While their physically and mentally violent and exploitative care relationship provides an alternative model to the notion of interdependence as a selfless ideal, affect nevertheless plays a more significant role than previous scholarship has acknowledged. In Dexter's and Ariel's relationship, pleasure and pain uncannily converge so that their care relationship represents a grotesque exaggeration and a critique of the Victorian ideal of caregiving as a self-sacrificial practice.

While Dexter's unusual body—he is described as 'half man, half chair' (206)—and his relationship with Ariel are perhaps the most intriguing parts of the novel, the majority of the narrative's plot is devoted to the unravelling of the novel's central murder mystery. When the protagonist and narrator, Valeria Woodville, later Macallan, finds out that her husband, Eustace, was on trial for murdering his first wife, leading to the Scottish verdict of 'not proven' instead of 'not guilty', Valeria is determined to prove her husband's innocence and save their marriage. Yet despite the narrative focus on Valeria's story, the novel's central emotional nexus lies in the relationship between Dexter and Ariel, which was also highlighted by the novel's first illustrator, who, as Walker Gore points out, 'recognised this displacement of sympathy and attention away from the marriage plot that is the novel's ostensible culmination' since the final illustration portrays Dexter's grave on which the faithful Ariel has died rather than Valeria's and Eustace's happy reunion (*Plotting Disability*, 101).

Dexter and Ariel form an unusual household: the two cousins live in a gloomy gothic house where all roles are flexible and fluid. It is a space in which characters can transgress their assigned gender roles, and the coarse footman/gardener can temporarily transform into a gentle mother figure: 'The rough man lifted his master with a gentleness that surprised me. […] He […] went silently out—with the deformed creature held to his bosom, like a woman sheltering her child' (300). Yet while Dexter's family structures allow for unexpected tenderness, they are equally characterised by violent manipulation. When Valeria visits Dexter on her sensational mission, she is shocked at Dexter's violent treatment of Ariel. In one of the novel's most violent scenes, Dexter attaches some strings to Ariel's wrists to prevent her from eating cake for his own amusement: Ariel's 'hand was jerked away by a pull at the string, so savagely cruel in the nimble and devilish violence of it […]. Her teeth were set; her face was flushed under the struggle to restrain herself' (326). This is

[4] For discussions on disability and technology in *The Law and the Lady*, see, for example, Alexandra Valint's '"Man and Machinery Blended in One": Dexter's Wheelchair and the Victorian Railway' (2021) and Esther Reilly's '"Half Man, Half Chair": Disability and the Posthuman Technological Imaginaries of Miserrimus Dexter's Sensational Body' (2022). For discussions on gender and sexualities in *The Law and the Lady*, see, for instance, Martha Stoddard Holmes's 'Queering the Marriage Plot' (2008) and Jolene Zigarovich's '"A Strange and Startling Creature": Transgender Possibilities in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*' (2018).

not just a power display on Dexter's part. Ariel here plays a substitutionary role: Dexter was in love with Eustace' first wife, Sara, but his love remained unrequited. Dexter abuses Ariel because he is lonely and bored; for him it is a way to amuse himself and 'kill the time' (327). While Herzl-Betz focuses on the underlying erotic structures of Dexter's and Ariel's relationship, considering it as an alternative care relationship that combines pain and sexuality, I read it through an affect studies perspective, exploring how emotions shape Dexter's and Ariel's relationship in a non-normative way.

As Tara MacDonald notes, Dexter validates his abuse through a discourse of intellectual degeneration; evolutionary thinking was 'crucial to how emotions were understood after Darwin', and Dexter's behaviour illustrates this (45). In Dexter's view, he and Ariel do not have the same level of emotional susceptibility; as he tells Valeria, 'You needn't pity her. Ariel has no nerves—I don't hurt her' (327). Yet Ariel's 'struggle to restrain herself' clearly suggests that she does indeed experience physical pain even if she attempts to hide it. There seems to be an affective mismatch between the two characters, which is why emotional responses cannot be transferred between them in a meaningful way: what gives emotional pleasure to Dexter is physical pain to Ariel. Yet Dexter's and Ariel's interdependence is built on this fraught affective dynamic since this seeming emotional hierarchy between them also structures the social roles they occupy: the master and the slave. Throughout the novel, Dexter fashions himself as a Prospero figure, reigning over his Gothic home and servants, while Ariel is cast into the role of the slave—as Valeria remarks, with her 'coarse masculine voice' and 'man's hat' (209), Collins's Ariel resembles much more Shakespeare's Caliban than his sensitive Ariel.

Not only Dexter but also Valeria often describe Ariel as failing to exhibit emotional responses to her environment. Ariel's 'round, fleshy, inexpressive face, her rayless and colourless eyes' turn her into a 'creature half alive; an imperfectly-developed animal in shapeless form' (210). Valeria here interprets Ariel's non-normative appearance as a lack of intellectual capacity. For Valeria, Ariel seems to be devoid of human traits, and her 'inexpressive' face and eyes suggest a lack of individuality. Ariel's inhuman appearance is all the more reinforced by her robotic caregiving practices:

> She combed, she brushed, she oiled, she perfumed the flowing locks and the long silky beard of Miserrimus Dexter, with the strangest mixture of dullness and dexterity that I ever saw. Done in brute silence, with a lumpish look and a clumsy gait, the work was perfectly well done. […] A machine could not have taken less notice of the life and the talk around it than this incomprehensible creature. (210–11)

Here, Ariel resembles a machine devoid of human emotions. The regular, staccato rhythm evoked by the verbs 'combed', 'brushed', 'oiled', 'perfumed'

echoes the steady working pattern of a mechanical instrument rather than a human being. Ariel is so fully immersed in her caregiving activities that she becomes detached from her social environment. Rather than being part of an interpersonal care community, Ariel takes refuge in 'brute silence'. Yet while this at first might seem to represent a negative version of the care model advocated by contemporary care ethicists, Valeria's remark that 'the work was perfectly well done' suggests that Ariel's seemingly apathetic caregiving nevertheless leads to a successful outcome.

Although Ariel's emotionless caregiving produces a satisfactory result, the mutual lack of compassion highlights the affective limitations of Dexter's and Ariel's care relationship. In one of the novel's most emotional scenes, Dexter appeals to Valeria's emotional generosity, attempting to elicit her pity:

> 'I languish for pity. Just think of what I am! A poor solitary creature, cursed with a frightful deformity. How pitiable! how dreadful! My affectionate heart—wasted. My extraordinary talents—useless or misapplied. Sad! sad! sad! Please pity me.' His eyes were positively filled with tears—tears of compassion for himself. He looked at me and spoke to me with the wailing querulous entreaty of a sick child wanting to be nursed. I was quite at loss what to do. It was perfectly ridiculous—but I was never more embarrassed in my life. […] I said I pitied him—and I felt that I blushed as I did it. (232–33)

Dexter's insistence on Valeria's pity highlights his emotional dissatisfaction with his care relationship with Ariel. As Claire Chambers and Elaine Ryder state, 'compassion is the essence of caring' (2), and because Ariel seems unable to offer Dexter her compassion, Dexter attempts to establish a compensatory emotional relationship with Valeria. Valeria's reaction to Dexter's demand—her confusion, ridicule and shame—illustrate the socially transgressive nature of Dexter's request. As Walker Gore notes, Dexter's persistent demand for compassion strongly contrasts with Stoddard Holmes notion of the 'silent, modest speech of the impaired body' (*Fictions of Affliction*, 114) in sentimental representation: Dexter's speech is 'anything but modest' (Walker Gore, '"Half Man, Half Chair"'). Dexter, then, is not a silent, eternally grateful care-receiver like Madonna but a character who actively voices his desire 'to be nursed'.

The emotional transaction between Valeria and Dexter is, however, more complex than it might seem at first. It is not only Dexter who acts in a socially transgressive way, but also Valeria's response is not as simple as it might at first appear. According to Sara Ahmed, emotions are not inherent or static within a subject, but they 'circulate between bodies', and it is through mutual emotional responses that identity boundaries are established (4, 10). At first, Valeria's pity does not seem to be sincere, which suggests that the affective transaction between the two characters is unsuccessful. Valeria's

hesitant reaction implies that her compassion is solely a forced linguistic response to Dexter's demand, and her blushing might indicate that she is in fact lying. Valeria's statement that she is 'at loss what to do' illustrates that Dexter's disabled body fails to affect her in a meaningful way. Through ridicule Valeria tries to maintain an emotional distance to the disruptive body of Dexter, and Dexter's querulousness only adds to Valeria's estrangement from him.

Yet Valeria's embarrassment and blushing might also suggest that their relationship is actually more ambiguous. The fact that Valeria expresses her admiration for Dexter on various other occasions might indicate that for Valeria, refusing to offer Dexter her pity constitutes a defence mechanism which prevents her from becoming genuinely emotionally attached to him. Indeed, in the novel's most sexually transgressive scene, which *The Graphic* (temporarily) censored,[5] Valeria describes the physical intimacy between herself and Dexter: 'He caught my hand in his, and devoured it with kisses. His lips burnt me like fire' (299). Valeria does not draw her hand back; the boundary between her body and that of Dexter becomes malleable and porous so that transgressive desires are transferred in a seemingly uncontrolled way. Through Valeria's ambivalent response, then, Collins leaves it unresolved whether Valeria truly pities Dexter or not and thus whether their relationship constitutes an alternative, emotional care relationship to that between Dexter and Ariel.

While Ariel is often described as lacking emotions, she at the same time also represents an extreme version of the selfless caregiver. Indeed, when Valeria is angry at Dexter, Ariel entreats Valeria to punish her in Dexter's stead:

> 'My back's broad,' said the poor creature. 'I won't make a row. I'll bear it. Drat you, take the stick! Don't vex *him*. Whack it out on my back. Beat *me*.' […] The idea of taking the Master's punishment on herself was the one idea in her mind. (302, emphasis original)

Whereas Herzl-Betz interprets this scene in erotic terms, suggesting that Dexter's and Ariel's relationship makes space to explore alternative sexual desires (45), I read these sacrificial transactions in more religious terms. As Jan-Melissa Schramm notes, in the Victorian period, self-sacrifice was 'crucial to public discourse', and authors such as Dickens, Eliot and Gaskell give 'fictional flesh to the ways in which a life of self-sacrifice makes real the metaphors of Christ's atoning work on the cross', thereby overcoming the gap

[5] In an 1875 letter, Collins complains about *The Graphic*'s decision to censor this supposedly transgressive scene without his consent: 'To my indescribable amazement, I found this passage, on its publication in the *Graphic*, clumsily altered, abridged and mutilated (without a word of warning to me) […]. I at once wrote (with some natural indignation) to complain of this scandalous breach of courtesy, which was also a plain breach of the agreement.' (*Letters of Wilkie Collins*, II 391).

between suffering and benevolence (3, 15). In these writers' texts, it is sacrifice which 'restores social and emotional order at the end of the narrative' (31). In Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), for example, the 'fallen' Ruth becomes a caregiver during a raging epidemic and selflessly nurses numerous people, including her former lover Mr Bellingham, back to life. It is only when she dies after contracting the fever that social order is restored, and her illegitimate son can be included into society.

Unlike his contemporaries, however, Collins does not believe that self-sacrifice can offer any resolution. While Ariel represents a Christ-like martyr figure, selflessly attempting to answer for Dexter's supposed sins, Valeria's shock at Ariel's behaviour demonstrates the novel's critical stance regarding such a quasi-religious self-sacrifice. Religious practices, already satirised in Collins's earlier work *Poor Miss Finch* through the ridiculous figure of the Reverend Finch, are here turned into a grotesque spectacle. *The Law and the Lady* thus criticises the Victorian ideology of caregiving as a pious and self-lacerating practice motivated by religious faith as depicted in Gaskell's, Dickens', Mulock Craik's or Yonge's fiction, for instance. Indeed, Yonge naturalises Wilment Underwood's utter self-denying care to her younger siblings in *The Pillars of the House* (1873), suggesting that it is the result of her religious faith. While the pious Wilmet selflessly nurses her siblings even at the expense of her own health—she 'fainted away, only reviving to swoon again as soon as she tried to move' (II 487)—Ariel's caregiving is characterised by substitutionary suffering. *The Law and the Lady* highlights the disturbing and harmful consequences of such a self-sacrificing caregiving ideal by carrying it to an extreme. If caregiving is pushed too far, it can be seriously damaging for the caregiver.

On the novel's very last page, Valeria casts herself in a self-sacrificial, Ariel-like role. As she entreats the readers, 'Don't bear hardly, good people, on the follies and the errors of my husband's life. Abuse *me* as much as you please. But pray think kindly of Eustace, for my sake' (413, emphasis original). Like Ariel, Valeria is prepared to endure the readers' (verbal) abuse in her husband's stead. While throughout the novel Valeria transgresses various social norms, in the end she seems to develop into a submissive and devoted wife, and it is because of this re-establishment of the supposedly normative social order that Valeria's and Eustace's relationship is allowed a happy ending while that of Dexter and Ariel is not. Dexter's and Ariel's violent care relationship is a grotesque exaggeration of the more conventional one of Valeria and Eustace, and by paralleling the two care relationships, the novel draws our attention to the latent exploitation and injustice of the idealised, heteronormative care paradigm. What appears to be an affectively positive care relationship might in fact be harmful.

The fraught emotional relationship between Dexter and Ariel is brought to an extreme towards the end of the novel when Dexter is admitted to an asylum due to his increasing delirium. Despite Ariel's faithful devotion to him—she would 'sit at his feet and look at him' continuously (350)—Dexter is unable to register her presence: 'For hours together, he remained in a state of utter lethargy in his chair. He showed an animal interest in his meals, and greedy animal enjoyment of eating and drinking […] and that was all' (350). Here, affectively positive emotions cannot circulate between Ariel and Dexter in a meaningful way as they are dispelled by his lethargic state. Dexter is only able to display animalistic drives for food and drink, but he is unable to establish any interpersonal relationship with other human beings. Because of the unsuccessful emotional transaction between himself and Ariel, Dexter is unable to establish any identity boundaries; his sense of self begins to fall apart—he is 'in a state of utter lethargy'—and his care relationship with Ariel seems to be unable to survive and thrive.

Yet, while Dexter ultimately dies, it is not his problematic care relationship with Ariel that contributes to his death but the institutional structures of the asylum. Indeed, as Valeria tells us, the asylum's rules attempt to eliminate all types of emotional interactions: 'serious objections were raised, when I further requested that [Ariel] might be permitted to attend on her master in the asylum, as she had attended on him in the house. The rules of the establishment forbade it' (359). The asylum is unable to recognise Ariel's potential beneficial influence on Dexter, rejecting their non-normative care model in favour of a uniform, depersonalised form of care that is prescribed by universal rules.

As Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington note, care ethicists 'embrace positive roles for emotions in helping to create empathetic connections that promote caring actions' (4). Some care ethicists even have described a 'fully developed sense of empathy' as one of the core characteristics of care (4). The fraught emotional relationship between Dexter and Ariel, however, does not conform to such an understanding of care. Ariel often fails to display a sense of genuine empathy and compassion, yet for the most part of the novel, their care relationship is nevertheless represented as a functioning, if painful, interdependent relationship: both Dexter and Ariel prosper in their roles in their own ways. Even in the end when Dexter's and Ariel's relationship seems to fall apart, Dexter nevertheless still relies on Ariel's care as she is the only one who understands Dexter's needs when his speech becomes incoherent. Valeria 'couldn't make out what he meant; no more could the doctor. She [Ariel] knew, poor thing—she did. Went and got him his harp' (350). When Dexter ultimately dies, Ariel is unable to survive without him: 'Faithful to the last, Ariel had died on the Master's grave!' (408). Ariel's death on Dexter's grave represents an extreme version of interdependence: Ariel's and Dexter's

identities are so intimately connected that they are literally unable to exist without one another. The novel thus refuses to transform their non-normative interdependence into a more conventional one but instead portrays their care relationship as being so powerful that it even transcends death. By demonstrating that these fraught emotional transactions can equally contribute to a model of interdependence that is valuable to its members, *The Law and the Lady* thus expands our notion of the kinds of interdependent relationships that should be acknowledged by care ethicists as constituting 'the heart of all social relations' (Herzl-Betz 48).

Conclusion

With reference to a care model of interdependence, in her 'Love's Labour Revisited' (2002) Feder Kittay asks, 'How can we negotiate the personal, the political, and the particular on the one hand and the abstract, the objective, and the universal on the other?' (242) One answer, as this article has shown, is by writing, reading and reflecting on literature. Care ethics is often an 'abstract and universalistic form of theory' (242) and approaching this through a literary perspective can add a new layer that complements our understanding of contemporary, real-life care settings. Collins's fictional care communities add a personal and political dimension that illuminates and expands the rather abstract, objective aims of care ethicists. Literature, and in particular the Victorian novel, is a site where social justice issues can be renegotiated and reimagined. While many twentieth- and twenty-first-century narratives rely on able-bodied, independent protagonists, exacerbating 'the gap between imagined lives and the lives most of us will lead' at some point (Stoddard Holmes, 'Victorian Fictions of Interdependency', 37), the many disabled characters that populate Collins's fiction and their care relationships prompt us to think about the role of interdependence in social justice.

In *Frontiers of Justice* (2006), Martha Nussbaum identifies several unresolved problems of social justice, one of which is 'doing justice to people with physical and mental impairments. These people are people, but they have not as yet been included, in existing societies, as citizens on a basis of equality with other citizens' (1–2). The reason for this exclusion, according to Feder Kittay, is because our society today has erased dependency from public life to create an understanding of itself as an 'association of free and independent equals', thereby excluding both dependants and individuals who attend to the needs of dependants (*Love's Labor*, 9). The Victorian novel, however, is a space where social inclusion of disabled people through interdependence can be imagined, showing us what such an inclusive community might look like. As *Hide and Seek* shows, mutual dependence is essential to create an inclusive and caring community. Disability facilitates, rather than prevents, affective relationships and social interaction. Madonna is very much part of her social

environment, and her disability is not represented as an obstacle to social success. Yet Collins also shows the harmful effects when interdependence is pushed too far. Madonna's and Lavinia's interdependence is so deep that Madonna is not allowed to experience romantic independence and establish a life of her own. She remains trapped in the Blyth family beyond the narrative: interdependence becomes painfully limiting. This potentially painful aspect of interdependence is further explored in *The Law and the Lady* where Dexter's and Ariel's deeply interdependent care relationship becomes a horrible exaggeration of that of Valeria and Eustace; it represents a critique of the Victorian notion of caregiving as a self-sacrificial activity that is pushed to an extreme.

Reading Collins's novels thus encourages a radical revision of our perception of how care works and what it looks like. Indeed, as Schaffer states, literature challenges us as readers, 'confronting us with culturally alien assumptions and unpredictable discursive complications, in ways that can teach us new ideas about the workings of care' ('Care Communities', 528). While Schaffer here refers to Victorian literature's potential to promote an ideal of care as an interdependent, affectively positive good, I suggest that literature might be even more radical. Dexter's and Ariel's painfully interdependent care relationship challenges the interdependence models of contemporary care ethicists who celebrate interdependence as the solution to social justice issues but do not acknowledge the potentially harmful effects if interdependence is pushed too far. Care ethicists' interdependence models claim to represent an ideal of a just and caring society, but Collins shows that what seems to be a valid antidote to problematic neoliberal independence might in fact have a darker undertone: positive affect might turn into painful sacrifice. Therefore, I would argue that in order to achieve 'a fully just and caring society', it is not enough to embrace dependency as 'the kernel of all human social organization' as Feder Kittay tells us (*Love's Labor*, 4), but we also need to take into account the potentially damaging effects of interdependence. Only if we acknowledge these complexities in the care setting can interdependent, affective networks be fully valued and care work be dignified.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr Clare Walker Gore (University of Cambridge), as well as to the editor and reviewers of the *Wilkie Collins Journal* for their insightful and valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Bailin, Miriam. *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction: The Art of Being Ill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Barickman, Richard, et al. *Corrupt Relations: Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Collins, and the Victorian Sexual System*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. *Aurora Leigh*. 1857; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847; Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2006.

Chambers, Claire, and Elaine Ryder. *Compassion and Caring in Nursing*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing, 2009.

Collins, Wilkie. *Hide and Seek*. 1854; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Collins, Wilkie. 'Laid Up in Lodgings'. *My Miscellanies*. 1863; London: The Floating Press, 2014, 71–101.

Collins, Wilkie. *Poor Miss Finch*. 1872; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Law and the Lady*. 1875; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Letters of Wilkie Collins*. Edited by William Baker and William Clarke, Houndmills: Macmillan, 1999.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone*. 1868; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*, ed. William Baker et al. 4 vols; London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Woman in White*. 1860; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*. 1843; Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2009.

Eliot, George. *Middlemarch*. 1872; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994.

Engster, Daniel, and Maurice Hamington. 'Introduction'. *Care Ethics and Political Theory*, ed. Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 1–16.

Feder Kittay, Eva. *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*. 2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 2020.

Feder Kittay, Eva. 'Love's Labor Revisited'. *Hypatia* 17:3 (Summer 2002) 237–50.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. 'Making Freaks: Visual Rhetorics and the Spectacle of Julia Pastrana'. *Thinking the Limits of the Body*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Gail Weiss. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003, 129–43.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *North and South*. 1855; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Ruth*. 1853; Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1997.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. ‘The Well of Pen-Morfa’. *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell: Journalism, Early Fiction and Personal Writings, Vol. I*, ed. Joanne Shattock. London: Routledge, 2016, 157–76.
Heller, Tamar. *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
Herzl-Betz, Rachel. ‘A Painfully “Nice Family”: Reconstructing Interdependence in Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*’. *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 9:1 (March 2015) 35–51. https://doi.org/10.3828/ilcds.2015.3.
Hind, Heather. ‘“Pondering on That Little Circle of Plaited Hair”: Hairwork, Materiality and Identity in Wilkie Collins’s *Hide and Seek* (1854)’. *Wilkie Collins Journal* 17:1 (Spring 2020). https://www.jstor.org/stable/26996143.
Hingston, Kylee-Anne. *Articulating Bodies: The Narrative Form of Disability and Illness in Victorian Fiction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019.
Holcroft, Thomas. *A Tale of Mystery, A Melo-Drame*. London; Richard Phillips, St. Paul’s Church-Yard, 1802.
Kitto, John. *The Lost Senses*. London: Charles Knight & Co., 1845.
Logan, Heidi. *Sensational Deviance: Disability in Nineteenth-Century Sensation Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2019.
Lonoff, Sue. *Wilkie Collins and His Victorian Readers: A Study in the Rhetoric of Authorship*. New York, NY: AMS Press, 1982.
MacDonald, Tara. ‘Middle Novels’. *Wilkie Collins in Context*, ed. William Baker and Richard Nemesvari. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023, 41–47.
Martineau, Harriet. *Harriet Martineau’s Autobiography*, ed. Maria Weston Chapman. 3 vols; Boston, MA: Houghton, Osgood and Company, 1877.
Martineau, Harriet. ‘Letter to the Deaf’. *Prose by Victorian Women: An Anthology*, ed. Andrea Broomfield and Sally Mitchell. London: Routledge, 1996, 51–66.
McDonagh, Patrick. *Idiocy: A Cultural History*. Liverpool University Press, 2008.
Mitchell, David, and Sharon Snyder. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. 5th ed.; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011.
Mulock Craik, Dinah. *John Halifax, Gentleman*. 1856; London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2014.
Nussbaum, Martha. *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006.
Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018.
Reilly, Esther. ‘“Half Man, Half Chair”: Disability and the Posthuman Technological Imaginaries of Miserrimus Dexter’s Sensational Body in Wilkie Collins’ *The Law and the Lady* (1875)’. *Victoriographies* 12:3 (November 2022) 307–25. https://doi.org/10.3366/vic.2022.0472.

Robinson, Fiona. ‘Care Ethics, Political Theory and the Future of Feminism’. *Care Ethics and Political Theory*, ed. Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 293–311.
Schaffer, Talia. ‘Care Communities: Ethics, Fictions, Temporalities’. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118:3 (Fall 2019) 521–42. https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-7616139.
Schaffer, Talia. *Communities of Care: The Social Ethics of Victorian Fiction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021.
Schaffer, Talia. *Romance’s Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Schramm, Jan-Melissa. *Atonement and Self-Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
Smiles, Samuel. *Self-Help; with Illustrations of Character and Conduct*. 1859; Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1863.
Starkowski, Kristen. ‘Constructions of Caregiving in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*’. *Brontë Studies* 46:2 (April 2021) 183–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/14748932.2021.1875634.
Stoddard Holmes, Martha. ‘“Bolder with Her Lover in the Dark”: Collins and Disabled Women’s Sexuality’. *Reality’s Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins*, ed. Maria Bachman. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2003, 59–93.
Stoddard Holmes, Martha. *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007.
Stoddard Holmes, Martha. ‘Queering the Marriage Plot: Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*’. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2008, 237–58.
Stoddard Holmes, Martha. ‘Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik and Yonge’. *Journal of Literary Disability* 1:2 (October 2007) 29–41.
Stoddard Holmes, Martha, and Mark Mossman. ‘Disability in Victorian Sensation Fiction’. *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. Pamela Gilbert. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 493-506.
Valint, Alexandra. ‘“Man and Machinery Blended in One”: Dexter’s Wheelchair and the Victorian Railway in Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*’. *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 43:2 (March 2021) 131–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/08905495.2021.1895570.
Wagner, Tamara. ‘Gender’. *Wilkie Collins in Context*, ed. William Baker and Richard Nemesvari. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023, 212–19.
Wagner, Tamara. ‘Wilkie Collins’s Sensational Babies: Lost Mothers and Victorian Babyhood’. *Victorian Review* 43:1 (Spring 2017) 129–45. https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2017.0014.
Walker-Gore, Clare. ‘“Half Man, Half Chair”: Disability and Personhood in Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*’. *The Victorianist: BAVS Postgraduates* (November 2015). https://victorianist.wordpress.com/2015/11/30/half-man-

half-chair-disability-and-personhood-in-wilkie-collinss-the-law-and-the-lady/.
Walker-Gore, Clare. *Plotting Disability in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020.
Yonge, Charlotte M. *The Pillars of the House; or, Under Wode, Under Rode*. 1873; 2 vols; London: Macmillan, 1889.
Zigarovich, Jolene. '"A Strange and Startling Creature": Transgender Possibilities in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*'. *Victorian Review* 44:1 (Spring 2018) 99–111. https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2018.0012.

Alexandra Valint, *Narrative Bonds: Multiple Narrators in the Victorian Novel*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2021. pp. vii + 208. ISBN 978-0-8142-1463-3.

Alexandra Valint's first monograph *Narrative Bonds: Multiple Narrators in the Victorian Novel* opens with an extended reading of Margaret Oliphant's *A Beleaguered City* (1880) that both contextualizes and inventories key Victorian multi-narrator novels. She suggests that Victorian novels in general do not serve to subjectively present differing points of view but, instead, 'remain reliable on the axis of reporting,' so that '[o]ut of multiplicity and diversity can come unity' (12). Her volume serves to synthesize the formal elements of canonical novels featuring more than one story teller—*Bleak House*, *Treasure Island*, *The Woman in White*, *Wuthering Heights*, etc.—and illustrate the ways in which narrators can illuminate and complement each other.

This wide-ranging study not only instructs on how 'the multinarrator novel … orders and integrates facts into a "system of knowledge"' but also provides a concise lexicon for considering the different types of multi-narration and their implications (15). Valint terms the various styles of narrator switching: *the back-and-forth*, *the quick switch*, *patchworks*, *the permeable frame*, and *returning and nonreturning*. Valint utilizes a case study approach to showcase how these different modes of narration interact with the thematic and formal interest of a given text. In this process, she highlights the surface elements — 'punctuations, titles, indentations' — in addition to the types of switches in narration and interactions between characters, points of view, and narrative modes, in order to push against the dominant critical discourse that has aligned the Victorian novel with simplified omniscient narrators (22).

Importantly, the book argues that the multinarrator novel 'does not attain polyphony' in the sense that Bakhtin intends, precisely because plural Victorian narrators do not often offer contradictions, but instead cross-reference and verify each other, creating the 'unity of a single world' (19). This unity is often built on collaboration with single characters, such as Mina Harker, acting as editors who 'solicit, arrange, and/or edit the plethora of narratives' into a cohesive, monolithic, whole (19).

Chapter One contextualizes Victorian multinarration by both looking forward and backward, suggesting a historical lineage that extends from the epistolary novels of Fanny Burney through to the modernist writings of William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. For Valint, Victorian narratives are often self-reflexively composed, calling attention to, and explaining 'how, when, where, and why these

narratives were written, revised, transcribed, requested, given, read and collected' (33). This approach foregrounds a collaboration that builds from *Clarissa* and *Evelina's* single-character focus and foreshadows the modernist structures of *The Waves* or *As I Lay Dying*.

Chapter Two looks at the 'back-and-forth' narration between Dickens's third-person and Esther's first-person account, suggesting a mutual relationship that reinforces the embodiment, 'sympathy and cooperation' that are central to *Bleak House* (47). Valint argues that the third-person narrator is 'crucially, not omniscient' but instead heterodiegetic (54): someone who narrates 'much of the aristocratic content of the novel … as surface and from the outside' as against Esther's 'deep interiority' (54). This type of equal narration is juxtaposed against *Treasure Island* in Chapter Three, which inverts a traditional frame narrative with a 'quick switch' narrative once the narrative moves to Dr. Livesey's narration halfway through the novel, exposing Jim's youthful earnestness and contrasting it with the doctor's 'levelheaded calm' (85). This formal switch mirrors Jim's own resistance to the 'callous adulthood of Dr. Livesey,' as he positions himself as a boy surrounded by mature men (93).

Chapter Four is particularly interesting as it turns towards the 'patchwork' quality of Collins's use of disabled narrators in three texts: *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, and *The Legacy of Cain*. Valint's aim to 'to introduce and model a disability narratology that not only centers disability in literary analysis but also pays close attention to the formal and stylistic characteristics of narrations penned by disabled narrators' synthesizes the monograph's interests in how narration strategies mimic the thematic interests of the author (101). Foregrounding Collins' own disability at the time of composition, she reads the three novels as texts that centralize disabled voices and model 'interdependence between numerous texts and characters' (102). The patchwork approach that Collins uses does not create a schism between narrators but, instead, produces a collaborative network among them, where one story-teller takes over when another cannot continue, because 'mastery is impossible for nondisabled and disabled narrators alike' (112).

Further, Chapter Five contends that the so-called 'permeable frame' between Nelly and Lockwood, and Catherine and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* eventually dissolves, mirroring the dissolution of boundaries that 'are central to many theories of the gothic' (144). Instead of distinctive narrators whose knowledge is limited by their own experiences, the untagged 'switches between narrators are, in a sense, border crossings' that collapse the spaces between characters and blur the distinctions between narratives (145).

In conclusion, Valiant looks at the assemblage of information that makes up late-Victorian gothic texts, including *Dracula* and *The Beetle*. The concepts of 'returning and nonreturning' mimic the pace of fast and slow cutting,

respectively, in which narratives do or do not circle back on themselves. Overall, *Narrative Bonds* maps how Victorian multi-narration works on the page, while also providing a concise lexicon for discussing the myriad ways that multi-narration can be manifested within Victorian novels.

Christian Gallichio
Emory University

Abigail Boucher, *Science, Medicine, and Aristocratic Lineage in Victorian Fiction.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. pp. x + 237. ISBN 978-3-031-41140-3.

This book explores the ways in which a range of popular genres from the 'silver fork' novel of the 1830s to the gothic fictions of the *fin de siècle* represented aristocratic genealogy and heredity through the nineteenth century. As Abigail Boucher stresses, 'the literary figure of the aristocrat is a … canvas on which endless interpretations and readings may be cast and through which paradoxes may be untangled', revealing not simply what particular social groups understand as 'the elite' but also what they 'believe to be true about themselves' (227). Her survey encompasses not only diverse forms of popular fiction, but also the scientific and medical debates around lineage and inheritance which they implicitly or explicitly reference, rework and at times parody or overturn. Her focus on how the aristocracy was imagined in Victorian Britain makes an important contribution to a renewed focus on class in critical studies, and challenges the tendency over last fifty years to concentrate on representations of the middle and working classes—despite the over-abundance of fictional members of landed society in both 'popular' and 'canonical' texts—in part for the fear of reinforcing enduring preoccupations with such elite groups. She argues that it is only by turning the critical lens back on these groups that one can challenge this cultural power and the 'elite's' own narrative of exceptionality and exclusivity.

Boucher argues that 'popular' genres—which of course shift their modes, readerships, and purposes through the century – often complicate and undermine as much as create and reinforce dominant aristocratic stereotypes. The trope of the sickly or effete aristocrat of either gender, bolstered by the early nineteenth cult of sensibility and by medical writings by physicians such as George Cheyne and Thomas Beddoes, is reimagined in silver fork fiction is ways, Boucher notes, that mimic the promotion of medicine—both training middle-class readers in habits of consumption—while also satirising and reworking the trope of fashionable illness. Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Godolphin*, for example, pathologises the infiltration of socially inferior figures into the aristocracy in the threatening figure of Constance Vernon, who marries into the

aristocracy as an act of revenge on behalf of her middle-class father, becoming frailer, however, in the process. *Cheverley,* Rosina Bulwer Lytton's repost to her estranged husband, Boucher argues, is 'one of the most thinly-veiled exposés and critiques of the aristocratic system' (58), as Julia, a commoner, is coerced into marriage into landed society; her increasing ill-health is the product of her abuse, while health and strength here becomes the mark of cynical aristocratic power. In contrast, the focus of G.W.M. Reynolds's serials, aimed at a radical artisan rather than aspiring middle class readership, is on male infertility as much as health. *The Mysteries of the Court of London,* a prequel to the wildly popular *Mysteries of London*, brings together gothic, 'Newgate' and radical Chartist tropes in the context of both scientific and medical debates on fertility and the political anxieties around royal succession in the 1830s, to represent the aristocrat as incapable of producing legitimate offspring—stressing that this is the result of *male* infertility or impotence, the result of both weakness and immorality. This involves representing aristocratic masculinity itself as embodying forms of gender dissonance to emphasise the link between performance and fertility. It takes the form of either 'feminisation', dramatised in the feminised Lord Florimel, who cross-dresses as 'Gabrielle', or 'emasculation' exemplified by the Earl of Desborough, whose consciousness of his own (explicitly named) impotence represents the growing consciousness of his class redundancy – or, in the case of the Prince Regent, each simultaneously. This 'queering' of the aristocracy, Boucher suggests, can only promote Reynold's radical republicanism, by counterposing it to a virile heteronormative middle class masculinity that reinforces Victorian gender boundaries and norms.

In these chapters Boucher successfully weaves perceptive textual analysis into their contemporary medical and political debates. This is less successful in the chapter on the centrality of endogamy to sensation fiction, and the acute anxieties around class boundaries that the mode frequently expresses. Although there is an interesting discussion here on the science of endogamy in the mid-nineteenth century, the discussion of the texts themselves is somewhat superficial, and contains one howler: Wilkie Collins's short story 'Mad Monkton'—first published as 'The Monkton's of Wincot Abbey' in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1855, then as 'Mad Monkton' in Collins's 1859 story collection *The Queen of Hearts*, is described as being first published in the 1887 collection *Little Novels*, the reference supplied being a dubious Russian website! (One wonders how such an error got through the editing process.) The two final chapters—on 'Ruritanian' Romances and the 'Evolutionary Feudal'—*fin de siècle* Gothic fiction—reads these two modes in dialogue, as, together, articulating the still fraught and contradictory concepts of lineage and heredity at the end of the nineteenth century: the concept of an immutable heroism, stemming from Carlyle's writing on hero-worship, and post-Darwinian concepts

of mutability, transformation, and degeneration. The Ruritanian romances: Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Prince Otto*, and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Lost Prince*, are elaborations of Victorian medievalism, positing imaginary realms outside history and evolution in which a virile and morally upright aristocracy recall Reynolds's idealised middle-class man, in a world outside evolution in which patrilineage is all, and offspring are replicas, or clones, of their ancestors. In contrast, the 'Evolutionary Feudal', exemplified by Richard Jeffreys *After London*, H. G.Wells's *The Time Machine*, and M.P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*, all suggest a quasi-Lamarckian (as posited by Darwin in his later work) process of development, in which the aristocratic body is simply like all organisms, subject to changes in the environment over time. Both genres, Boucher suggests, both mirror and contradict each other; in different both express comparable *fin de siècle* anxieties about the nature of social distinction in the future.

Boucher concludes her chapters on sensation fiction and Ruritanian romances with a brief note of the enduring appeal of many of their themes in late-twentieth and twenty-first-century popular culture and her overall conclusion, too, meditates on the stubborn cultural hold of these myths and representations of a landed elite—in popular TV series such as *Downton Abbey* and *Bridgerton* and films such as *Saltburn* and in the preoccupation with the royal family—in part precisely because of their pathologisation in popular culture. As she notes, 'cultural power once held by the aristocrat has shifted to the celebrity'; but the aristocracy remains the template and goal to aspire to, in a cultural hegemony which, in the UK at least, little has changed.

Jenny Bourne Taylor
Sussex University (Emerita)

***Wilkie Collins in Context*, ed. William Baker and Richard Nemesvari. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. pp. xxxvi + 348. ISBN 978-1-316-51057-5.**

After the remarkable revival of the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, there was a slight decline in scholarly attention towards Wilkie Collins and sensation fiction. However, the tendency may be reversed with the publication of this volume which should revive critical interest in the author, paving the way for new approaches to his oeuvre.

A collection of thirty-five chapters divided into four parts edited by William Baker and Richard Nemesvari, *Wilkie Collins in Context* explores a variety of themes, which confirm "the multifaceted quality of Wilkie Collins's genius that goes far beyond the focus on *The Woman in White* and *The*

Moonstone" (xviii). In addition to Collins's best-known novels, the volume examines his less studied fictions as well as his non-fictional writings, including his broad correspondence and his non-fiction journalistic production, which are the objects of Chapters 2 and 8. Another merit of the editors and authors is that of coping with overlooked biographical details, such as Collins's personal library and his relations with contemporary writers, respectively treated in Chapters 16, 19, 20 and 21. As suggested by the volume's title, moreover, all the chapters deal with some neglected contextual aspects, including Collins's relations with the mid-Victorian artistic community, his love for the theatre, his musical interests, and his environmental awareness.

The first three chapters of Part I, titled "Life and Works", provide an in-depth introduction to Collins's biography, letters and relations with publishers. Researchers who aim to discover more on his personal and professional life will be especially interested in the analysis of Collins's correspondence conducted in Chapter 2, which is co-authored by William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law and Paul Lewis. Alongside useful information on the various letter editions, including the recent InteLex digital edition, this chapter offers tabular data on the major recipients of Collins's missives, on the rate of his letter writing and even on the days of the week in which he was most productive. The other chapters of Part I examine his fiction and non-fiction writings, subdivided into specific categories, which cast light onto his broad interests and his lifelong experimentation with forms and genres.

Part II opens with four chapters focusing on critical responses to Collins's oeuvre arranged chronologically, from contemporary to present responses. The last two chapters of this part discuss the afterlife of his works and their cross-media adaptations spanning almost two centuries. In Chapter 14, Alexis Weedon introduces several films based on Collins narratives produced in three continents. She also focuses on theatre performances, radio plays and video games, offering precious ideas for further research and exploring various contextual elements, including the responses that these products elicited in specific historical conjunctures. As Weedon suggests, "For readers of his books, the media adaptations on radio and screen are better at capturing the affective insight of Collins's genius for a modern audience" (136). Chapter 15, authored by Jessica Cox, is a critical reflection on the neo-Victorian afterlife of Collins's oeuvre, on the wide-ranging rewritings and adaptations of his works, as well as on his fictional resurrection "as a character in several other neo-Victorian novels", often "cast alongside a fictional Dickens" (144). These neo-Victorian reinterpretations raise important issues tackled by Collins himself at the time, which have acquired even more centrality in our present reimagining of the age of Victoria. As Cox notices, "His work shines a light on Victorian concerns and

anxieties, and to this end proves a useful vehicle for neo-Victorian interrogations of the period" (144).

The literary context is the topic of Part III, whose six chapters cast light on Collins's intellectual life. An interesting approach to "neglected facets" of "his life as a professional writer, as an intellectual and as somebody who needed books to exist" is provided in Chapter 16 by William Baker, who reconstructs Collins's library on the basis of two sale catalogues (147). As Baker observers, this reconstruction shows that the books Collins read "contributed specifically to his strengths as a novelist", as they "shaped the intensity of his descriptive settings, his powerfully realistic evocations of cultural issues, and the dramatic interaction between his characters" (155). Fresh ideas on Collins's foundational association with the sensation school of fiction are offered in Chapter 18, authored by Nemesvari, who identifies two elements that contributed to this long-lasting association: namely, Collins's relationship with Charles Dickens and his involvement with Victorian theatre. If the latter "established a link with melodrama" and with "an ostensibly unrefined mass audience" stigmatised by Victorian reviewers, the relationship with Dickens was instrumental in "situat[ing] Collins as a minor figure connected to a lesser form of writing" (171), which became a source of anxieties for orthodox critics.

A variety of cultural and social contexts are taken into account in Part IV, the final and longest section of the volume, consisting of fourteen chapters. Some themes dealt with in these chapters are not new to Collins scholars, but their treatment is here enriched by fresh details and reflections. In Chapter 23, for example, Tamara Wagner examines different facets of Collins's representation of gender, coming to the conclusion that "[h]is persistent rejection of prescriptive gender attributes, while often self-conscious, testifies to the multiplicity of experiences and discourses surrounding gender in Victorian Britain" (218). Collins's complex relation to race and empire is explored by Melisa Klimaszewski in Chapter 32, which delves into his contradictory responses to racism and incidents of colonial violence. While providing useful information on the author's family and historical background, the chapter analyses more and less known Collins writings, exploring their textual ambiguities and demonstrating that they "resist hasty categorisation" (297). Part IV also deals with money, science and medicine, politics, law, geography, and class, combining previously studied aspects with innovative elements that open new research paths. Chapters 25, 26, 27, 31 and 35 engage with less familiar themes, such as language, Victorian art, music, the environment and ethics. In Chapter 31, Mark Frost discusses the different environments represented by Collins, with a special interest in his realistic depiction of rural life. In the volume's last chapter, Biwu Shang examines the "ethical issue about one's identity and choice" that is at the core of Collins's works, using *The Woman in*

White as a case study to demonstrate the author's assertion of "the irreplaceable importance of maintaining ethical order" and of "the disastrous consequences of ethical chaos caused by misplaced ethical identities" (323).

These few examples confirm the richness of themes and insights provided by *Wilkie Collins in Context*. Published just before the 200th anniversary of Collins's birth, the volume is "not meant to be exhaustive" but, as the editors clarify, it aims "to generate further discussion on Collins's diversity and to suggest additional areas of exploration in Collins studies" (xx). In addition to reviving interest in a fascinating Victorian author who continues to challenge interpretation, *Wilkie Collins in Context* proves an invaluable tool for scholars, who are offered new ideas and stimuli for developing fresh lines of research.

Mariaconcetta Costantini
G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara

Wilkie Collins Journal

The Wilkie Collins Journal (formerly *The Wilkie Collins Society Journal*), is an annual academic, peer-reviewed publication dedicated to the life and writings of William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889). Established in 1981 and sponsored throughout by the Wilkie Collins Society, the journal publishes research articles and book reviews relating to one of the most popular and significant literary figures of the Victorian era. The editorial team is keen to accept new submissions from both university-based and independent scholars. We would like to encourage: a wide range of methodological approaches and ideological perspectives; biographical and bibliographical as well as critical analysis; work on Collins's lesser-known fiction as well as the major sensation novels of the 1860s; investigations of Collins not only as novelist but also as dramatist, journalist and short-story writer; and comparative, international or historical studies situating Collins's writings in a broader context.

Submissions

The *WCJ* is happy to consider the submission of research articles up to around 8,000 words and research notes of around 3,000. All manuscripts should be in MS Word format, follow MLA Style, and not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. All submissions are subject to peer review, and we do our best to offer constructive advice to younger or less experienced authors in particular. All submissions should be sent via email to the general editor, Graham Law of Waseda University: glaw@waseda.jp. The *WCJ* also undertakes reviews of major new publications on Wilkie Collins and related topics. Enquiries from publishers and authors should again be sent by email to glaw@waseda.jp.

The Wilkie Collins Society

Chairperson: Andrew Gasson. **Secretary:** Paul Lewis, paul@paullewis.co.uk. **Membership:** Annually £18 for members in the UK, £20 in Europe; £28 for those elsewhere. Payment in sterling only. Includes subscriptions to regular newsletters and hardcopy of the *WCJ*.

PUBLISHED BY
THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY
DECEMBER 2024

ISSN: 0897-2982

Wilkie Collins Journal