

FEELING MIDDLE CLASS: SENSORY PERCEPTION IN VICTORIAN
LITERATURE AND CULTURE

By

MEGAN WARD

A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Program in Literatures in English
written under the direction of
Kate Flint
and approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

May 2008

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

FEELING MIDDLE CLASS: SENSORY PERCEPTION IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

By MEGAN WARD

Dissertation Director:

Kate Flint

This dissertation proposes that perception in the Victorian era was not just a source of information but a way of training the self. Representations of the senses defined bourgeois identity through a process that this project labels guided sensing: instilling particular sensations in the body that register as middle-class experience. This work extends both broad considerations of bodily class formation and specific Victorianist interest in the senses by delineating a form of self-fashioning that was considered sustainable at mid-century but receding by the fin-de-siècle. Reading major literary works alongside scientific texts, domestic manuals, and legal treatises, this dissertation argues that sensory detail established a self-consciously modern practice of the body. The second half of this project shows how later novels of the period interrogated guided sensing, questioning its efficacy in inculcating and sustaining middle-class values.

The four chapters each elucidate one of four concepts fundamental to middle-class identity: taste, professionalism, fidelity, and cultivation. The first two chapters read popular journalism and sensation fiction to establish how guided sensing distinguishes

middle-class women from men. The discourse of taste in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* encourages women to ignore sensory information to appear tasteful. At the same time, Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* prompt men to emphasize their sharp senses in pursuit of professionalism. Later Victorian novels, however, begin to question guided sensing. The third and fourth chapters show how Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* and Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* diminish the narrative drive of individual mobility. No longer as desirably modern as in the 1850s, guided sensing subsided without the drive of individualism. These novels defer the narrative drive of individual mobility, reconstituting the individual within the social realm's conflicting models of sensory subjectivity. Percipient bourgeois identity, this project attests, was a social experience that felt singular.

Acknowledgements

My debt for the inspiration and ideas of this work begins far in the past. My earliest mentor, Tim Spurgin, first introduced me to the fascinations of Victorian literature and feminist criticism. Kate Flint has been my advisor through two theses, three degrees, and many versions of this project. I am intensely grateful for her intellectual rigor and her confidence in me. Many times I have gone into her office confused and discouraged and emerged with renewed energy. Jonah Siegel has also been an exacting and stimulating reader of many pieces of this project and its offshoots; the first kernel of Chapter Two began as a coursework paper in his class. Carolyn Williams gave me direction on the conference paper that became Chapter Three, and I am thankful for her help in articulating my ideas. I have learned so much from Barry Qualls, as a teacher, mentor, and advocate. Finally, I am grateful for Janice Carlisle's insight as outside reader for this project.

These pages have been through multiple versions, and my fellow graduate students have been kind enough to read many of them. A version of Chapter One was helped tremendously through readings by both the Nineteenth-Century Interest Group and the graduates fellows of the Center for Cultural Analysis. Caroline Huber generously sponsored the Qualls Fellowship that gave me time to write in the academic year 2004-2005. The participants in Myra Jehlen's dissertation seminar of 2005 encouraged nascent ideas to grow. I am grateful for a fellowship from the Center for Cultural Analysis in my second year of dissertating. My friends and colleagues Sarah Alexander, Kristie Allen, Rachel Buurma, Devin Griffiths, Michael Masiello, Regina Masiello, Susan Nakley,

Jacob Nellickal, John Rogers, and Rachel Smith have pushed me for clarity and inspired me by example. The Rutgers English Department enriched this project through a Mellon Summer Research grant that allowed me to visit the University of Delaware Special Collections for the research on fancy-work patterns in Chapter One. Finally, the Mellon Summer Dissertation workshop, lead by Marianne DeKoven, came at just the right time to help me write the final chapter and conceive of the project as a whole.

All of this support, professional and personal, comes on top of a family life I feel so lucky to have. My parents, Barb Ward and Tim Ward, have been my staunch supporters and book providers for thirty-two years, letting me read in the bathtub, under the covers, and at the dinner table. Some of my earliest memories of reading are with my grandmother, June Schwandt, who fed my love of books with trips to the library and ice cream cones. This dissertation is for – and in spite of – Matilda, who gives me perspective. And also, always, for Steve, who makes it worthwhile.

Table of Contents

Abstract of the Dissertation	ii
Acknowledgments	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Sensing Patterns: Taste, Comfort, and the <i>Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine</i>	19
III. The Evidence of the Senses: Male Professionals in <i>Bleak House</i> and <i>The Moonstone</i>	60
IV. High Fidelity, High Realism: The Value of Being Real in <i>The Eustace Diamonds</i>	97
V. <i>The Woodlanders</i> and the Cultivation of the Senses	129
VI. Conclusion: <i>Howard's End</i>	170
Works Cited	176
Curriculum Vitae	189

Introduction

Writing from the vantage point of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, Walter Besant catalogued the customs of Victorian life in *Fifty Years Ago* (1888). His description of morning calls, in particular, captures a performance of middle-class life that he already finds out-dated: "It was a ceremonial which necessitated a great deal of ritual and make-believe. No one, for instance, was to be surprised in doing any kind of work. Why they went through this elaborate pretence I have not the least idea, because every one knew that every girl in the place was always making, mending, cutting-out, pasting, gusseting, trimming, turning, and contriving."¹ Leisure appeared to characterize the middle class, and the rise of leisured activities represented a fundamental change from the 1830s to the 1880s. Yet Besant also characterizes domestic women's leisure as an "elaborate pretence." Middle-class life, Besant's account suggests, was fundamentally a performance – a performance of leisure by a class of workers, a performance of security by an insecure class. Besant comments darkly, "The Debtor's Prison belonged chiefly to the great middle class."² The desire for middle-class identity was so strong that it was worth a very costly performance.

This dissertation argues that we can understand the performance of middle-class identity in a new way by examining the senses. Never merely descriptive, I contend, sensory information is the locus of important cultural debate about the shaping of the modern self. While a prodigious body of scholarship has discussed being middle class in

¹ Besant, *Fifty Years Ago*, 91.

² *Ibid.*, 109.

Victorian literature,³ very little scholarly investigation has gone into *feeling* middle class.⁴ Representations of the senses explored the potential for achieving middle-class identity through bodily experience – not just performing middle-class identity, but experiencing it bodily. The Victorian literary and cultural imagination conceived of perception as trainable and replicable. I call this *guided sensing*: attending to or eliding particular sensations in order to instill middle-class identity in the body.

This project charts the emergence and interrogation of guided sensing, a rise-and-fall narrative that begins with my theorization of guided sensing in the 1850s and 1860s. By examining the prescriptive discourses of the periodical press and sensation fiction, I argue that guided sensing reinscribes the gendered divide between public and private by constructing different sensory models for domestic women and professional men. Guided sensing suggests that individuals can control sensory experiences, advancing a narrative of self-improvement. The actualization of that self-improvement, however, is hindered by the inescapable forces of the social world on the individual. Guided sensing makes class formation feel as though it is controlled by the individual, but the tension between individual and social undercuts individual control.⁵ In the second half of this project, I read Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* (1871-2) and Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (1887), both novels that pay particular attention to the way sensory detail is

³ For recent examples, see Kevin Swafford, *Class in Late-Victorian Britain*; Stephen Hancock, *The Romantic Sublime and Middle-Class Subjectivity in the Victorian Novel*; Lisa Surridge, *Bleak Houses*; and Jennifer Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*.

⁴ For a historical approach to middle-class behavioral identity, see Andrew Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty*.

⁵ For discussions of class formation within the public sphere, see Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*; Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place*; and *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain*, eds. Peter Ghosh and Lawrence Goldman.

translated on the page. Percipient bourgeois identity, these novels show, was a social experience that felt singular.

Each chapter of this project encapsulates a moment, ranging from the high Victorian period to the fin-de-siècle. I focus on the women's periodical press and the novel because they made middle-class life their business. Their shared interest in courtship, class aspiration, and the growing divide between home and professional life contributed to class formation through their own attempts to define their middle-class readership. Nancy Armstrong has contended that, in order to become a novel's protagonist, "a character had to harbor an acute dissatisfaction with his or her assigned position in the social world and feel compelled to find a better one."⁶ I turn this dissatisfaction around; my dissertation focuses on genres that take as their starting point the possibility of social satisfaction through individual self-fashioning. Each of my four chapters distills a key term of middle-class identity from literary and cultural representations of the senses: taste, professionalism, fidelity, and cultivation. By developing these terms, I locate the intersection of the percipient subject with class-labeled cultural values.⁷

Mid-Victorian cultural commentators and scientists were both interested in the replicability of bodily experience. Samuel Smiles' iconic *Self-Help* counsels, "We must repeat and again repeat; facility will come with labour."⁸ Everyday experience was fodder for individual self-improvement. Sarah Stickney Ellis's domestic manual, *The Women of England*, directed itself at the "middle-classes," encouraging women to focus

⁶ Armstrong, *How Novels Think*, 4.

⁷ For a discussion of the difficulties of identifying class-labeled values, see Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People*.

⁸ Smiles, *Self-Help*, 93.

on “those minor parts of domestic and social intercourse, which strengthen into habit, and consequently form the basis of moral character.”⁹ These urgings to train the self to achieve and perpetuate a certain class identity emerged in tandem with scientists’ inquiry into how psychological and physiological states can, as Herbert Spencer argued, “grow by constant repetition automatic.”¹⁰ Spencer claimed that “[i]nstance may be regarded as a kind of organized memory,”¹¹ so that responses that seem immediate and instinctual can actually be the result of repeated experiences.

At the same time, scientists wondered about the things that we do not knowingly sense – the results of experiences that are so repetitive that we cease consciously to perceive them. G.H. Lewes used mechanical metaphors to explain the workings of the body, while A.B. Johnson noted that “The workmen in factories lose a perception of the incessant clicking of the machinery, and we become measurably unconscious of the periodical striking of a clock after much familiarity therewith.”¹² These related interests – conscious and unconscious automatic perceptions – are intimately tied to modern life, as evidenced by the use of industrial language. Repetitive industrial labor and repeatable scientific results combine to suggest that humans can – and should – be able to make the most of this culture of repetition and training. As Smiles counsels, “Daily experience shows that it is energetic individualism which produces the most powerful effects upon the life and action of others, and really constitutes the best practical education.”¹³ This dissertation argues that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, we can see this interest in

⁹ Ellis, *The Women of England*, vi.

¹⁰ Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology*, 450.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 445.

¹² Johnson, *The Physiology of the Senses*, 45.

¹³ Smiles, *Self-Help*, 5.

repetition and self-improvement working in combination when it comes to the training of particular senses.

Guided sensing depends upon a paradox: that sensory impressions can be trained, but that these responses will nonetheless feel unprompted, immediate, and natural. Janice Carlisle calls this feeling of immediacy “common sense,” “the rarely articulated, taken-for-granted result of experiences supposedly shared by all one’s fellows, if not all humankind.”¹⁴ Carlisle posits that this common sense is particularly recognizable in odors, for they “evoke sensations that necessarily convey the force of the economic determinants of social distinctions.”¹⁵ We see common sense at work in *Middlemarch*, a text halfway through the period I survey, which exhibits the allure and the difficulties of guided sensing. When the narrator remarks on Rosamund’s “placid” sense that Captain Lydgate’s rank “penetrated them [Middlemarch society] as if it had been an odour,” the novel expresses the ineffable immediacy of class distinctions (582). This comment is notable not because Rosamund perceives his rank by dint of his smell, but because Eliot is confident of an odor’s ability to express information at once subtle and obvious. Captain Lydgate’s rank feels as natural as a scent but is as constructed as class distinction.

Carlisle’s argument about scent and class can be extended, I believe, to include the other senses. The senses cannot always be easily separated, as when Dorothea muses of her mother’s jewels, “It is strange how deeply colours seem to penetrate one, like scent” (13). Victorians’ interest in synaesthesia meant that the senses were not always considered to be so separate from one another. Nor were ideas of psychology and

¹⁴ Carlisle, *Common Scents*, 5.

¹⁵ Carlisle, *Common Scents*, 12.

interiority completely separate from what we might now consider the more physiological information conveyed by the senses.¹⁶ William Carpenter argued that the nervous system provided the conditions for “Sensation, Thought, Emotion, and Volition,”¹⁷ an idea that Kate Flint explores in her work on the seen and unseen, a challenge to the “sufficiency of the visible.”¹⁸ In *Middlemarch*, Dorothea tries to “justify her delight in the colours by merging them in her mystic religious joy,” a complicated amalgam of emotion and sensation. Dorothea’s sensory response to the visual experience of looking at colors is analogous to smelling and hovers between morally suspect and religiously profound. The meaning of the senses, then, is at once immediate and restrained, superficial and interior.

Eliot also shows us how Dorothea and Celia, seeing the same jewels, sense very differently and find their sensing to be mutually resistant, despite their goodwill. Eliot uses this vignette to open the novel in order to represent the differences between the sisters, and also to illustrate the potential incompatibility of any two perspectives. While Dorothea wants the jewels so that she can “feed her eye at these little fountains of pure colour,” Celia feeds her eye on her reflection in the pier-glass (14, 12). Yet Eliot is clear that the self-abnegation or self-adoration implied by these different visual practices do not offer easy access to the character’s psyche. Dorothea’s asceticism, Eliot reminds us, has very much of pleasure in it. And Celia “had always worn a yoke; but is there any yoked creature without its private opinions?” (15). Their sensory practices reveal them as

¹⁶ For a discussion of this idea in the eighteenth century, see Katherine Kickel, *Novel Notions: Medical Discourse and the Mapping of the Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*.

¹⁷ Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology*, 90

¹⁸ Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, 25. For an analysis of how emotion and the senses interact together with political economy, see Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic*.

perceptually isolated, and Eliot interrogates the extent to which we can ever understand another's interiority. This scene, among many others, shows us that the senses are not universal currency, even if the shared information of, for instance, color is often depended upon. It is this disconnect that guided sensing picks up on; without seeming naively understandable, sensory information would not have the freighted meaning that it so often does in Victorian writing.

Critical work on the senses in the nineteenth century has concentrated primarily on visual culture, inaugurated by Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* (1990) and Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes* (1993). The rise of visual culture during the nineteenth century has been explicated in all its technological, capitalist, scientific, artistic, and colonizing force. Despite Crary's intriguing and more general claims of the "industrial remapping of the body in the nineteenth century,"¹⁹ scholars have remained committed to explicating sight over the other senses. Visuality is understood as at once eminently Victorian and modern, as Lynda Nead underscores when she argues that the burgeoning metropolitan experience "was primarily a visual one."²⁰ Nineteenth-century photography and, eventually, film sent an ever-increasing amount of images into circulation. Images saturated imaginations as well as paper, a process which Jennifer Green-Lewis, among others, has identified as a reciprocal relationship: "Photography's pervasiveness is the consequence as much as the cause of its imaginative life in the minds of its readers."²¹ Nancy Armstrong has argued that we cannot – indeed that the Victorians did not – see

¹⁹ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 19.

²⁰ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 57.

²¹ Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians*, 8.

rightly that fundamental nineteenth-century institution, the realist novel, without photographic images.

This spate of work on visibility has been tempered by recent works that concentrate on other senses than sight. John Picker's *Soundscapes*, published in 2003, acknowledges that "the gaze acquired a new degree of importance in this period" but maintains that "the era also experienced a rise in close listening."²² Picker elucidates a variety of interesting cultural circumstances, from Carlyle's attempt to build a soundproof study to Dickens' anxiety about the intense noise of the express train. He argues that Victorian auralness differed qualitatively from Modernist auralness, as the Victorians sought to quantify and harness the power of sound. Jonathan Sterne targets the related assumption that sensory reproduction was alienating, trumped by face-to-face interactions. Sterne urges us to focus on the "social relation making possible the moment of sonic communication."²³ Sterne's fascinating work draws attention to a myriad of cultural factors that he argues influenced attitudes toward reproduced sound, from headphones to canned food. Like Crary, he sees the capitalist-industrialist system producing increasing individuation of the sensing subject.²⁴

The political ramifications of sensing have also been examined in Janice Carlisle's 2004 *Common Scents*. She identifies the "perceptual politics" of smell, how everyday encounters "involve cultural values enacted through and by the senses."²⁵ In particular, Carlisle argues, the intimacy of smell reveals the unconscious ways that social hierarchies are evaluated and maintained through scent, or lack thereof. Carlisle's model

²² Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*, 6.

²³ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 343, 344.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁵ Carlisle, *Common Scents*, 11.

of sensory representation has been very influential to my own; she posits reading as “a way of practicing when and how and why to notice an odor.”²⁶ I take this way of reading as my starting point, but I move away from the single-sense model. Instead, I examine the senses synthetically, as the Victorians often did. In certain chapters, one sense may rise to the forefront, as sound does in Chapter Three, but I remain attentive to the ways that sensory information is always heterogeneous. As important as visual or aural culture were to the Victorians, I contend, they are not the whole story. The descriptions that we mine for information about how the Victorians used and understood their senses present varied senses impressions in multiple combinations – sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings. They were interested in the interplay among the senses, and, I believe, we should be too.²⁷

Class aspiration and the senses are linked by a larger concern with understanding the self through bodily expression. Dealing intimately with the relationships between self and community, outside and inside, *Middlemarch* picks up on many of the tensions inherent in guided sensing. Published at the same time as *The Eustace Diamonds*, *Middlemarch* is similarly concerned with the social effects of class aspiration. Eliot gives us insight into how class change happens, both from the historical perspective of the first Reform Bill and in her detailed understanding – informed by mid-century physiology and psychology – of how bodies reflect interiority. When confronted with his grim prognosis, Casaubon turns characteristically inward. Yet the narrator assures us, “What

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ In an early study on the senses, Louise Vinge notes that the “number and order of the senses are fixed by custom and tradition, not by nature.” Michael Syrotinski extends this observation to include in studies of the senses, “questions of the sixth sense, telepathy, second sight, and all forms of prescient knowledge.” Vinge, *The Five Senses*, 7. Syrotinski, Introduction to *Sensual Reading*, 11.

was Mr Casaubon's bias his acts will give us a clue to" (424). The narrator reminds us that actions are always informed by interior desire and, if examined, can reveal much about those desires. She elaborates: "But what we strive to gratify, though we may call it a distant hope, is an immediate desire; the future estate for which men drudge up city alleys exists already in their imagination and love" (424). Even in a moment ostensibly concerned with religion and death, the novel turns to an aside about class aspiration to explain the connection between individual desire and bodily action. So strongly is desire identified with class aspiration and the body that the narrator's commentary cannot move outside this triumvirate – even when trying explain a quite different interior preoccupation.

In its explication of how we might see one's inside by seeing one's outside, *Middlemarch* reveals the inextricable connections between sensory training and class aspiration. Guided sensing tries to make explicit the connection between outside and inside, to specify which acts will "give us a clue to" a particular class status. The experience of culture is made to seem natural, to reside in the body. Guided sensing depends upon the individual seizing control of the narrator's invitation to determine interiority through acts. It suggests that the individual might groom the self to react – to feel – a particular way, to control from the inside-out what Pierre Bourdieu has called the "looking-glass self," or the "agent's own representation of his/her social 'effects.'"²⁸

Yet even while it explicates the logic of guided sensing, *Middlemarch* also records the forces that inevitably disturb that logic. The central metaphor of the novel, the social web, explains how, even while we might look at outsides for insight, the

²⁸ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 73.

individual rarely controls the outside – or the inside – to the extent that guided sensing suggests is possible. We can never control

those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious gentlemen stood for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly grouped in consequence; while a few personages or families that stood with rock firmness amid all this fluctuation, were slowly presenting new aspects in spite of solidity, and altering with the double change of self and beholder. (95)

It is inevitable that even the most securely positioned “were slowly presenting new aspects” and many have much less control than formerly: being denied, “caught in political currents,” finding themselves grouped “in consequence.” This “new consciousness of interdependence,” which Eliot promotes throughout the novel, always undercuts the narrative of individual self-fashioning. It is impossible always to discern, this passage tells us, the ways that individuals affect and are affected by the social web. The “less marked vicissitudes” accrete into material consequences, but are almost impossible to track or change.

Thus, the novel records its interest in the possibility of self-improvement even while showing its inevitably, and essentially, compromised nature. The “double change of self and beholder” suggests that in class aspiration, individuals change the self in order to change how they are perceived by others. Sensory perception, I argue, is what is new

in this equation. The idea that one could affect others' perceptions by changing one's own sensory perception relies on new, post-industrial interest in the training of the senses. Change from within the self is half of the "double change" that Eliot describes. Without the self-training of guided sensing, there would be only change from the outside affecting the individual. Guided sensing cannot cohere in narratives intimately concerned with the inevitable, untrackable vicissitudes of the social web, but that is not the whole story. The social web is woven with individual threads, those stories also, as Eliot reminds us, informed by their own individual desires. Guided sensing taps those desires, those aspirations.

Like *Middlemarch*, the novels I read from the 1870s and 80s, Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* and Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*, find guided sensing to lose coherence in the face of the tension between individual and social. These novels contest the logic of guided sensing by showing how foundational middle-class values, fidelity and cultivation, unsettle the narrative of upward mobility. Ultimately these novels transcend the narrative confines of the individual to locate the sensing subject in its inextricably social position.

The question of individual self-fashioning is one that has been dominated by scholars working in the Foucauldian paradigm. D.A. Miller, Nancy Armstrong, and Mary Poovey all suggest the ways that individual desire, self-knowledge, and belonging are inescapably shaped by the capitalist state. Some suggest that this hermeneutics of suspicion pervades Victorian critical engagement more generally. For instance, in 2003 Andrew Miller criticized that year's scholarly Victorian offerings, noting in particular the lack of diverse theoretical engagement. "To be sure," he notes dryly, "there may be side

skirmishes with Michel Foucault or Nancy Armstrong in the introduction, but such theoretical anxieties pass, and the critic settles down to read a few canonical and perhaps a smaller number of uncanonical Victorian novels.”²⁹ The ubiquity of discipline as a model for Victorian subjectivity has prompted a recent call for a different kind of historical argument – one that, for Lauren Goodlad, using Foucault’s later essays on liberalism, places “emphasis on the synchronic rather than the diachronic: on elaborating deep-seated conflict, variation, and unevenness, rather than on charting unequivocal and hegemonic change.”³⁰

Although my dissertation moves chronologically from the middle to the late nineteenth century, I make a synchronic argument about the emergence of guided sensing and its interrogation through narrative. I am not arguing for broad historical change but rather an in-depth look at one idea and its “deep-seated conflict, variation, and unevenness.” My argument takes this shape because I am not claiming a broadly conceived disciplinary subjectivity. Instead, I expand this model by including the self-conscious, if problematic, pleasures of ambition and self-improvement that I see in guided sensing.³¹

I provisionally agree with the kind of argument made, for instance, in Mary Poovey’s *Making a Social Body*. Poovey contends that Edwin Chadwick’s *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* had the effect of “establish[ing] the ‘naturalness’ of middle-class living habits.”³² One of the enduring

²⁹ Miller, “Recent Studies,” 966-7.

³⁰ Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, xi.

³¹ For a treatment of the relationship between pleasure and labor in the Victorian novel, see Carolyn Lesjak, *Working Fictions: A Genealogy of the Victorian Novel*.

³² Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 117.

curiosities of my research is the way that class-labeled bodily experiences carry the weight of nature even though they are so laboriously the effects of culture. I depart from Poovey, however, in identifying the pleasure that that potential can bring with it. In the rhetoric of guided sensing, I find an undercurrent of pleasure, accomplishment, and play. These elements, I argue, are what separate guided sensing from an unthinking celebration of middle-class norms – “[d]isplaying our own hermeneutical suspicions without the ideological heavy weather,” as Matthew Titolo has described this approach.³³ For instance, Inspector Bucket’s famed finger points him to clues and solutions and thereby instantiates his professional, middle-class identity. This is an experience of class formation that is corporeal, exaggerated, and even comedic. Inspector Bucket joyfully inhabits a body with meaningful sensory perspicacity. The *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*, too, suggests that the “‘naturalness’ of middle-class living habits” does not distance that lifestyle, but rather brings it within reach of the careful student, who is always “tremblingly alive to the most delicate test.”³⁴ Class-labeled bodies are not just an effect of a disciplinary state, these texts imply; they can be the product of self-aware, enlivening self-fashioning.

The first chapter of my dissertation reads the sewing patterns and short fiction of the innovative *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* in order to establish the idea of guided sensing that runs throughout my project. In its first eight years, from its inception in 1852 to its upgrade in 1860, the magazine formulated an idea of taste that combined the class aspirations of its readership with cultural interest in both routine and the virtues of domesticity. The magazine’s sewing and fancy-work patterns present an emergent

³³ Titolo, “The Clerks’ Tale,” 173.

³⁴ *EDM*, III: 123.

idea of taste as both a social virtue and a trainable sensory experience. The patterns draw on contemporary discourses of industrialization and routine, suggesting that the routinized work of the pattern could instill a sense of taste in the body of the domestic woman by training a particular sensory response. The importance of patterns extends beyond sewing or dressmaking; the magazine presents working patterns as part of routinized sensing crucial to the development of taste. In this process, the discussion of patterns bears a marked resemblance to the discourse of industrial mass production, an unusual pairing taken up, I argue, by the representations of pattern-working in the magazine's short stories. Fictionalized representations of pattern-working consistently emphasize the ways that tastefulness is expressed as intrinsic feeling rather than physical response, a process that translates sensory experience into interiorized sentiment. The periodical encouraged the domestic woman both to train her body to respond in particular ways and to elide that training through affect.

The development of mystery and sensation fiction, I argue in my next chapter, participates in the construction of professional male identity by a process markedly different from that prescribed for domestic women. For the professionals – the detectives, doctors, lawyers, and scientists – of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, guided sensing means attending to their own sensory information, analyzing it, and drawing conclusions from it, rather than obscuring it through sentiment. Correctly interpreting the evidence of the senses enables the professional to decipher the mystery, restore order, and create a world that makes sense. The professional solves the mystery with the “chain of evidence,” a reified mental process available for hire. The chain of evidence satisfies both the emerging legal

preference for first-person testimony and the deductive logic of scientific method.

Serving an organizing function for the class-based sensing of these novels, the chain of evidence demonstrates the rising cultural power of the professional middle class. The professional's explanation of the world – usually for the benefit of the befuddled upper classes – is a composite sensory practice that determines how the world of the novel is ordered: legally, scientifically, and commercially.

In the third chapter, I synthesize the previous chapters' separate investigations of masculine and feminine identity by examining how the realist novel's pledges of fidelity interrogate guided sensing. I argue that Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds* explores the unfulfilled desire for perfectly replicated experience that informs both romantic and sound fidelity. The pledges of fidelity in the novel are evaluated by their truth in repetition, the subsequent iterations judged against an ephemeral, but memorable, original. This standard also defines sound fidelity: the ability of realism to capture the sound of speech, to make it, in Trollope's words, read as real to "the ear, quick and true."³⁵ The traceless standard of perfect fidelity, however, is never achieved. Instead, the novel uses its own self-conscious realist practice to present fidelity as a cultural value appraised by its own undoing. Lizzie Eustace attempts to extricate and replicate performances of fidelity from men far more urgently than they from her, suggesting that the sound of fidelity is always a social bargain, even at its most intimate. Guided sensing relies on making meaning out of repeated bodily experiences, and *The Eustace Diamonds* suggests that a sense cannot be captured on the page or in life – it is within the fleetingness of the sense that its value resides.

³⁵ Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 116.

My final chapter explores end-of-century resistance to guided sensing through an analysis of Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*, which offers and then revokes the narrative of upward social mobility. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* touts guided sensing as modern, seemly, and desirable. Thirty years later, *The Woodlanders* exposes the price of this guidance, measuring in the body the costs and rewards of education and urbanization. The novel's figuring of cultivation draws on the term's double formation: part nature, part culture; part training subject, part trained object. Grace's cultivation is represented as a disconnection from her senses, which are instead interpreted by the men – her father, her husband – who seek to reassure themselves of her improved status. Hardy depicts the elision of bodily sensation entailed by Grace's cultivation as a circular process that frustrates the telos offered by guided sensing. The novel undoes its own upward mobility narrative, cycling back around through the seasonal metaphor of cultivation to suggest that the changes brought about through self-improvement are only temporary. By the end of the nineteenth century, the narrative of individual self-fashioning gives way to a more reciprocal relationship between the individual and the inescapable social realm.

Hardy's novel brings to a close the trajectory of guided sensing, initiated by the emergence, at mid-century, of a belief in a modern, trainable body. By the fin-de-siècle, this definition was suspect, as the social challenges to guided sensing attenuated the narrative of self-improvement. My understanding of Victorian sensory experience unsettles Bourdieu's opposition between the aspirational "labour" of "retraining" and the "legitimate culture" of birth.³⁶ To the Victorians, I argue, guided sensing *was* a form of

³⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 71.

legitimate culture, not necessarily a way of faking it, but of exploring the relationship between class and bodily expression. Guided sensing was undone not by its labor or its illegitimacy but by its reliance on individualism. This project attests that the feeling of class aspiration could not be self-contained.

I.

Sensing Patterns: Taste, Comfort, and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*

“There are a thousand things that everybody sees, and nobody thinks of,” marvels the author of “Railway Magic,” an 1855 article in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*.³⁷ The writer is particularly interested in drawing attention to the sensory experience of train travel. It is not just that new parts of the country open up to the railway, or that the speed allows one to cover new territory; the actual sights of the everyday are given new meaning when seen from the window of a train. The modernity of train travel enables the traveler to view the English countryside with new eyes: the eyes of a housewife. Looking out the train window, the anonymous author asks, “And did you remark – not a spike wrenched from its good hold, not a tie *un*-tied, not a timber splintered? There *must* be a charm in those fingers indeed.” The construction of the railway is the work of an especially tidy and conscientious laborer, depicted here as the domestic woman.³⁸

As the train rushes the viewer from far to near perspective, the features of the landscape are crafted from quotidian housewifely objects: “Strips of narrow yellow ribbon widen into broad acres of golden grain; scattered skeins of silk floss are webbed into running rivers.” Rural idyll and modern power merge into one image, united through a visual perspective that draws its references from needlework rather than farming or

³⁷ EDM, III: 372.

³⁸ For an interesting counter-point on the images and metaphors used here to aestheticize industry, see Joseph Bizup, *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry*, esp. pp. 18-50.

factory work. Fingers, ribbon, and silk floss feature prominently in the parts of the periodical devoted to sewing and fancy-work patterns. “Railway Magic” ends with the observation that the railway marks out and almost creates the surrounding fields, lakes, and towns. The railway’s relationship to the landscape becomes much like a pattern for an embroidered scene: “the railway itself, in the magic of distance seems the *double scoring* of the beautiful fields and lakes and towns along which those lines are drawn.”³⁹ The railway marks out the lines within which to fill the fields, lakes, and town.

The unlikely pairing of sewing goods and industrial technology is characteristic of the magazine’s subtly industrialized depiction of women’s domestic experience. This pairing, I argue, reveals an emerging concern with the shaping of the senses in the modern world. In its first eight years, from its inception in 1852 to its upgrade and expansion in 1860, the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* combined the class aspirations of its readership with cultural interest in the related virtues of domesticity and routine. The emphasis on perception in the passage is also typical: descriptions of sewing and fancy-work patterns in the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* are consistently presented as not just keeping feminine fingers busy, but as molding sensory experiences through repetition or routine. The conception of patterns and their place in women’s daily lives extends beyond sewing or dressmaking to an overt patterning of everyday sensing, like that of the train passenger. For this reason, the magazine’s presentation of patterns reveals much about the ways that post-industrial routine shaped the interaction of taste, class, and sensation in this period.

³⁹ EDM, III: 373, original emphasis.

From its outset, the magazine identifies taste as a defining feature of the middle-class woman and the home.⁴⁰ The way women touch, taste, see, hear, and smell their surroundings – and appear not to do so – is collapsed into an idea typically given the name of just one sense: taste, a physical and aesthetic response rife with class significance. The language used to describe the patterns takes them beyond the realm of the practical; they are a way of developing taste, inculcating a particular sensory response in the reader that she may interpret and present as feminine, middle-class aesthetic sensibility. The patterns are presented both as both essential to forming a reader's sense of taste and as products of that tastefulness. Initially the magazine includes just one or two patterns but increases the number of patterns and the amount of commentary until they become a distinguishing feature of the magazine.⁴¹ The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* attempts to define and codify taste both as a sensory response and as a value essential to middle-class femininity.⁴²

The magazine's treatment of patterns is therefore representative of an emergent idea of taste as both a social virtue and a trainable sensory experience. Contemporary discourse of industrialization and bodily habit influenced the magazine's presentation of

⁴⁰ For what he terms a "prehistory" of domesticity, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity*. See also Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's seminal work, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*.

⁴¹ The popularity of patterns is an example of what John Brewer and Frank Trentmann call the "life cycles" of consumption, where "desires and habits are shaped over time." Introduction to *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives*, 3.

⁴² By "middle-class" I refer not just to an income range but also to a particular lifestyle, the maintenance of which required a substantial income, although not one free from labor. The term most often designates a wife who does not work outside the home, a husband who leaves home to work in the morning and returns in the evening, and the creation and maintenance of home as the center of a woman's life. John Burnett has identified this class as one-sixth of the population at mid-century and notes, "This 'new' class was the most family-conscious and home-centered generation to have emerged in English history." *A Social History of Housing*, 95.

domestic routine, suggesting that the routinized work of the pattern could instill a sense of taste in the body of the domestic woman by training a particular sensory response. This is the trained sensory response that I term guided sensing, the idea that one could train oneself to respond sensorily in ways that were laden with class significance. Guiding the senses in pursuit of taste was, the magazine implied, integral to the concentric self-definitions of the imagined reader's femininity, domestic affection, class, and even national identity. The magazine presents itself as solidly middle-class, offering authoritative counsel to readers who are possibly insecure about their own social standing. The magazine's claims to its readers about taste in middle-class domestic life are at once forcefully asserted and unstable. The varying definitions of taste simultaneously appeal to a wide range of readers and suggest that they can learn to be tasteful.

While the process of reading and working patterns locates the sense of taste within the body of the reader, highlighting at once its desirability and lack of codification, the pattern suggests taste can be instilled – an idea at odds with concepts of taste as an innate aesthetic value. Taste, these representations suggest, is rooted in the opposition of cultivation and instinct. Guided sensing capitalizes on the value of innate taste while suggesting that it can be learned – for the price of a magazine, for the investment of the worker's labor. In doing so, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* depends upon a mid-century cultural interest in routine that went beyond the shop floor to include the importance of domestic routine in maintaining “the importance of this [middle] class in upholding the moral worth of our country,” as domestic authority Mrs. Ellis opines.⁴³ In

⁴³ Ellis, *The Women of England*, vi.

an early issue, The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* counsels that “the love of order, cleanness, and neatness” have to be “grafted by habit” on women.⁴⁴ Domesticity, this metaphor suggests, is not a mere activity; it should become part of the body, part of the self. The magazine suggests that the way to “graft” domestic virtues is through routine and repetition. The household routine, adherence to a daily schedule, and repetitive handiwork advocated by the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* are not means unto themselves. The magazine insists that these routines will impart particular physical responses.

This insistence on the physicality of routine jars with the ethereal representations of feminine middle-class affect. Guided sensing teeters on the juxtaposition of routine and spontaneity, of training and birth – incongruities that make guided sensing at once attractive and elusive. If the magazine offers any resolution to these vacillations, it is through the pairing of taste with comfort, sentimentalizing the physical process of guided sensing through descriptions of the emotional value of the physical experience of home. In order to explore this pairing, I will conclude this chapter with the magazine's fictionalized, didactic descriptions of pattern working, texts that transcribe tastefulness into emotion. Sensing becomes feeling, a translation of sensory experience into interiorized sentiment. First, however, I will explore the magazine's presentation of guided sensing as routinized sensing *and* feeling, imparted through pattern-working.

The Magazine in Context

⁴⁴ *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, I (1853): 3.

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, launched in 1852, was a departure from the typical women's magazine of the period – starting with the use of the word “woman” in the title. The *Lady's Magazine* and the *Lady's Museum* had merged into *La Belle Assemblée*, which temporarily ceased publication in 1847, creating an opening in the market for women's periodicals.⁴⁵ Distinguishing itself from these magazines, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* targeted a middle- and lower-middle-class audience; at 2d. it was significantly less expensive than the one-shilling lady's magazines of the past.⁴⁶ It was also less extravagant in appearance: about the size of a modern paperback book, with a plain cover and thirty-two pages of closely-spaced type. Unlike the similarly-priced *Family Friend* and *The Christian Lady's Magazine*, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* was not particularly concerned with religion; it celebrated instead the amalgam of domestic ideology with generic Christian morality. The word “English” in the title suggests that the two forms of the domestic, local and national, are inextricable.⁴⁷

The editor, Sam Beeton, was eager to announce the originality of his project. He writes in the preface to the first issue, “The purposes and intentions of our little Magazine are of a nature so different to those of any other now before the public, that we think it necessary to explain at some length the leading features which we intend should characterise it.”⁴⁸ The editorial tone is self-deprecating (“our little Magazine”) in order to be self-aggrandizing (“so different”), a characteristic strategy for sounding at once

⁴⁵ Beetham, *Magazine of Her Own*, 59.

⁴⁶ White, *Women's Magazines*, 44.

⁴⁷ In *The Ideas in Things*, Elaine Freedgood explicates the ways that national identity is constructed in quotidian household objects.

⁴⁸ EDM, I: 1.

authoritative and accessible. The claim of its difference was true in one feature at least: its dissemination of practical advice for women running homes, particularly its inclusion of recipes and dress patterns. The patterns included in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* were initially for clothing only ("Our Practical Dress Advisor"), but in 1855 this section was expanded to "The Work-Table" and included patterns for items such as net purses, cigar cases, and work bags, as well as dresses and embroidered trim."⁴⁹ The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine's* greatest competitor in its early days was the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, published also as the *Ladies' Cabinet*. This magazine, however, did not contain the patterns, recipes, or other practical instructions that characterized the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*. The previous ladies' magazines presented themselves as leisurely entertainment, focusing on light fiction, poetry, travelogues, and lengthy descriptions of fashion plates, with no instructions on how to reproduce the outfits pictured. In particular, Margaret Beetham claims it is "difficult to exaggerate the importance" of the *Englishwoman Domestic Magazine's* sewing and fancy-work patterns to future women's publications.⁵⁰ Indeed, Nicola Humble points out that these innovations in content "remain stalwart features of inexpensive women's magazines for the next century."⁵¹ In 1857 the *Ladies' Treasury* became one of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine's* earliest imitators, with a format that included, as its subtitle announced, "Entertaining Literature, Education, Fine Art, Domestic Economy, Needlework, and Fashion."⁵²

⁴⁹ Isabella also shared the pattern commentary with Mlle. Roche, who then took that section over completely after Isabella's death.

⁵⁰ Beetham, *Magazine of Her Own*, 67.

⁵¹ Humble, Introduction to *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, x.

⁵² *Ladies' Treasury*, I: i.

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* worked to convey not only a sense of practicality and entertainment, but, above all, of middle-class solidity within reach of the upper echelons of the working classes. As the first magazine to have Parisian patterns available to the at-home English reader, the patterns were desirable yet accessible to readers who, as Sarah Freeman notes, “were of a class who could not possibly afford to buy clothes from Paris.”⁵³ The magazine positioned itself as an authority on middle-class domestic life, but it did so in order to speak to those who were not themselves confident about good taste – those to whom guided sensing would presumably be most attractive. Beetham points out that “[t]he title, price, and monthly publication of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* designated a specific readership which it also sought self-consciously to create.” So while the magazine targets “the woman who employed servants,” the actual readership probably included upper-level servants, too.⁵⁴ The variety of readers contributes to the magazine’s multi-vocal, aspirational tone.⁵⁵ Several times the editor prefaces the bound edition with a comment such as, “henceforth no lady will consider her bookcase complete unless she numbers amongst its treasures the EDM.”⁵⁶ The use of the word “lady,” contrasting with the “woman” of the title, in tandem with his reference to the “treasures” of that lady’s bookcase, identifies the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* as at once a reference guide and a status symbol.

⁵³ Freeman, *Isabella and Sam*, 76.

⁵⁴ Beetham, *Magazine of Her Own*, 62.

⁵⁵ Social mobility marks all of the Beeton enterprises; as Kathryn Hughes describes a Beeton family friend, “It was this kind of gentleman – one whose father had been a coachmaker rather than a clergyman – who made up the world from which the *Book of Household Management* emerged.” *The Short Life and Long Times*, 183.

⁵⁶ EDM, I: iv.

The guidance of the editorial voice remains strong, but the magazine also presents itself as a center within which the readers' voices can congregate and overlap. A magazine, either as monthly issues or a yearly volume, progresses linearly as the issues accumulate. Periodical scholars have identified the importance of patterns of discourse perpetuated by the regular features of a magazine. For instance, Louis James remarks, "The pattern created by a journal's layout becomes built in, over a period of time, with our ability to read its contents." Recognizing the repetitive features of a magazine means becoming, as James says, "particularly intimate" with those features.⁵⁷ What distinguishes the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, however, was its interest in adding readers' voices to the editorial guidance of features and descriptions. The linear accretion of this periodical, then, is composed in part by the multi-directional participation of readers' requests for particular patterns, readers' discussions of the experience of working patterns, and readers' own patterns that had been circulated and handed down. The result was a magazine that presented experience from actual ladies, given the weight and prestige of publication. The magazine's cultural authority lay partially in its position as a repository of collected wisdom and partially in the reader's own complicity in that wisdom.

Characterizing itself as a helping hand, it embraced the "uninitiated, who, sometimes from carelessness, but oftener from the want of a guiding monitor" needed instruction in "domestic management; embracing as it does actions minute and insignificant in detail, but each one tending to swell the amount of happiness *if*

⁵⁷ James, *English Popular Literature*, 39.

performed, of misery if neglected.”⁵⁸ This information and attitude proved extremely popular. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, Beeton’s new project had “in one year gained a greater number of patrons than any other magazine in the Empire.”⁵⁹ By 1857, five years after its launch, the magazine declared a circulation of 50,000 readers.⁶⁰ Although these claims cannot be substantiated, they speak to the magazine’s influence and sense of its own presence. Between the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* and its sister project *Mrs. Beeton’s Book of Household Management* (written by Sam’s wife Isabella and heavily promoted in the magazine), the Beetons were a formidable force in mid-century middle-class domestic instruction.⁶¹

The *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* is typical of the period in its emphasis on the virtues of a strict routine in the home. Routinized behaviors were reliable and efficient, two domestic virtues that might be instilled by the working of patterns. The domestic woman embodies, as the magazine describes it, “the unseen, spiritual, mighty influence of Home, and Woman’s love: producing its desired effect and doing its work, more by invisible machinery [. . .] than by outspoken word.”⁶² This is distinct from the more-common admonishment found in the *Ladies’ Treasury*: “employment is the safeguard of the young female mind.”⁶³ Rather than merely suggesting the danger of idle

⁵⁸ EDM, I: 1, original emphasis.

⁵⁹ Beetham, *Magazine of Her Own*, 59.

⁶⁰ EDM, VI: ix.

⁶¹ Although Isabella Beeton wrote several columns for the EDM, including recipe and child-rearing, she did not become a co-editor until the magazine’s expansion in 1860. At that time, she revamped the magazine’s fashion and needlework sections significantly, making the magazine and its treatment of patterns quite different from those I discuss here. The magazine increased in size and price; it started offering a detachable insert with patterns that could be purchased for an additional sum.

⁶² EDM, III: 76.

⁶³ LT, I: iv.

hands, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* articulates a particular relationship between training and sentiment. The domestic routine should appear effortless, should seem an outgrowth of womanly affection, but the process is actually the reverse: affection is a result of routine, of the “invisible machinery” of her habitualized mental and physical activity. Through a mechanized routine, the magazine suggests, the domestic woman may produce the “mighty influence of Home,” a sentimental ideal of womanly affection, tasteful decoration, and well-regulated schedule. Home is home only to the extent that it feels at once like “Woman’s love” *and* like “machinery.”

The capacity for routinized thought, feeling, and action, in other words, was not limited to the industrial towns of the north but existed literally and imaginatively in the home. Kathryn Hughes observes that Isabella Beeton’s infancy was spent in her father’s fabric wholesale business, mixing the industrial products of the north with her London home: “As baby Isabella crawled, then toddled, among the giant fabric pillars she would have absorbed the smells and textures of the textile trade, the sharp tang of Manchester cotton, the powdery feel of velvet, the flutter of muslin.”⁶⁴ Among its fiction, poetry, and advice, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* includes an article, “Cotton,” that breathlessly catalogues the immense system of industrial production: “We work into yarn nearly two million pounds of cotton *every day*; we have twenty million spindles whirling their rapid course in spinning their cotton into yarn [. . .] this mass of cotton is spun and woven in two thousand factories, employing daily between three and four hundred thousand persons within the walls.”⁶⁵ The “we” here is all of English cotton manufacturing, yet it is inseparable in tone from the editorial “we” that dictates pattern

⁶⁴ Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times*, 29.

⁶⁵ EDM, III: 3.

choice, select essays, and dispenses domestic advice. The magazine conceives of routine, domestic and industrial, as inherently English, moral, and modern.

The Sense of Taste

The magazine presents guided sensing as a way of instilling taste in the body, a sensory reaction that demonstrates the reader's taste to herself and others. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "taste" originally included smell and touch as well as what we now consider taste. As our current conception of the five senses developed, taste was differentiated from the other senses. Taste used to be conceived of as a composite sensory experience, not necessarily centered in the mouth. The evolution of the idea of taste as a sense has moved toward increasingly intimate physical contact with the object being sensed, from merely being near it (as with smell) to touching to the kind of envelopment usual for tasting. The act of tasting erases the usual distinction between the sensing body and the object of sensation as they merge physically. At the same time, its meaning was also expanding to encompass aesthetic and social judgment, the "sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, beautiful." Taste is a sensory experience that is also a judgment on the exterior world, on the somatic experience of beauty or ugliness. Literally and figuratively, tasting is a test of the outside world that takes place in the body. The experience of a pleasant taste is also the experience of finding the material world to be appropriate. In this way, taste as physical sensation, as description, and as social evaluation overrides the descriptive boundaries between bodies and objects, blurring the distinction between physical reaction and social prescription.

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* contributes to an emergent idea of taste as a trainable response to the convergence of questions about taste in the mid-nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, taste was discussed most often as a very particular response to art, usually coded masculine and high-brow.⁶⁶ By the middle of the nineteenth century, taste was considered a more general aesthetic response, used in discussing the domestic interior, and often coded feminine.⁶⁷ In addition Victorian taste discourse oscillated between describing taste as an absolute social signifier (good vs. bad taste) and an individual preference (“that’s not to my taste”). John Burnett describes what has been one strain of historical argument: the Victorians “had rejected their dependence on traditional, aristocratic dictates, and had announced their individuality in a variety of distinctive architectural styles.”⁶⁸ Asa Briggs makes a similar evaluation of the lack of “consensus about the design of things, about education in taste, about the evolution of styles.”⁶⁹ Despite the proliferations of styles, however, the emphasis on

⁶⁶ While Addison and earlier eighteenth-century philosophers discussed taste in relation to art and literature, by the mid-eighteenth century, the decorative arts were introduced as subjects for taste. A contemporary of Hume and Burke, Alexander Gerard suggested in 1756, “Scarce any art is so mean, so entirely mechanical, as not to afford subjects of taste. Dress, furniture, equipage, will betray a good or bad taste: nay, the lowest utensil may be beautiful or ugly in the kind.” Gestures were also made toward defining taste as a national characteristic. It was generally accepted that a nation can have a singular sense of taste, as when Addison reproaches, “the general taste in *England* is for Epigram, turns of Wit, and forced Conceits” or Horace Walpole entreats, “We have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste; but let it reign here on its verdant throne.” Gerard, *An Essay on Taste*, 213. Addison, *The Spectator*, 272. Horace Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, 65.

⁶⁷ Some recent studies have interrogated this shift and suggest that taste was a topic for low as well as high culture, domesticity as well as art in the eighteenth century. See, for instance, *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us About the European and American Past*, eds. Goodman and Norberg, and Jeremy Black, *Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*.

⁶⁸ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, 114.

⁶⁹ Briggs, *Victorian Things*, 18.

individuality does not preclude absolute distinctions of taste; indeed, the absolute distinctions co-exist with acceptance of individual variation. An *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* article, "The Philosophy of Furniture," warns the decorator to avoid "the perversion of taste" and evince only "legitimate taste."⁷⁰ In order to illustrate these principles, the author describes a "chamber with whose decoration no fault can be found."⁷¹ This room is minutely described, including even the dimensions of the room: rectangular, 30 by 25 feet, "a shape affording the best (ordinary) opportunities for the adjustment of furniture."⁷² Good taste here means adhering to clearly-stated, very specific rules.

The discourse of taste in the magazine exemplifies the ambiguity of simultaneous authority and collectivity, working in much the same way that Michel de Certeau describes the authority of a conversation: "the interlacing of speaking positions weaves an oral fabric without individual owners, creations of a communication that belongs to no one. Conversation is a provisional and collective effect of competence in the art of manipulating 'commonplaces' and the inevitability of events in such a way as to make them 'habitable.'"⁷³ Although the guidance of the editorial voice remains strong, the magazine presents itself as a hub for readers' voices. De Certeau's weaving metaphor is apt both in regard to the magazine's focus on sewing and handicrafts and in the way that periodicals are at once a cumulative and an expansive reading experience. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* amalgamated the actual voices of domesticity through the patterns, comments, and essays contributed by readers. The editorial

⁷⁰ *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, III, 45, original emphasis.

⁷¹ *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, III, 46.

⁷² *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, III, 46.

⁷³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xxii.

authority that selected those particular voices and presented them as “commonplaces” made the magazine at once conversational and authoritative. That blend of participation and sanction yields a feeling of consensus, a way of life that is presented and read as “habitable.” Nancy Armstrong has noted the sense of complicity readers felt with nineteenth-century moral guides, arguing, “moral hegemony triumphed in nineteenth-century England largely through consent rather than coercion.” What makes the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* different from a conduct guide, however, was the readers’ participation in the discussion of what constituted “moral hegemony.”⁷⁴ The aspirational reader is not just participating in her own disciplined subjectivity. Economic logic certainly informs readers’ desire to work patterns and attain middle-class taste, but their participation in discussions and sharing of patterns, as well as their eagerness to work them, suggest a more active, ambitious participation than mere “consent.”

Working these patterns produces not just a tasteful object, but also the physical exercise of taste in the body of the seamstress. When advising readers to produce hanging baskets, the editor announces that the patterns will “give excellent opportunities for ladies to exercise varieties of taste.”⁷⁵ These objects, the results of assiduous handicraft work, were tasteful because self-improving: “The mind cannot be healthy if it is always desiring some external excitement [. . .] it is on this account that we uphold the resources of the work-table as being truly feminine, peace-inspiring, and elegant.”⁷⁶ The magazine’s concern with “external excitement” and its proposed antidote of the “resources of the work-table” suggest an interiority shaped by patterned sewing, one that

⁷⁴ Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 16.

⁷⁵ *EDM*, VIII: 375.

⁷⁶ *EDM*, VIII: 31.

is initiated by the action of the fingers but produces a mind that is “healthy” because it is able to recognize and produce objects of taste. The physical experience of working patterns imprints on the worker a reaction that changes her perception. By training her senses through pattern working, the magazine suggests, the reader may become recognizably middle-class.

The magazine suggests that patterns introduce not just a way of doing but also a way of being. Patterns can inculcate a sensory experience that is not necessarily an of-the-moment reaction to the world, but rather one that has been routinized. The pattern may be both a formula for producing an object and for training the senses. The sensory reaction, however, may not register consciously as patterned, and therein lies the power of patterns – they may instill cultural standards that feel like an impromptu or natural responses.⁷⁷ The patterns in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* draw on the significance accrued through everyday sensing; as Janice Carlisle points out, that mundane sensory experiences “are often unconscious, largely taken for granted, can simply magnify the significance of their unacknowledged effects.”⁷⁸ Art critic J. Gardner Wilkinson complained at mid-century of the domestic decoration of “our mechanically finished houses,” suggesting that the experience and display of taste were noticeably formulaic in an attempt to make markers of middle-class style easily recognizable.⁷⁹ The desire for recognizability stems from, I believe, the difficulty in pinpointing the subjective experience of taste. Guided sensing is not one single action, but rather the suggestion that one could learn to taste and be tasteful, to identify as solidly middle-class

⁷⁷ For a different treatment of the relationship between nature and culture in the domestic sphere, see Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 159.

⁷⁸ Janice Carlisle, *Common Scents*, 11.

⁷⁹ Wilkinson, *On Colour*, 266.

through training. While the economic and aesthetic values of taste may be more easily quantified, the sensation – or lack – that registers as tasteful eludes exact codification, which heightens its desirability.⁸⁰

Taste is usually invoked in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* as a defined response to the material world, assuming the reader's agreement, as in this description from "Our Practical Dress Advisor": "Bugles and beads are not worn as they were; we cannot but think it bad taste when they are used as a trimming for bonnets."⁸¹ The tone of the passage invites the reader to share this inevitable response called taste, to be part of the "we" rather than just receive the lesson as a dictum. Yet, an awareness of possible variation haunts assertions of absolute taste in the magazine. While bugles and beads on bonnets might certainly be in bad taste one season, the admission that they "are not worn as they were" presupposes the possibility that they will be worn differently again in the future. This uncertainty contained within certainty epitomizes the magazine's attempts to invoke and define taste, to pin down the elusive quality that sparks a particular response. It is the shifting definitions of taste, rather than the superficially rigid ones, that suggest the cultural importance of taste. The idea of taste encompasses but also moves beyond fashion's rapid changes. Taste suggests a cultural category tied not only to the market-driven changes of fashion but also to the affective and moral values that underpin class.

The magazine's discussions of taste vacillate between the attractions of self-fashioning and instinct, of codification and elusiveness. One article opines, "Delicacy of taste in all things is one of the most charming and desirable of qualities. It supposes in

⁸⁰ For more information about taste and the nineteenth-century interior, see Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions*.

⁸¹ EDM, I: 50.

the first place great perfection and sensitiveness of bodily organization; in the second, high cultivation, and in the third, a moral tenderness which is tremblingly alive to the most delicate test.”⁸² The posture of expertise and the desire to control the presentation of taste create the combination of detail and ambiguity in this list of aggrandized requirements (“great perfection” and “high cultivation”) for the idealized “trembling” response to the tastefulness of one’s surroundings, a result of the right “bodily organization.” This organization need not be innate, however. As the word “cultivation” implies, the reader can develop this kind of bodily response, bolstered by the magazine’s self-improvement philosophy: “We all of us have two educations, one of which we receive from others; another, and the most valuable, which we give ourselves. It is this last which fixes our grade in society, and eventually our actual value in life.”⁸³ It is difficult to tell whether the reader eager to consolidate or improve her social status would be gratified or intimidated to hear that her “grade in society” and even her “value in life” can be fixed through her own efforts. The magazine suggests that training oneself in taste as a marker of class status means regulating not just one’s outward class appearance, but one’s very bodily response, to be always “tremblingly alive to the most delicate test.”

This conception of taste and its bodily expression underlie the editor’s 1855 introduction to the newly expanded “Work-Table” section: “Regarding a taste for fancy-work as a great blessing, and a skill in its performance as one *certain* source of amusement and profit, we shall endeavor to keep our readers *au courant* of all that foreign or English ingenuity may devise, either to facilitate labour, to improve materials,

⁸² EDM, III: 123.

⁸³ EDM, II: 391.

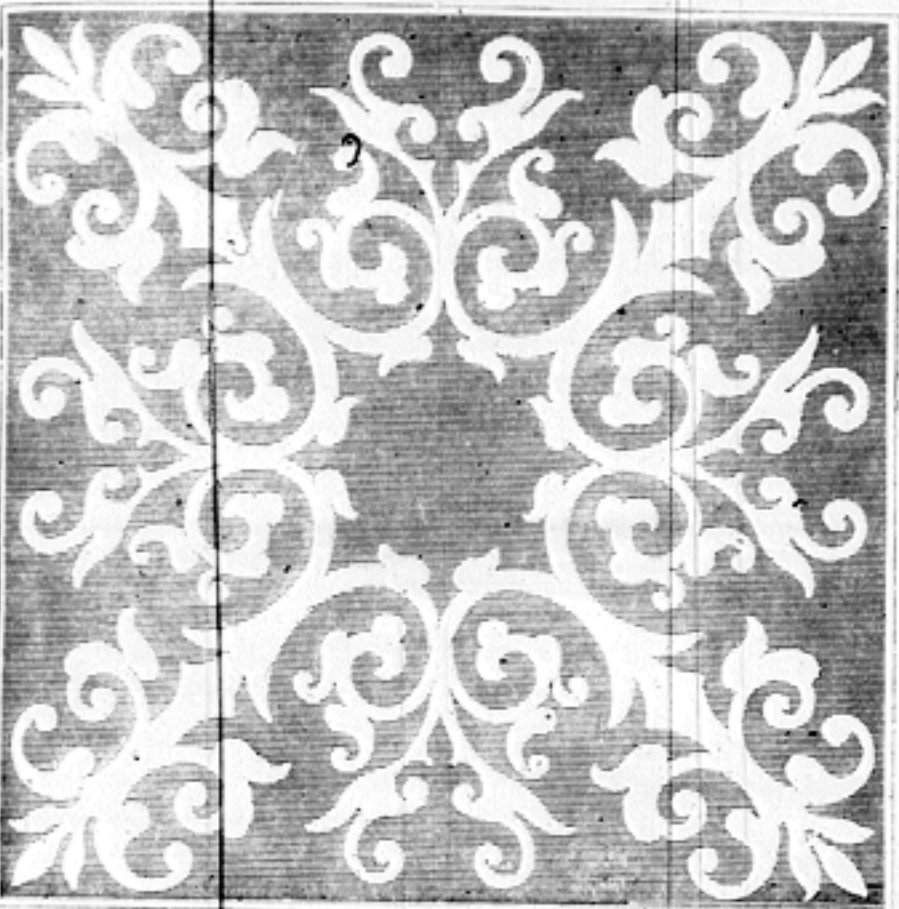
or to develop taste.” (See Figure One)⁸⁴ Here the magazine assumes that the reader will be working on these projects in the home, for the home, and that what is “*au courant*” will be made domestic by bringing it into the English house of the reader. The lightness of the tone combined with the injunction to take up a new project expresses prevailing cultural complexities in the attitude toward women’s handicrafts. The emphasized “*certain* source of amusement and profit” has the hollow ring of overzealous gaiety. I do not mean to suggest that the tone is disingenuous, or that we should heap twenty-first-century scorn on these activities. Rather, the fillip of excitement that marks the voice while pronouncing that phrase has an undertone of constraint. The editor assures us that it is “certain,” and enjoyment becomes compulsory. This duality, the approval mixed with obligation, signals the complex cultural stakes in the magazine’s representation of pattern-working and domestic taste.

The double use of “taste” exposes its circular logic. The first, “a taste for fancy-work,” presents taste as the desire to do fancy-work that is felt in a way analogous to a food craving or a pleasurable sensory response. It is the unconscious evocation of past work in the present desire to do fancy-work that marks the taste as routine. The second kind of taste is a result of the first. Those with the desire for fancy-work can profit from that desire in order to develop aesthetic judgment. This connection suggests that a felt enjoyment (a “taste for” something) can be trained to trigger a particular judgment (good “taste”). Bodily response suggests social and aesthetic judgment, that something in good taste tastes good (and bad taste works conversely). Many of the earliest discussions of taste consider its place in the body. Addison’s 1712 exploration of taste in *The Spectator*

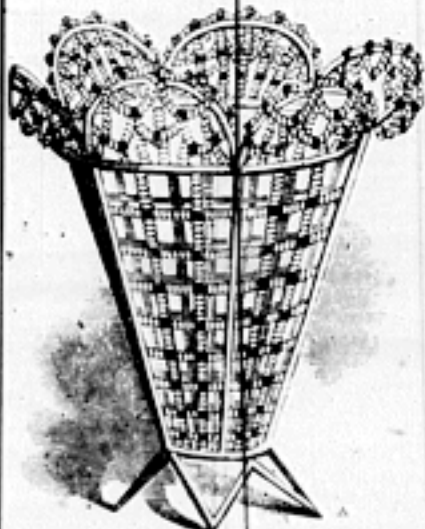
⁸⁴ EDM, V: 29, sic.

suggests that a person without innate taste in literature might read great authors so “he naturally wears himself into the same manner of Speaking and Thinking” (III: 272). It is unclear in Addison’s writing whether this “wearing” takes place within one’s body, as a trained physical and mental response, or if it is taken on externally, that is, worn as clothes are worn. Almost 150 years later, the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* suggests that a “taste for” an activity can produce “taste,” a physical experience, one that takes place in bodily sense and response.

THE WORK-TABLE.



URN MAT.



CERAM STAND.

Is assuming the management of the Work-table of this Magazine, at the commencement of its fifth volume, a few words explanatory of our intentions and views may not be unacceptable to the reader.

Regarding a taste for fancy-work as a great blessing, and skill in its performance as one certain source of amusement and profit, we shall endeavour to keep our readers *au courant* of all that foreign or English ingenuity may devise, either to facilitate labour, to improve materials, or to develop taste. We shall also be pleased to receive any suggestions from our subscribers, and to give them any *advice* in our power, provided that they comply with one or two simple rules, indispensable in correspondence with all whose time is devoted to the service of the public.

1st. We trust that all letters will be clearly and *briefly* written, and contain the name and address of the writer, with a stamped directed envelope if a private reply is desired.

2nd. That no designs shall be asked for which are not likely to be of *general* utility. This excludes crests, sets of initials, and similar things, which can always be procured privately, at a trifling cost.

Figure One: The announcement of the expanded patterns section called "The Work-Table" draws visual as well as textual attention to the tastefulness of repetitive, decorative work.

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine's* formulation of taste is rarely theoretical, more often grounded in the quotidian decorative objects of the home. During the nineteenth century women became consistently responsible for the purchase and display of household goods, even as they themselves became symbols of the virtues of home. Thad Logan argues that the designation of good or bad taste was riddled with “anxiety about the ability of women to make responsible choices in the marketplace [. . .] to act as purchasing agents for the household.”⁸⁵ This focus on the economic implications of nineteenth-century taste is typical of recent criticism. Jean-Christophe Agnew, for instance, locates the importance of nineteenth-century notions of taste in commodity culture, labeling taste “a word whose nineteenth-century rise in popularity had been intimately bound up with the rise of consumer culture.”⁸⁶

Limiting taste to its function as an economic marker misses the important ways in which it works sensorily.⁸⁷ The sensory valences of taste communicate with the aesthetic in ways that have not been fully explored, ways that were implicit in the discourse of nineteenth-century domesticity. Notably, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* uses “taste” in a way that is salient in its cultural moment: as a sensory and aesthetic response to the material world that can be developed in the body of the woman reader and is particular to middle-class domestic ideology. There is no overt distinction made between body and mind, or between sensing and judging, as they are all linked back through the working of the tasteful pattern, the affective understanding of the work-box, and the

⁸⁵ Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 83.

⁸⁶ Agnew, “A House of Fiction,” 141.

⁸⁷ In *The Body Economic*, Catherine Gallagher attends to the relationship between sensation and economics in relation to narrative.

imagined creation of the home.⁸⁸ The body that works patterns develops not just an appreciation of a particular aesthetic attached to those crafts, but a learned sensory response to the material world that is closer to gustatory taste than is commonly acknowledged in theories of aesthetic taste. The magazine implicitly communicated, as Bourdieu has articulated in a twentieth-century context, that one's physical surroundings are "insensibly internalized."⁸⁹ More strikingly, however, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* attempted to make explicit, to make sensible, the ways that the aesthetic is informed by the physical.

The idea that aesthetic taste was rooted in a sensory response analogous to or growing out of gustatory taste was one that was familiar to nineteenth-century art critics. Indeed, they struggled to articulate the exact relationship between tasteful surroundings and sense perceptions. In the catalogue to the 1851 Great Exhibition, Richard Redgrave claimed that ornament "should be like condiment to our food, used only to give piquancy and relish, for as it would be a sickening thing to live on sauces, so over-decorated furniture soon disgusts even those who at first most admired it."⁹⁰ A surfeit of ornament is an intense but ultimately unsatisfying physical pleasure. In an earlier essay on the Crystal Palace exhibition, Ralph Nicholas Wornum took an even more direct tack, arguing that "our object is to decorate this in so tasteful a manner, that it shall suggest comfort and elegance, without giving offence to the sense or perception."⁹¹ Here aesthetic taste is that which includes physical sensations but steers clear of the excess

⁸⁸ For a materialist history of middle-class identity, see Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century*.

⁸⁹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 77.

⁹⁰ Redgrave, "Principles of Practical Art," 59.

⁹¹ Wornum, "The Exhibition as a Lesson in Taste," xx.

physicality that would offend the senses. The “sickening” sensation of over-decorated furniture highlights the moral element of home decoration, which devolves on the regulation of sensory response. To be “tasteful” is not necessarily a fully sensed experience; it is as much a process of denying sensation (avoiding offense or sickening) as it is one of recognizing a response. The sense of taste could be both a conflation of all five senses and a denial of any sensation at all.

“A Time to Sew”

In the patterns for sewing and embroidery, the cookery recipes and child-rearing advice, and even in the poetry and fiction, the magazine constructs a domestic standard, in which family structure, affective outlets, and social routine are all outlined. Sewing and fancy-work patterns played an increasingly large role in the magazine’s idealization of the home: “We are very anxious that our little corner of this journal may be useful in promoting, in some slight degree, the kindest feelings of the social and domestic life, among which stands, first and foremost, love of home, displayed in the many elegant ornaments which issue from the work table.”⁹² The regular creation and display of decorative objects, the magazine implies, is not frivolous but an integral part of creating and maintaining the middle-class home and, especially, the woman who runs it.

Routine and virtue were cemented in the daily practices of domestic life, and the magazine’s sewing and fancy-work patterns were presented as an essential part of that routine. The preface to the first volume boasted “a fund of practical information and

⁹² *EDM*, VIII: 255.

advice, tending to promote habits of industry and usefulness, without which no home can be rendered virtuous or happy.”⁹³ This attitude accords with what social historians such as John Tosh have argued: “The home was supposed to be inward-looking, focused on the most intimate and compelling of human needs [. . .] yet it was a point of pride to most wives to make the household routine conform to a punctuality hardly less strict than that of the shop floor.”⁹⁴ The sewing and fancy-work patterns of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* offer access to one way that domestic affect was imagined as compatible with – even enhanced by – routinized work.

The magazine’s preface touted the hugely popular feature, “Our Practical Dress Instructor,” as a key component of its “fund of practical information” for “promot[ing] habits of industry and usefulness.” From the beginning, each issue contained sewing and fancy-work patterns. In 1855, this section was expanded to “The Work-Table” and included multiple patterned projects, including decorative items like net purses, cigar cases, and Berlin wool work cushions, part of what Talia Schaffer describes as the “wild” popularity of the domestic handicraft movement in the period.⁹⁵ The reader could follow these patterns herself or take them to a dressmaker; work, share, and discuss them with friends; and contribute her own work or comment on the magazine. The dialogue surrounding patterns suggests they were a pervasive part of being a middle-class woman, integral to both body and mind.

The reader requests for patterns and the noted popularity of these features suggest considerable investment in the accumulation and working of patterns. The work-box, a

⁹³ EDM, I: iv.

⁹⁴ Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, 47.

⁹⁵ Schaffer, “Taming the Tropics,” 205.

small wooden carrying-case, usually ornately decorated and filled with the accoutrements of sewing and needlework, was often invoked as the hallmark of domestic application.

This veneration of domesticity through patterns and sewing accessories operates according to what Pierre Bourdieu has called “a sort of generalized Engels’ law” of taste: “At each level of the distribution, what is rare and constitutes an inaccessible luxury or an absurd fantasy for those at an earlier or lower level becomes banal and common.”⁹⁶ The magazine’s identification of patterns and the work-box as the quotidian accessories of middle-class femininity implies they are luxuries to the classes below, consolidating in everyday objects the class-marking differences of taste.⁹⁷

The descriptions accompanying the patterns reveal the magazine’s conception of the place of patterns in the domestic routine as both modern and moral. A pattern for a Berlin wool cushion emphasizes that it is “so simple that it requires scarcely more than the mechanical motion of the fingers to produce” (See Figure Two). The “mechanical motion” of the pattern was precisely what suited it to the domestic routine: “There are many ladies who find it more agreeable to have an easy piece of work in progress, to fill up the leisure moments as they arise.”⁹⁸ The discussion, selecting, and working of patterns filled an important place in the magazine’s depiction of Victorian middle-class life. Patterns combined the affective sanction of home with the regimented working of the body into a particular routine. That patterns were not considered opportunities for self expression is evident in the magazine, as in the culture at large. Thus an 1845 book of

⁹⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 247.

⁹⁷ In *David Copperfield*, Peggotty’s work-box, with its picture of St. Paul’s Cathedral painted on the dome, is a prized possession, an aesthetic object rather than merely a practical one.

⁹⁸ *EDM*, VII: 255.

needlework pieces from a school in Great Cressingham focuses on a striking uniformity of stitches and sentiment. The same quotations are used again and again (“God is love” or “A time to sew”), and in the decorative sections of the sewing, the flowers, borders, or gathers, consistency, not invention, is the aim.⁹⁹

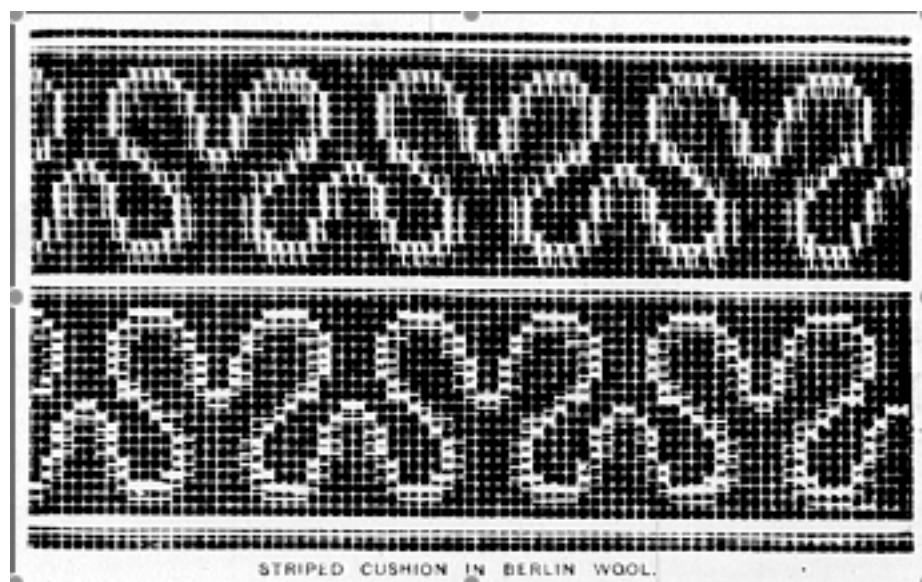


Figure Two: The repetitive handi-work of a Berlin wool pattern.

In their adherence to consistency and routine, the fancy-work patterns of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* are similar to those in the magazine's biggest rival, the *Ladies' Treasury*. The *Treasury* editor, Mrs. Warren, also touts the improving effects of domestic handi-crafts but does not focus so much on the worker as the object produced, assuring readers that they will “well repay the slight trouble of working.”¹⁰⁰ Her descriptions of beads that look like silver, Berlin wool that “has the appearance of rich chenille,”¹⁰¹ and slate that imitates the “finest oil painting on copper”¹⁰² offer a

⁹⁹ See also Talia Shaffer, “Craft, Authorial Anxiety, and ‘The Cranford Papers.’”

¹⁰⁰ *LT*, I: 190.

¹⁰¹ *LT*, I: 252.

vision of craft that fulfills Talia Schaffer's description of "a material evolution, as it were, when rubbish could be reshaped into treasure."¹⁰³ The simplicity of these patterns, like those of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, is assured, even when they appear to be quite complex and detailed. The patterns promise to be all things to all hands: simple, yet absorbing and rewarding, engaging idle hands and shaping the worker.

The consistency emphasized in the patterns and their descriptions is integral not only to the creation of domestic decoration but to domesticity itself. The text accompanying a dress pattern in the magazine counsels, "The united family circle, the social friendships, the glowing fire, continue to make an English drawing-room the perfection of comfort. The work-table lays claim to its share of influence in promoting this general appearance of refinement and happiness. It proves that loving hearts have inspired active minds with taste."¹⁰⁴ The pattern forms an integral part of the "united family circle," which is concentrically demarcated by the house walls and the borders of England. The doubling-up of cultural heavyweights – domesticity and national identity – suggests that a woman who does not engage herself with a pattern is remiss in her creation of home, local and national. A "mechanical" pattern is actually to be preferred to "one which requires close attention and much thought" because the "mind can often be interested in the one, while the other would prove a fatigue."¹⁰⁵ The mechanical workings of the body are understood to facilitate the working of the mind, with the chief

¹⁰² *LT*, I: 124.

¹⁰³ Schaffer, "Craft," 224.

¹⁰⁴ *EDM*, VII: 254.

¹⁰⁵ *EDM*, VII: 255.

object to “inspir[e] active minds with taste.” The mechanical action of the pattern facilitates the active development of taste in the mind and love of home in the heart.¹⁰⁶

The patterns represent what made the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* an important cultural force: they might be the leisured interest of a middle-class woman who did not work. But they might also be used to clothe a family or to sew for money, activities taken on by a working woman for hire or by a frugal woman entrenching her family's position through her own at-home labor.¹⁰⁷ Contemporary understandings of routinized behavior permeate the magazine and its presentation of patterns. Andrew Miles has argued that Victorian communities exposed to the forces of industry “witnessed a middle class, growing in social strength, increasingly distance itself from the toiling mass beneath.”¹⁰⁸ The patterns at once draw upon the awareness of industrial routine and attempt to use that routine to define middle-class taste. Women's domestic activities are both saturated with industrial, mechanized actions and defined as essentially free from the workings of industry. In order, then, to reconcile these oppositions, the routinized

¹⁰⁶ Women's sewing and industrialization were linked by more than just routinization. Matilda Pullan's *Lady's Manual of Fancy-work* expressly links the invention of the sewing machine to women's handiwork habits: “The era of the Atlantic Telegraph, is also that of the Sewing-Machine! the time when women, disenthralled in a great measure from the drudgery and weariness of plain needle-work by its extensive introduction, will have more time to acquire, along with other charming accomplishments, that of Fancy Needle-work, which is not only a pleasant and ever-varying resource against ennui, but a direct agent in the cultivation of home pleasures and home affections.” Pullan makes an argument now familiar to us from mid-twentieth-century advertising: the wonders of industrialization make women's lives easier, allowing them to devote more time to their families. The sewing machine can take on the plain sewing, freeing up more time for fancy-work, changing the cultural meaning of pattern-working. Pullan, “The Lady's Manual,” xiii.

¹⁰⁷ The role of women in determining a family's quality of life cannot be overstated, both by Victorian household writers and those who study them today. As Maxine Berg has noted, “wives' skills and tastes could do as much as husbands' wages to determine how comfortably their families lived.” Berg, “Women's Work,” 94.

¹⁰⁸ Miles, *Social Mobility*, 47.

work of the pattern combines the virtues of habit with the abstraction of middle-class taste.

The goal of the magazine is to “make our humble publication a small means of assistance and pleasure to the happy homes of our numerous subscribers.”¹⁰⁹ Its features, patterns chief among them, tout the improving sense of taste and, through taste, the creation of the happy home central to English national identity. It is worth noting, however, that the editorial tone apparently suffers no disjunction between its investment in the place of patterns in the English domestic ideal and the much-vaunted tastefulness of French fashion, as when the magazine prints patterns for “Broderie Anglaise” rather than “English Embroidery.” The domestic interior is both absorbed by and central to a sense of national identity. The very first issue exhorts the reader to remember that the Englishman is proud of “the moral and domestic character of his countrywomen.”¹¹⁰

The affective place of sewing and fancywork patterns in women’s lives invests them with cultural force that is based, at least in part, on the connection between the routine of patterns and the development of taste. The magazine exhorts:

If a few of the many hours which are passed in wearisome indolence were occupied in the production of some piece of beautiful needlework, many ladies might render the dresses of themselves and their children distinguished by elegance and good taste, and yet not subtract in the slightest degree from the annual income, or deprive their families of one single comfort in the daily arrangement of domestic life.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *EDM*, I: iv.

¹¹⁰ *EDM*, I: 1.

¹¹¹ *EDM*, VIII: 375.

The pattern at once renders a domestic service, initiates a self-improvement measure, and creates a status symbol. To suggest that a woman might, with her needlework, distinguish her family “by elegance and good taste” endows that needlework and its accoutrements – the pattern, the action of sewing, the display of worked goods – with the ability to transform the one who works it.

The Feeling of Taste

The language of physical excess used to describe distasteful decorating invokes the concerns of artifice or ostentation that always haunt material display. How to manifest one’s taste through decoration and action is part of what Katherine Grier has termed the nineteenth-century construction of the “appropriate relationship of the civilized person to the world of the senses.”¹¹² This anxiety has been addressed in several different strains of nineteenth-century decoration criticism. One of these traces the influence of industrial production on Victorian notions of taste. Rémy Saisselin, for example, writing in 1984, sees the middle-classes of the nineteenth-century as tasteless, arguing that the proliferation of industrially produced decorative objects means that the tasteful decorative object was one not “originally intrinsic to the bourgeois world.”¹¹³ Victorian taste, to Saisselin, was, rather, a desirable, spontaneous response: “Taste could save one from the general debasement of the passion for bibelots caused by the industrial production of knicknacks by reestablishing the distinction between mere bric-a-brac and art.”¹¹⁴ Saisselin echoes Asa Briggs, writing in the middle of the twentieth century, who

¹¹² Grier. *Culture and Comfort*, 152.

¹¹³ Saisselin. *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*, 72

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

similarly dismisses the idea that taste is appropriable at all: “The middle-classes not only could not buy ‘taste’: they frequently debased what taste remained.”¹¹⁵

The second, more recent, strain of critical discussions takes up the moral implications of taste and consumerism. Thad Logan has analyzed the evaluative and sensual nature of critical commentary on Victorian decoration in *The Victorian Parlour* (2001). In particular, she has turned our attention to Ruskin’s judgmental language of decorative sensing: “a violence and coarseness in curvature, a depth of shadow, a lusciousness in arrangement of lines, evidently arriving out off an incapability of feeling the true beauty of chaste form and restrained power.”¹¹⁶ Logan notes that this language anticipates Edith Wharton’s status-conscious comments on “trashy” ornaments in *The Decoration of Houses*, as well as a host of twentieth-century comments on Victorian decorative practices (such as those by Saisselin and Briggs). Perceptions of decoration are not only class statements but open to the moral critique of sensory response. Logan identifies this as “not so much a language suspicious of sexuality in general, but a language of submerged misogyny, whose underlying topic is the female body conceived as fleshy and lascivious, inclined to illicit pleasure.”¹¹⁷ Lori Merish, a contemporary of Logan’s, has analyzed the equally problematic pleasures of consumerism for women. She argues that taste is figured as “sentimental ownership” in nineteenth-century American literature. According to Merish, this sentimentality evades accusations of crass

¹¹⁵ Briggs, *The Age of Improvement*, 469.

¹¹⁶ John Ruskin. *The Stones of Venice*. Vol. III. in *The Works of John Ruskin*. Ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. London: George Allen, 1904, vol. XI, 9. Cited by Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 86.

¹¹⁷ Logan, *The Victorian Parlour*, 88.

consumerism, transforming taste into evidence of motherly love rather than material display.¹¹⁸

What makes taste so sensually troubling to the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, however, is not only its sensual fulfillment or consumerist element. The magazine's liminal class position – always attempting to depict a world that is slightly out of reach, but reachable – depends upon and troubles over the erratic nature of sensory response. Guided sensing is only alluring if it is effective, yet taste cannot ever seem too standardized. The magazine's complicated and ever-shifting representations of taste are elusive because they are attempting a tricky cultural position, drawing on middle-class morality and social striving in order to promulgate a particular kind of sensory response. In doing so, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* and Ruskin become strange cultural bedfellows. The magazine inadvertently pinpoints the insecurities behind the sensory response demanded by Ruskin's language. How exactly *is* one to feel “the true beauty of chaste form and restrained power”? Can one learn to appreciate “chaste form” over “coarseness” and “lusciousness”?

The troubling sensory overtones in Ruskin's prohibition suggest that what is at stake in decoration cannot be captured solely by consumerism, morality, or sexuality. Neither strain of critical discussion has dealt with the ways that the senses are both implicated and elided in constructing taste. Displays of taste in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, I contend, were defended from accusations of materialism or sensuality by their absorption into a discourse of domesticity, rendering them fundamental to middle-class English identity. The language of the Victorian domestic

¹¹⁸ Merish, *Sentimental Materialism*, 5.

idyll – “knit,” “feeling,” “touching,” – converts sensing into affect, transposing the troubling body into ethereal emotion. Ultimately, guided sensing suggests that women instill middle-class taste in the body, but that they simultaneously cover that sensory response with affect.

For the domestic woman, the magazine implies, taste relies on turning sensing into feeling. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* claims that absolute knowledge of taste could be shared, for a price. That a closer examination reveals this knowledge to be slippery, shifting, and elusive does not undercut its value. By implicating a woman's class status, familial affect, and national identity within her sense of taste, the magazine increases the value of its knowledge of taste. Taste was sentimentalized, not just by the mother-child bond Merish theorizes, but through the translation of women's sensing into a register of her feelings about marriage, family, and home.¹¹⁹ Taste was made affective in conjunction with another word of somatic significance: comfort.

¹¹⁹ I see this discussion participating in critical conversations about repression. Not just suppression, repression can be attention turned inward, the development of an interior sensory life that is as rich and complicated as the exteriorized experience. To this end, the female middle-class body is expected to repress *and* express sensory experiences in order to define itself as part of a particular group. In my use of repression here I draw partially on John Kucich's use of the term, as an “ideological instrument that actually produced a certain historical subject.” Kucich eschews Freudian repression, with its emphasis on the sublimation of damaging experiences, in order to enter into a broader use of the term, one that literary and historical scholars take to mean the individual and social regulation of immoral behavior or discourse, particularly sex and sexuality. Foucault figures prominently here; in *The History of Sexuality* he argues adamantly against repression as the erasure of sex, and for the modern proliferation of discourses about sexuality that “yield multiple effects of displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification of desire itself.” Kucich uses Foucault's insistence on repression as a wellspring of sexuality but maintains that repression, rather than being solely a tool for bourgeois discipline, is a kind of interiority gained through partial self-negation, one that is historically located in the mid-nineteenth century.

I would like to emphasize what both Kucich and Foucault note, but end up leaving unexplored: repression is a kind of sensory dislocation, not just sexual

The aspiration to create a home that is tasteful and comfortable is an expression of both class status and womanly affect. The interior that is both tasteful and comfortable is stylish without being faddish and well-appointed without being ostentatious. Such an interior evinces knowledge of class-specific decorative objects and has upholstered, padded furniture, draperies, and fringe – all the coverings that soften lines and protect the inhabitant from rough edges.¹²⁰ Comfort nurtures where taste displays – at least in the idealized world of decorating. Comfort eases and makes more affective the place of routinized taste in domestic ideology; to put it in the magazine's terms used earlier in this chapter, comfort transforms the "invisible machinery" of patterned taste into the "Woman's Love" of home.

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* is a magazine dedicated explicitly to rendering the domestic idyll readable and reachable. Together, taste and comfort combine to create an ideology of domesticity that is made to seem natural to the female body. Womanly affect is not necessarily conceived of as a spontaneous outpouring, but, as I have shown, can coexist with mechanized routine. The patterned inculcation of taste is enriched by the concept of comfort, the mitigating effects of physical and emotional ease that work to reconcile the more overt status implications of taste with the emotional valences of home. Both taste and comfort also represent extreme somatic experiences, of

deprivation. Foucault's "displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification" apply not just to sexual desire but to sensory experience more generally. Kucich, *Repression in Victorian Fiction*, 3. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, 23.

¹²⁰ Elaine Freedgood attaches imperial significance to the many hours filled by women's sewing, particularly attaching fringe, when she speculates, "this form of border patrol may well have lent psychic and symbolic aid to the larger designs of the imperial project"; "The geographical edges of the nation and its colonies [. . .] need attenuation and qualification." "Fringe," 259-60.

chilly remove or coarse heedlessness. Being tasteful may not necessarily be comfortable, but, on the other hand, being comfortable may well mean being tasteless.

The allied use of “taste” with “comfort” is, according to Witold Rybczynski, a nineteenth-century convention, requiring a new definition of comfort: “people began to use ‘comfort’ in a different way because they needed a special word to articulate an idea which previously had either not existed or had not required expression.”¹²¹ Rybczynski cites Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* as the first use of comfort specifically in reference to the domestic interior: “Magnificence there was, with some rude attempt at taste; but of comfort there was little.”¹²² This idea of comfort is specifically domestic, rooted in the particular layout and decoration of the nineteenth-century home, with smaller, partitioned rooms, carpets, and upholstered furniture. The terms stand in complimentary relation to one another, as when the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* comments on the “taste and judgment in planning and executing this comfortable and elegant abode.”¹²³

Twentieth-century decoration critics often suggested that Victorians embraced comfort at the expense of taste. John Gloag, a noted mid-twentieth-century design critic and author of the aptly-named *Victorian Taste* and *Victorian Comfort*, argued, “the decline of taste in the 1820s and ‘30’s coincided with the rise of [. . .] a philosophy of comfort, which was adopted by the middle-classes, expounded in its material aspects by Dickens [. . .] and embraced by everybody who enjoyed modest, easy, or affluent circumstances.”¹²⁴ Similarly, John Burnett comments that “solid comfort and a cozy clutter were the leading characteristics of the Victorian interior” and reflected a way of

¹²¹ Rybczynski, *Home*, 22.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²³ *EDM*, I: 229.

¹²⁴ Gloag, *Victorian Comfort*, xv.

life previously available only to the upper classes.¹²⁵ What Gloag and others have missed, however, is the affective connotations of comfort, of the ways in which it goes beyond mere financial ease, decorative innovation, or material abundance. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* often translates decorative comfort into somatic comfort, which in turn becomes psychic and affective comfort.

Taste inheres not just in the creation of a particular kind of interior, but in the creation of middle-class domestic comfort. The sensation of taste that the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* recommends is neither the wanton fulfillment of sensual appetites nor senselessness; rather, it is the reorientation of a sensory experience so that it registers within particular social and moral parameters.¹²⁶ It is redundant, for instance, to complain of a room's "comfortless, bachelor aspect."¹²⁷ Marriage, more than mothering, is judged in relation to the myriad of factors that constitute domestic comfort, as we see, for instance, in a short story typical of the magazine, "Daisy Vere." After a life-long bachelor finds himself in love, he finds discomfort in his parlour, even though "his housekeeper has made his fire bright, and kept his room in as perfect order as a bachelor's room can be kept – and although his soft arm-chair almost buries him in its luxurious recesses." After his marriage, he finds "the chairs are full of welcome."¹²⁸ The decoration of his house and his comfort in it become a metonymic measure of his emotional life; he cannot feel comfortable without his beloved's presence, while after

¹²⁵ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, 110-4.

¹²⁶ Mario Praz uses the term *stimmung* to denote the "sense of intimacy" created in the home. For Praz, a lack of *stimmung* is a lack of sensing; that is, sensing is necessary to intimacy. This construction misses, however, the ways that even lack of intimacy must be sensed, just as the description of a room as "cold" is a sensory response. *An Illustrated History of Interior Decorating*, 53.

¹²⁷ EDM, II: 374.

¹²⁸ EDM, III: 235-6.

their marriage, the welcoming embrace of the chair is a descriptive nod to the embrace of his new wife.

The shifting experience of taste as both sensory experience and sensory control is offered tentative resolution by the magazine's fiction. Largely didactic and sentimental, the magazine's fiction included serialized stories as well as shorter, contained pieces. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* claimed the honor of first publishing Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in England. It also contained large numbers of short pieces by little-known authors that underscore a conventional, sentimental ideology of domesticity. It is these more conventional pieces that most often depict affect trumping the sensory conundrums of taste and comfort. For instance, the first sign of fictional love is the supposed deprivation of the senses: "the expression of the eyes that met hers sealed down their lids and tied her tongue," while she "riveted the eyes and charmed the lips of a certain" man. We are meant to understand, however, that the seeming blindness and speechlessness of these victims actually indicate heightened sensory awareness. Falling in love is expressed as senselessness – "she did not know herself"¹²⁹ – that covers intense sensation. Enduring marital, domestic love is expressed as sensing transposed into affect. The converse is also true; in an unhappy marriage, the undutiful wife complains, "He had an ungraceful way of lounging in his chair, and half reclining on the sofa, even in company, that was terrible. It made me uneasy from head to foot." She is unhappy because she married thinking "I could correct what was not exactly to my taste," a mistake conveyed by the ironic title, "How to Manage a Husband."¹³⁰ Again, the language of sensing and affect are conflated: her physical discomfort stems from her

¹²⁹ EDM, II: 317.

¹³⁰ EDM, I: 46.

unhappiness, as she attempts to label her willfulness “taste.” The tale, not surprisingly, records her transformation into a dutiful wife who maintains a tasteful home where both she and her husband are comfortable.

These stories also depict the substitution of affect for sensing through fictionalized pattern-working. For example, a brief tale of a love match, “Alice Eddlestone,” shows the use of patterns in turning sensing inward. It dramatizes the titular character’s secretive love through her pattern-working: “She dared tell no one what it was that, whilst she silently bent over her frame, tracing with swift and skilful fingers the elegant pattern before her, but which she saw not, so often called up a rosy flush into her usually pale cheeks.”¹³¹ The same patterns that inculcate taste also allow the body to preserve its interiority. Her sensory experience is reoriented and, thus, sentimentalized; rather than sensing the work of the pattern, she feels only emotion. She continues to work the pattern with “swift and skilful fingers,” and while she “saw not,” she feels a “rosy flush.”

Another story of love and courtship opens with a young woman seated “within the embrasure of the deep bay-window,” working a piece of embroidery while her mother tells a story: “while her needle created flowers so beautiful that one almost scented their fragrance, she listened attentively to what Mrs. Caxton called, ‘a romance in real life.’”¹³² It is her needle—not her creative consciousness or even her hand—that creates the flowers while her mind listens attentively. Her body is described as being in more contact with the “embrasure” of the window and its curtains than with the working of the embroidery pattern. This mother and daughter replicate cultural norms of love and

¹³¹ *EDM*, IV: 322, sic.

¹³² *EDM*, II: 99-100.

courtship from within a room that is, itself, a standard of domestic felicity. In both of these fictional representations, working a pattern heightens certain senses while others are ignored. When read alongside the magazine's association of pattern-working with taste, we can begin to see how the economic meanings of taste are veiled by the sentimental meanings – the creation of a home and the heterosexual romance on which it depends. The feeling of taste instilled by these patterns is as much the experience of sensory elision as sensory perception.¹³³

The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* guides aspirational readers toward a sense of taste that is neither the wanton fulfillment of sensual appetites nor senselessness. Rather, it is the reorientation of a sensory experience so that it registers within particular social and moral parameters. Representations of women's sensory experiences in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* suggest that the imagined habitation of the home centers around a routine that features the working of patterns in order to instill sensory responses and elisions that register as taste, a class-bound sense that is both creation of and reaction to the Victorian domestic interior. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* identifies taste as the essential marker of middle-class sensibility, and, in doing so, it transposes sensory experience to an affective register, making taste out to be at once a sentimental and sensory experience.

At the beginning of this chapter, I invoked the magazine's wonder at the effect of industrial life on perception. The author of "Railway Magic" claims that the pace of

¹³³ For a more sustained discussion of attention, see Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*.

¹³³ EDM, III: 372.

¹³³ EDM, III: 372.

modernity establishes a new kind of human perception, influenced by the railway's rhythmic "mighty chronometer."¹³⁴ The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine's* presentation of sewing and fancy-work patterns markets tastefulness as a mode of self-improvement made possible in an era of industrialized routine. By selecting certain patterns, the magazine purports to select sensory experiences with particular, valuable meanings and sell them to their readers. Guided sensing for the mid-century aspirational reader means translating the sense of taste into the interiorized sentiment of comfort. Working these patterns is a way of training of the senses, an experience of sensing and sensory elision, of taste and of feeling. The *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* depicts routinized handiwork as a way of instilling a sense of taste informed in equal parts by sentiment and regiment.

II.

The Evidence of the Senses:

Male Professionals in *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone*

Mystery fiction poses this central question: how can we judge whether our observations and their conclusions are true? In *Bleak House*, for example, Mr. Snagsby finds that, when confronted with the deplorable conditions of Tom's-All-Alone, he "can scarce believe his senses" (331). This scene works in two ways: it presents sensory information that the reader should believe – the repugnant sights and smells of the slum are accurate, based on other impressions we've received. But we are also meant to sympathize with Mr. Snagsby's doubt, to identify with the experience of doubting the evidence of one's senses. How an individual evaluates the reliability of the evidence of his senses is an epistemological problem that troubles both nineteenth-century science and law. The ways that those professions wrestle with this problem overlap in intriguing ways, many of which can be examined through the scientific and legal discourse of the mid-nineteenth-century mystery novel. Establishing oneself as a middle-class professional, these novel suggest, means proving a particular ability to interpret the evidence of the senses.¹³⁵

The mystery novel is uniquely focused on the relationship between sensing and knowing the world. The detective is a fictional creation whose sensory perception is often especially acute and whose interpretations of sensory information are precise.

¹³⁵ See also John Picker, *Soundscape*s. Picker draws a different kind of correlation between sensing and professional identity, arguing that Carlyle's attempts to construct a soundproof study illustrate the ways that silent space might actually and socially separate the middle-class professional from the lower-class urban dwellers and their street noise.

Mystery fiction often includes sensational elements designed to provoke a sensory response in the reader through its combination of domestic realism, its titillating intrigue, and the rhythms of suspense that structure its plots.¹³⁶ Together, these overlapping categories demonstrate a new focus on the sensory experience of reading, both in the depiction of the act of sensing within the text and in the body of the reader. In this way, sensing becomes an act of cultural arbitration; the mystery novel begins in chaos and, through the simultaneous sensory acumen of the detective and resolution of heightened sensations in the reader, order is restored. As Ronald Thomas points out, this means restoring a sense of “objective social authority.”¹³⁷ To be able to sense the world rightly, to be able correctly to interpret and respond to sensory information, means to create an ordered world.¹³⁸ Who is able to create that world and whose perspective is disorienting involves making judgments according to cultural designations influenced by the rise of science and the changing rules of evidence.

Two intersecting questions emerge in the middle of the nineteenth century, questions posed by science and law but answered by the mystery novel. These questions both problematize the variability of individual perception: how do we know that the evidence of our senses is true? And how do we know that we correctly interpret that evidence? These questions emerged in part from the basic model of sensing: Locke’s two-step process outlined in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The first step,

¹³⁶ For a more thorough account of nineteenth-century suspense and realism, see Caroline Levine, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt*.

¹³⁷ Thomas, *Detective Fiction*, 9.

¹³⁸ Although he does not discuss the detective, Jonathan Crary makes a related observation when he argues, “Attention thus became an imprecise way of designating the relative capacity of a subject to selectively isolate certain contents of a sensory field at the expense of others in the interests of maintaining an orderly and productive world.” *Suspensions of Perception*, 17.

perception, is the physical act of sensing, the external sensory information that forms the raw material for the second step, reflection, whereby the mind processes this information. These two steps, “when the Soul comes to reflect on, and consider to furnish the Understanding with another set of *Ideas*, which could not be had from things without.”¹³⁹ Thus the sensory dialectic is outlined, where information about the external world must necessarily come first from without and then from within. Locke’s model became a touchstone for debate about the nature of ideas. Locke argues that “Our *Ideas* are *not capable* any of them of *being false*, till the Mind passes some Judgment on them,”¹⁴⁰ suggesting that the essential criteria for truth or falsehood are necessarily intellectual and subjective. In his study of the mind and body, G. H. Lewes describes the mystery of “the strange blending of Thought in the act of Perception.”¹⁴¹ The exact moment when sensory information becomes subjective interpretation remains unknown. It is this gap between objectifiable material evidence and individual inference that looms large for nineteenth-century empiricists, sparking debates about the nature of knowledge.

The mystery novel, I argue, takes up this gap and presents it to the reader as the heart of the mystery. There is sensory evidence, and there are inferences. But the correct inference can be drawn only by the sensing professionals – the detectives, doctors, lawyers, and scientists. Thus the problem of individual perspective is allayed by the idea of expertise. While individual perception certainly varies, these novels suggest the elusive possibility of one right answer, a verifiable solution proposed by the sensory professional, usually available for a price. How that price is determined – that is, why

¹³⁹ Locke, *An Essay*, II, 105.

¹⁴⁰ Locke, *An Essay*, II, 385.

¹⁴¹ Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, II, 249.

this service would be culturally or financially valuable – is rooted in the history of scientific and legal standards of evidence. Who offers these services, I contend, tells us much about middle-class aspiration and the rise of the professional.

The interplay of uncertainty and certainty, desire for order and a persistent return to disorder – create *and* satisfy the conditions for professional guided sensing, which is the counterpart to the feminine sense of middle-class taste I discussed in Chapter One. Rather than being encouraged to elide sense through sentiment, the male professional is encouraged to pay particular attention to his senses. Indeed, the professional's middle-class identity depends on his sensory acuity. He designates the correct interpretation of sensory evidence and, in doing so, instantiates not only his own class identity, but that of others in the novel, as well. The professionals of the mystery novel do not participate in the “professional self-critique” that Susan Colón, among others, has identified in mid-century novels about professionals.¹⁴² Instead, these novels offer us a précis of the cultural conditions for professionalism, a sense of the visceral importance of what is at stake in the creation of professional services. Not only a class designation, the professional claims the right of cultural arbitration through his interpretation of sensory evidence.

The Problem of Individual Perspective

The differing interpretations suggested by a mystery reveal a desire to believe in an understandable world. But that desire is always undermined by the variability of individual perspective, suggesting a frustratingly fractured world view that can never be

¹⁴² Colón, *The Professional Ideal*, 4. Colón notes that she does not include Dickens or Collins in her study for this reason.

shared. The variability of human perception is demonstrated to disorienting effect in *Bleak House*.¹⁴³ The story takes place within a world controlled by sensory information; lists of details, objects, directions, even secret observances shape both setting and narrative. The pile-up of detail almost suggests that there would be no story without these sensory proofs of the material world. But the ways in which sensory information is continually undermined, modified, or contradicted suggest the unreliability of the sensory practices and interpretations used to gather and represent knowledge.

Sensory experience is simultaneously, paradoxically presented as self-evident, and scientific and fiction writers alike appealed to the senses as common ground. This, as I discussed in the introduction, is the paradox upon which guided sensing depends. John Tyndall, speaking to a general audience, uses mundane anecdotes to illustrate his assertion that “The limits of hearing are different in different persons.”¹⁴⁴ For instance, he draws an analogy between a line of boys pushing one another and the transmission of sound through air. He at once asserts the variability of perception and depends upon a shared understanding to make his point. William Carpenter, too, wonders how to pin down definitive descriptions of the senses when they “vary considerably, as regards general acuteness, amongst different individuals; and [their] power may be much increased by practice.”¹⁴⁵ Individual variation forms an ever-shifting foundation, one that forces uncomfortable admissions of sensory relativity. Objective assertions of sensory evidence are simultaneously difficult and fundamentally necessary.

¹⁴³ For a different treatment of the role of evidence in *Bleak House*, see Lawrence Frank, *Victorian Detective Fiction and the Nature of Evidence*.

¹⁴⁴ Tyndall, *Sound*, 100.

¹⁴⁵ Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology*, 269.

The mystery novel demonstrates this cultural concern with the translation of sensory information into objective knowledge. In one of the concluding moments of *Bleak House*, Allan Woodcourt and Esther Summerson visit Chancery only to find the case absorbed by costs. They watch as bags and bundles of papers are carried out, “seeing Jarndyce and Jarndyce everywhere” (899). Yet the case is both everywhere and nowhere, as it is being dissolved in that very act of its visual propagation. This simultaneous movement from sensory information to its dissolution or modification is one that is practiced throughout the novel in the epistemological strategies of the various characters, especially in the recognition and solution of mysteries. J. Hillis Miller has pointed out that, for all its detection, the novel leaves things “almost as dark, as mud-soaked and fog-drenched, as they are in the opening pages.”¹⁴⁶

In particular, the novel tests out whether or not sensing is the same as knowing. Can the characters believe the evidence of their own senses? The characters’ ways of sensing become wishfully indistinguishable from their ways of knowing. For example, when Esther sends Charley for the letter from John Jarndyce that she predicts will be a marriage proposal, she listens as “Charley went up the stairs, and down the stairs, and along the passages—the zig-zag way about the old-fashioned house seemed very long in my listening ears that night—and so came back, along the passages, and down the stairs, and up the stairs” (637). Esther listens so that she can follow Charley’s route through the house in her synaesthetic imagination, a multi-sensory representation that captures the interplay among the senses and how they figure in the mental construction of the material world. In order imaginatively to trace Charley’s route, Esther must have precise spatial

¹⁴⁶ Miller, “Interpretation in *Bleak House*,” 188.

knowledge of the old-fashioned intricacies of Bleak House. Her sense memory of the house is altered, however, by her particular situation; her knowledge is strengthened by her prediction of the letter's content. In this case, Esther's subjective perspective gives her a particular sensory power.

As straightforwardly as we see spatial navigation standing in for intellectual and emotional understanding in that instance, however, metaphors of sensory orientation more often turn out *not* to be reliable indicators of a character's understanding of the obscured events of the plot. Sensing and knowing remain stubbornly, elusively disconnected. When Mrs. Snagsby (erroneously) fears that her meek husband is having an affair, she threatens him, "O you may walk a long while in your secret ways [. . .] but you can't blind ME!" (376). Mrs. Snagsby understands that being blinded may mean being deceived, but she does not realize that the reverse is certainly not true – seeing does not mean understanding. What Mrs. Snagsby sees and how she turns those images into information does not correspond with what the reader knows to be the truth. That she would find the mental move "from suspicion to jealousy" as "natural and short as [the road] from Cook's Court to Chancery Lane" (375) does not suggest that the mental paths of deduction are as well connected as those city streets. In fact, the very use of this analogy suggests that seeing is not necessarily believing.

This uncertainty stems from the variability of individual perception. Mrs. Snagsby may attempt to map her individual convictions onto her sense of urban topography, but the way the sensing subject understands the world may easily become disconnected from that world itself. Mrs. Snagsby's interpretation of her observations becomes wishfully conflated with her familiar, navigable route, which emphasizes the

separation between her subjective understanding of the world and its material actuality. The danger of sensory misinterpretation lies in its initial impression of truthfulness. Mrs. Snagsby has, in effect, blinded herself. The sensory and topographical metaphors overlap to produce the simultaneous feeling of familiarity and disorientation.

The creation of a mystery depends upon this unreliable sensory knowledge, making uncertain our foundational sources of information about the world: the senses. Often, sensory information is not enough to enable the sensing subject to make inferences, as when George says to Esther while in Chancery, ““Could you point a person out for me, I want? I don’t understand these places”” (367). His lack of understanding is not a lack of absolute information. His height allows him to “star[e] over their heads [of the crowd] into the body of the Court” (367). What seems to be familiar, first-hand knowledge of the Court is rendered merely visual fact about its appearance, rather than useable knowledge of its ways. Even while he is able to see clearly enough to make his way in the crowd, he still cannot maneuver effectively. His sensory information cannot be interpreted in a way that allow him to act knowledgeable, a minor example that highlights the continual attempts by the mind to link up the internal, corporeal reaction to the world and that external world itself, to locate the sensing self within an understandable material world.¹⁴⁷

It is possible, then, to feel utterly separated from one’s own sensory information. George may possess intimate sensory information about the Court but still not understand

¹⁴⁷ Alan Rauch suggests that in *Pickwick Papers*, Dickens considers the ways in which novels could be “compilations of knowledge.” I think that in *Bleak House* we see how this compilation is not valued by mass; knowledge is valued on a sliding scale, as in this scene where George’s knowledge visual knowledge and its interpretation both seem ineffectual to him. *Useful Knowledge*, 57.

it. And Esther, more than any other character, dramatizes the continual analysis and construction of sensory input that is an inescapable part of subjectivity. Her writing perspective is primarily visual, but in a way that manages to encompass multiple variations of one visual image, even while insisting on the reliable information imparted by the details she reports. The most inconsistent of these reportages is her appearance and the change wrought by her illness, which is carefully catalogued in mirrored reflections and others' reactions. Esther's beauty is the unsolved mystery of this detective novel, and her narrative is the performance of its ambiguity. By the end, when Woodcourt protests that she is prettier than ever and asks her, "'do you ever look in the glass?'" this question is moot, because the view from her eyes has become layered over with her projection of others' interpretations, including Woodcourt's own (914). The glass holds no empirical truth. When Esther replies, "'You know I do; you see me do it'" (914), it is the most truthful answer she can give; it does not impart any information about what she might perceive from the glass, it merely offers Woodcourt back his own visual evidence of the action of her looking. While the "major" mysteries are cleared up rather quickly—Esther's parentage, Tulkinghorn's killer—the question of Esther's beauty is left open by the last sentence: "they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing—" (914).

The creation of a mystery about Esther's own self-understanding highlights the role individual perspective plays in the creation and solution of the mystery. All knowledge is created from within the individual, corporeal subject position. The sensory information that forms the initial impetus for thought and conception comes very directly from the sensing subject's body. In this way, as Alexander Bain explained it in 1855,

one's own body is constantly being used as a "unit of comparison and standard of reference" in evaluating and comprehending the external world.¹⁴⁸ Each person's understanding of the world is inevitably and fundamentally colored by his or her own sensory experience. The senses provide a standard of reference that is not at all standard. We must trust our senses to relay information about the external world, but science and literature increasingly reveal just how variable that information must be. As a result, perspective becomes an epistemological problem—a figure for individualized world-construction that is expressed as sensory location.

Very often, the most obvious sensory information is useless, and characters make inferences based on their own habit, memory, and bias. Alexander Bain likens the process of sensing to one's idea of home. It is not necessarily a reflection of the house as material fact, but rather an amalgamation of all past and present experiences of that home. Bain explains, "the visible picture of our dwelling is a permanent and habitual experience."¹⁴⁹ By drawing on the intensely personal experience of the home, Bain illustrates that sensory inferences are not necessarily the work of a moment, but rather a multi-layered amalgamation of past and present sensory impressions. Similarly, the individual of the mystery novel is at once confident in her bodily knowledge and also aware of its fundamental uncertainty. The sensing subject is oriented in a disoriented world.

The Problem of Proof

¹⁴⁸ Bain, *The Senses*, 374.

¹⁴⁹ Bain, *The Senses*, 370.

The problem of individual variability compounds a related issue: the problem of proof. How can one know that the conclusions drawn from the evidence of the senses are true? What is the most conclusive kind of proof? And how do we judge the truth value of that proof? By testing out various kinds of proof, Dickens and Collins question the nature of evidence. And, just as importantly, they questioned who was qualified to interpret that evidence. Ronald Thomas identifies *The Moonstone* as a modern novel, “the first novel of any kind to demonstrate in a compelling way the emergence of the modern field of forensic science and its growing importance to a new science called criminology.”¹⁵⁰ Part of *The Moonstone*’s modernity, I argue, is its use of evidentiary debates to define professionalism.

In *The Moonstone*, Collins stages a dramatic opening that asks readers to consider the nature of proof. Collins, a former lawyer, would knowingly have entered into contemporary legal discourse when he began the novel with a preface in the form of a letter from a cousin to his family in which he swears will be “strictly and literally, the truth” (1). He tells the story of the Moonstone’s arrival in British hands, which implicates his cousin in several murders, as well as the theft of the jewel. He concludes, “I have no evidence but moral evidence to bring forward. I have not proof that he killed the two men at the door; I cannot even declare that he killed the third man inside—for I cannot say that my own eyes saw the deed committed” (6). The circumstantial evidence seems sufficient: the writer finds his cousin, blood-stained dagger held aloft, cursed by the dying Indian at his feet. The suggestion, though, that the writer has no “proof” because he did not say his “own eyes saw the deed committed” suggests the conflicted

¹⁵⁰ Thomas, “*The Moonstone*, detective fiction, and forensic science,” 67.

values of different kinds of evidence. The writer is at once certain enough of his cousin's guilt to turn his back, yet asserts that nothing had been said that could justify reporting him (5). The narrative tests out these various kinds of evidence, and, in the end, real proof is determined by the professional consensus in the novel.¹⁵¹

Through the Prologue, the novel weighs in on the role that individual perspective plays in the fraught question of what qualifies as reliable evidence. As both science and law turn their attention to the process of inference, sensory information becomes weighed with mistrust. That mistrust coalesces around the question of whether to trust physical sensation or intellectual opinion, and whether it is even possible to distinguish between the two. If sensory information is so relentlessly subjective, built from the inside out, then how can one approximate objective sensing? Inference is the problematic point of understanding, what G.H. Lewes calls "strange blending," the blurred process of turning identifiable external information into internally persuasive concepts or beliefs.¹⁵² The Prologue's cagey refusal to do more than simply offer the evidence of the senses – in all its damning incompleteness – sets up the stakes of inference.

Ambivalence towards inference affects both legal and scientific standards of evidence. Both fields use evidence as proof of material fact. One of the first attempts to define the standards of evidence was Sir Geoffrey Gilbert's early-eighteenth-century "Best Evidence Rule": "The first therefore and most signal Rule, in Relation to Evidence is this, That a Man must have the utmost Evidence the Nature of the Fact is capable

¹⁵¹ See also Lewis Roberts, "The 'Shivering Sands' of Reality: Narration and Knowledge in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*."

¹⁵² Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, II, 249.

of.”¹⁵³ It is within the phrase “the Nature of the Fact” that the ambiguity lurks. If a fact has an essential nature, what kind of evidence will attest to that nature? Is it pieced together from the surrounding circumstances or revealed in eyewitness testimony? In attempting to tease this out, legal theorists of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries have gone through multiple definitions of “the best evidence.” Far from adhering to an absolute standard, evidence—legal and scientific—is socially and culturally defined by prevailing standards of objectivity, ultimately dictated, at least in part, by our own understanding of human truth and error.

The nineteenth century is the nexus of change in rules of evidence, moving from circumstantial evidence to eyewitness testimony.¹⁵⁴ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, circumstantial evidence was thought to have a reliability, an innate truthfulness, that human bias could not achieve. Trials – much abbreviated affairs – were built around situation and material fact. Alexander Welsh argues that this standard of truth “openly distrust[s] direct testimony, [and] insist[s] on submitting witnesses to the test of corroborating circumstances.”¹⁵⁵ Legal scholars agree that the introduction of consistent legal representation for the defendant significantly changed the interpretation of evidence. After the Prisoner’s Counsel Act of 1836, which legislated the presence of lawyers in the courtroom, direct testimony slowly gained ground. By the twentieth century, testimony was unquestionably the preferred form of evidence, with circumstances seeming more open to bias. Detective fiction was born during this flux in the middle of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵³ Sir Geoffrey Gilbert, *Law of Evidence*, 1769.

¹⁵⁴ See Alexander Welsh, *Strong Representations* and Jan-Melissa Schramm, *Testimony and Advocacy*.

¹⁵⁵ Welsh, *Strong Representations*, 7.

The question of who took the Moonstone is, at base, the question of how to draw the correct inference from the evidence of the senses. In other words, the problem is not that there is insufficient evidence; rather, it is the interpretation of the evidence that proves problematic. For Jeremy Bentham and for J.S. Mill, both progressive legal thinkers, the automatic quality of the sense-inference process is potentially misleading. Mill's 1843 work on evidence, *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, picks up on Bentham's earlier concerns with the automatic nature of inference: "But we may fancy that we see or feel what we in reality infer. A truth, or supposed truth, which is really the result of a very rapid inference, may seem to be apprehended intuitively."¹⁵⁶ To feel that sensory knowledge is innate, to mistake the inference for the sense impression itself, is both an empirical mistake and, according to Bentham and Mill, one of the central difficulties in formulating rules of evidence. They argue that if we trust the evidence of the senses so implicitly, if we equate certain somatic responses with a more trustworthy kind of knowledge of the external world, then we mistake the way that sensory impressions are processed. Mill and Bentham assert that a detail that feels registered in the flesh is more accurate than one considered in the mind. While the sensory impression may have theoretical accuracy, inference – even brief and automatic – is necessary to draw any conclusion from that impression. The physical feeling of certainty is no more trustworthy than the intellectual assertion of a logically deduced fact, and the two components of any piece of evidence are often inextricable.

The question of certainty is raised early and often in *The Moonstone*, as the plot revolves around the disappearance of the stone in circumstances that are at once

¹⁵⁶ Mill, *A System of Logic*, I, 8.

mysterious and quite clear. Rachel Verinder inherits the Moonstone on her birthday. That night, the stone disappears from her bedroom. Rachel believes she knows the solution to the mystery, as she actually has seen her suitor Franklin Blake remove the diamond from her cabinet. She falls prey to what Sean Grass calls “the novel’s great detective and narrative misfortune that its characters trust so entirely to what they see.”¹⁵⁷ Rachel firmly believes in Franklin’s guilt, and, as the lawyer Mr. Bruff points out, “‘we can hardly blame her for believing you to be guilty, on the evidence of her own senses’” (351). It is not just sight that proves problematic in the novel; it is all sensory evidence. What Rachel saw does not provide the solution as it turns out; Godfrey Ablewhite took the diamond from Franklin. The mystery is made even more mysterious as Franklin himself does not know that he ever took the diamond, having been unknowingly dosed with opium at the time.¹⁵⁸ What stands out from these layers of confusion, however, is both Rachel’s own belief in her knowledge and the narrative’s concurrent suggestion that her certainty is equally perplexing. Once the doctor Ezra Jennings proposes an experiment to reconstruct the events of that night in order to prove Franklin’s innocence, Rachel immediately relinquishes her certainty of the night’s proceedings in the face of his superior professional methodology. The evidence of her senses can be correctly interpreted only in a regulated masculine, setting. The problem of proof resides in the need for correct inference, a dependable method of correctly interpreting the evidence of the senses.

¹⁵⁷ Grass, “*The Moonstone*, Narrative Failure, and the Pathology of the Stare,” 97. For more on visual surveillance in *The Moonstone*, see also Brian McCuskey, “The Kitchen Police: Servant Surveillance and Middle-Class Transgression.”

¹⁵⁸ John Sutherland concludes that the “core problem” of *The Moonstone* is not “‘who stole it?’ but rather ‘what is it to steal?’” Introduction to *The Moonstone*, xxix.

Collins draws on a variety of scientific texts in writing *The Moonstone*;¹⁵⁹ chief among his interests was the storage of sensory impressions in the memory. When Ezra Jennings explains the theory behind his proposed experiment, he argues, ““There seems much ground for the belief, that every sensory impression which has once been recognised by the perceptive consciousness, is registered (so to speak) in the brain, and may be reproduced at some subsequent time, although there may be no consciousness of its existence in the mind during the whole intermediate period”” (385-6). Here Collins draws on a contemporary scientific debate about whether sense impressions are recreated by the same nerves or merely recalled from storage in the brain or the sensory organ itself.¹⁶⁰ By hypothesizing that sense impressions are stored in the brain, able to be recalled at a later date, *The Moonstone* becomes a proving ground for the effects of sensory memory on action.

Like *Bleak House*, *The Moonstone* repeatedly presents the solution to the mystery as sensory orientation, the feeling of understanding one’s own sensory evidence. Thus, Rachel’s misleading evidence suggests a false sense of security. Although she does not know the diamond’s actual location, Rachel, unlike most other characters, is never “in the dark” or “lost.” And very often the characters who believe themselves to be so sensorily misled are in possession of evidence that Rachel herself does not have. Both novels posit

¹⁵⁹ Jenny Bourne Taylor points out that Collins used both the mainstream psychology of William Carpenter and the more unconventional mesmeric theories of John Elliotson in his construction of Ezra Jennings’ medical and scientific background. *In the Secret Theatre of Home*, 183.

¹⁶⁰ Carpenter believed that “impressions made upon the organs of sense continue for a time, after the cause of the impression has ceased.” However, G.H. Lewes concluded that the impression itself ends after a time: “At first our actions are guided by sensation; then by the ideal representatives of those sensations” Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology*, 227. Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, 186.

a final, authoritative version of events. But, along the way, they also highlight the inconsistencies and variations among different perspectives, the credence of various kinds of proof. Finalizing one version of events is most often the work of the narrator; in order to do so, he does not always select the most consistent or mutually-agreed upon version of events. Solving the mystery is not democratic, and significantly so. There are red herrings that distract many of the characters; Lady Dedlock is barely involved in Tulkinghorn's death, for instance, and Rosanna Spearman has nothing to do with the disappearance of the Moonstone. Together, the questions of individual variability and inference combine to render a world where solving the mystery does not mean simply assembling evidence.¹⁶¹ Instead, the solution depends on an individual who can turn these problems to his advantage, working from within the sensory confusion to restore order.

The Professional: "A High Tower in His Mind"

The possibility of a professional interpreter of evidence offers an escape from the difficulties of the corporeal perspective. The detectives, lawyers, scientists, and doctors of these novels base their reputations on their professional ability to reorder facts into an understandable whole. Among the onslaught of metaphors of sensory confusion, darkness, and disorientation, the instances of sensory order stand out. When Mr. Bruff consults Mr. Murthwaite as an expert on Indian culture, Mr. Bruff relates, "Lawyer as I was, I began to feel that I might trust Mr. Murthwaite to lead me blindfold through the

¹⁶¹ For an analysis of the role of the reader in Dickens and Collins, see Robert Tracy, "Reading and Misreading *Bleak House*" and Mark M. Hennelly, Jr., "Reading Detection in *The Woman in White*."

last windings of the labyrinth, along which he had guided me thus far.” Mr. Bruff’s new understanding of the facts is translated into a sense of orientation, possible only at the hands of his expert guide. He adds, “I paid him the compliment of telling him this, and found my little concession very graciously received” (286).¹⁶² Mr. Bruff’s expertise must give way to Mr. Murthwaite’s, and the niceties of professional courtesy, however satirically observed, nonetheless reinforce the limits of each man’s authority. Seeking the advice of an expert resolves the metaphors of sensory deprivation that dominate so much of the novels. The professional – the lawyer, the doctor, and the scientist as well as the detective – positions himself as the expert with particular sensory acuity.

The professional in a mystery novel bases his expertise on his ability to interpret correctly the evidence on the senses, thereby solving the mystery. Guided sensing for the professional is a combination of sensory perspicacity with scientific rationale. This process emphasizes repetition in an effort to persuade the reader that the professional’s sensory interpretation is more reliable precisely because it emulates scientific practice, which depends upon close observation and result replication. Guided sensing means forging a repeatable route through the sensing subject’s mind, a way to train oneself in sensing and interpreting. Magali Sargatti Larson has argued that the “main instrument of professional advancement [. . .] is the capacity to claim esoteric and identifiable skills.”¹⁶³ The mystery novel shows how sensory inference becomes an “identifiable skill” for these professionals. Consider, for instance, when Franklin Blake visits Mr. Bruff with the confounding fact of his paint-smeared nightgown. Franklin relates, “I shall best describe

¹⁶² Most critical treatments of darkness in *The Moonstone* see it as an expression of imperialism rather than sensory confusion. See, for instance, Timothy Carens, *Outlandish Subjects in the Victorian Domestic Novel*.

¹⁶³ Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism*, 180.

the effect which my story produced on the mind of Mr. Bruff by relating his proceedings when he had heard it to the end. He ordered lights, and strong tea, to be taken into his study; and he sent a message to the ladies of his family, forbidding them to disturb us on any pretence whatever” (331). In response to the baffling evidence, Mr. Bruff recreates an office from within his home, as closely approximating as he can the conditions of his professional life, the life of an active mind removed from feminine contact. And when their conference is over, Franklin thanks Mr. Bruff for his “inestimable assistance” (336). Within his make-shift office, Mr. Bruff assumes his professional identity, able to influence Franklin to act according to his expert advice.

As it turns out, however, Mr. Bruff interprets the evidence incorrectly. Yet he is still able, as an expert, to influence Franklin and bolster his professional status. This is an example of what John Kucich calls “Collins’s grudging, ambivalent admiration throughout his career for imposing, nonhumanistic professionals.”¹⁶⁴ By using the term “professional” here, I aim not to define various kinds of professionals, or even their relative success in solving evidentiary difficulties. Rather, I hope to show how these novels propose a middle-class masculine identity that depended on a model of sensory acuity. By following this masculine model of guided sensing, the professional could claim his particular brand of expertise, the correct inference from the evidence of the senses. The professional must propose a solution to the evidentiary uncertainty, but, even

¹⁶⁴ Kucich, “Collins and Victorian Masculinity,” 136. Kucich identifies the key issues for professionalism in Collins as humanistic vs. nonhumanistic professions. Kucich argues that Collins used “humanistic professionals to affirm intellect instead of a model of middle-class power that he associated with traditional male gentility. This strategy enabled him to resist the moral conventions of bourgeois culture, and to bolster the virility of the intellectual, often stigmatized in Victorian England as effeminate in relation to his scientific or technocratic brethren.” “Collins and Victorian Masculinity,” 132.

more importantly, he must perform his methodology. The sensory professionals of these novels have cultural value in their bourgeois solidity, their certainty in their own expertise. They ultimately prove their place in the world as much as they prove a particular outcome.

Not only does *Bleak House*'s Mr. Bucket solve the mystery, but in providing his professional interpretation of the sensory evidence, he also provides the possibility of a mystery-solving service, an intellectual labor that can be hired as needed. Mr. Bucket is depicted as having super senses: "he mounts a high tower in his mind, and looks out, far and wide" (798). He is able accurately and quickly to interpret the evidence of his senses, a world view that is unobstructed – in direct contrast to the foggy London of the beginning of the novel. As a professional detective, then, he becomes a referent for the correct interpretation of the evidence at hand, and all the other characters are evaluated through his particular sensory perspective. The professional offers a class-specific solution to the problems of individual perspective. Often, as when Sir Leicester complains "of the obliteration of landmarks, the opening of floodgates, and uprooting of distinctions" and turns to Mr. Bucket (414), or when Franklin consults Ezra Jennings for scientific insight, the resolution to a character's confusion come from a person of a lower rank. Although, as Bain concludes, "We cannot step outside [our] perspectives,"¹⁶⁵ the mid-nineteenth-century mystery novel demonstrates that it is possible to hire a new one.

Rather than eliding his sensory information with sentiment, the male professional is encouraged in these novels to pay particular attention to his sensory information. By correctly deducing the meaning of the evidence of his senses, the professional can

¹⁶⁵ Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect*, 325.

instantiate his middle-class identity with professional expertise. The professional man solves the problem of individual variation by insisting on one accurate version: his own. That is, he must translate sensory evidence into objective information – or at least make it appear that he has done so.

In *Bleak House*, detective Bucket's professional qualifications are rooted in his sensory perspicacity. His famed finger, imbued with powers of detection and elucidation, goes beyond merely touching: "it whispers information [. . .] it enjoins him to secrecy [. . .] and it sharpens his scent." This corporeal synecdoche performs a necessary acrobatics of the senses. Because Mr. Bucket's finger takes on the power of synthetic sensing, it then also assumes the power of detecting, as when it is shaken "before a guilty man, and it charms him to his destruction" (742). By locating, however fantastically, the sensory impression and its interpretation within the compact location of a finger, Dickens constructs the possibility of a professional sensory epistemology that is nonetheless rooted in the subjective sensing body.¹⁶⁶ In order to evade the problems of epistemological uncertainty that can be posed by the corporeal perspective, the professional must prove that his expertise can make sensing approximate objectivity in a way that does not seem possible for the private individual operating in his purely private and personal capacity.

The Moonstone presents an account of several professional men's competition for the role of evidence expert. Mr. Bruff continually shores up his professional perspective, as when he asserts, "I look at this matter from a lawyer's point of view. It's a question of

¹⁶⁶ For discussion on reading the criminal body, see Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* and Ronald Thomas, *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*.

evidence with me” (332). Sgt. Cuff nicely discriminates between different kinds of evidence when he concludes at the end of the novel, “There is here moral, if not legal, evidence, that the murder [of Geoffrey Ablewhite] was committed by the Indians” (447). And Mr. Jennings demonstrates his medical credentials in his narrative of Mr. Candy’s illness by referring to the “plain, undeniably plain, evidence of the pulse” (368). The professional who solves the mystery demonstrates the reconnection between the sense impression and its correct interpretation, creating for the reader a material world that “makes sense.” In a later Collins novel, *The Law and the Lady*, Valeria Woodville becomes an anomaly, a female detective, on the hunt for information to exonerate her husband. One of her first acts of detecting is to seek out “some sort of clue to the mystery [. . .] Some thing, for instance, which my eyes might see, and my hands might touch.”¹⁶⁷ Valeria’s attempts to enter the masculine world of detecting are initiated by a search for a meaningful sense-impression. Whether or not she can find and correctly interpret the necessary information from those sensory clues is in part determined by her status as a woman and as an amateur. She is ultimately denied the moment of solution that Mr. Bucket, Ezra Jennings, and Sergeant Cuff have, in part because of the child she delivers, a very physical reminder of her place as a private lady, not a private eye.

The professional’s attention to sensory perspicacity is thrown into relief by the lack of sensory information exhibited by those who are not eligible for professional status. Esther, for instance, follows the model of feminine guided sensing that I set up in Chapter One: she has trained herself to elide her sensory information with sentiment. And while she does not necessarily pursue middle-class taste, her guided sensing is

¹⁶⁷ Collins, *The Law and the Lady*, 72.

crucial nonetheless to her middle-class status.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, when she acknowledges for the first time her position as John Jarndyce's future wife, neither of them says a word, but she sits by his side and shows him a book-table cover that she had ornamented for him. Her work becomes a material artifact of her class status, itself a combination of feminine effacement and sentiment. As Esther "explained the pattern to him and all the great effects that were to come out by and by," she asks about Woodcourt (850). Esther uses her needlework – evidence of her new position – to attest to her proper sentiments and obscure the less appropriate ones.

Esther's confusion about matters less sentimental and domestic evinces the need for the interpretive abilities of the professional. Esther cannot understand why Lady Dedlock's face should be "like a broken glass" to her, a reflection that is interrupted, a sense-impression from which she is unable to make the proper inference. In contrast, it is in his professional capacity as legal advisor to the Dedlock family that Mr. Tulkinghorn silently observes and swiftly infers Lady Dedlock's secret. And we are told outright that "The velocity and certainty of Mr. Bucket's interpretation [. . .] is little short of miraculous" (794). It is the business of the professional to reconnect the sense impression and its proper interpretation. The mid-century mystery novel demonstrates how lawyers and detectives have made knowledge their profession.

In contrast, reflection – sensory and metaphysical – is often refused or rejected by the private individual who has no hope of middle-class professional status. Rather than business, the private individual has busyness. The importance granted the middle-class

¹⁶⁸ Olga Stuchebukhov finds that Esther exemplifies "the middle-class idea of self-improvement, the ability to overcome vanity, egotism, and passion through reason." "*Bleak House as an Allegory of a Middle-Class Nation*," 147.

male professional's activities throws all others into obscurity, what Myron Magnet has called Dickens' "middle-class philistinism."¹⁶⁹ At the end of *Bleak House*, Phil Squod's life is summed up: "A busy little man he always is, in the polishing at harness-house doors, of stirrup-irons, bits, curb-chains, harness-bosses, and anything in the way of a stable yard that will take a polish: leading a life of friction" (998). This is the fiction of friction: being busy is presented as a way of being content. Busyness is a way of avoiding reflection or inference. And without inference, there can be no professionalism. Phil's perpetual cleaning "blackens himself more and more," a descriptive figure for a worker who is obscured by his labor rather than enlightened by it (387).

Esther, too, attempts to use friction—her endless jangling of keys, keeping of books, and ordering of the household—to prevent her own reflection. She often controls her desiring self with work—merrily (or melancholily) ringing her housekeeping keys and reminding herself, "I should be busy, busy, busy—useful, amiable, serviceable" (640). Being busy is a direct substitute for being happy, as when Esther cannot quite present a happy front and so is instead "as busy as possible" running a house (868). Esther's form of business is among the earliest usages of that word, denoting any kind of activity and engagement. It is not until the eighteenth century that business became public and official practice. By 1884, the *Oxford English Dictionary* registers the phrase "business as usual" as a comment on public affairs. In the moral code of the novel, private busyness is more worthy than public business, at least for women, as clearly illustrated through satiric characters like Mrs. Jellyby or Mrs. Pardiggle, who are not busy enough in their own homes and too busy outside them. For Esther, whose private life of

¹⁶⁹ Magnet, *Dickens and the Social Order*, 7.

friction can only lead to more praise and love, being busy is a way not to reflect. Esther splits and addresses her unruly self in the mirror only when she has not been sufficiently busy (and usually uses that opportunity to urge herself on to greater busyness). This busyness quells her desires, in part because it quells her reflection—both her ambiguous mirrored reflection and her problematic refusal to reflect or interpret her sensory information.

In a novel about information control, it is striking that Esther should be at once so busy and so quick to deny knowledge.¹⁷⁰ In order to maintain what James Buzard has called her “aggressively self-effacing first-person voice,”¹⁷¹ and its accompanying performance of limited understanding, Esther often denies her sensory input. She cannot admit to knowing that Woodcourt admires her, nor can she admit to knowing the state of her own feelings for him, even while her narration stumblingly allows the reader to know both of those things. To do this, she must abjure knowledge herself, a tricky task in writing a first-person narrative. We see this in the paragraphs where she attempts to introduce Woodcourt’s sea journey as a professional endeavor that might allow him to marry upon his return; Esther first begins, “I believe—at least I know he was not rich,” where knowledge of this objective fact is weighed and judged safe. She follows this up by demurring, “Not that I need mention it, for it hardly seems to belong to anything,” disallowing any subjective connection between the state of Woodcourt’s affairs and her own. Esther reinforces her place as a domestic woman in part by denying her ability to reflect.

¹⁷⁰ For more on the public-private distinction between author and character, especially as regards the production of knowledge, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity*, particularly “Characters, Authors, and Readers,” 99-105.

¹⁷¹ Buzard, *Disorienting Fiction*, 109.

The appearance of the professional man influences the form of the narrative, as well. Scholars have pointed to the Prisoner's Counsel Act of 1836, which guaranteed the presence of lawyers in the courtroom, as key in the trend toward omniscient narration in the nineteenth century. Alexander Welsh argues that, in a trial controlled by lawyers, "motive and intent can be wrested away from both defendant and witness and reconstructed from circumstances."¹⁷² I extend this conversation by suggesting that this struggle for control is a new-found belief in professional intervention over the purportedly self-evident proof of circumstance. A lawyer is a professional interpreter of the evidence, someone who constructs a narrative of guilt or innocence out of the evidence of the senses relayed by witnesses; the role of the judge and jury is essentially to choose to believe in this narrative or not.¹⁷³ And, as such, any belief in the possibility of objective justice relies much on the skill of that interpretation.

The narrative relies on the professional to resolve the problems posed by the subjective nature of sensory knowledge. In turn, the professional's position of expertise is bolstered by the changing rules of legal evidence and the increasing specialization of professions. Reliance on the lawyer's interpretative practices in the courtroom combined with changing laws that allowed more people to testify. More perspectives were introduced in any given situation, much as when Franklin Blake marshals the first-hand evidence of almost everyone involved in the disappearance of the Moonstone (with the

¹⁷² Welsh, *Strong Representations*, 39.

¹⁷³ We see this kind of thinking relayed in an account of a jury trial from 1858. The *Times* records the charge to the jury: "It was not the duty of a jury to speculate upon motives which might lead to a crime, but it was their duty to look at the facts proved in the case, and if they [. . .] came to the conclusion that it was committed by the prisoner, they had nothing to do with the question of motive." The interpretation is not the job of the jury, it is the job of the lawyers who constructs the narratives of guilt and innocence. The lawyer is credited with the "facts proved in the case." *The Times*, July 24, 1858.

notable exception, of course, of Rachel Verinder, whose sensory evidence is both crucial and crucially misleading). As each account is introduced, we also receive periodic interpretations—from Sgt. Cuff, from Mr. Bruff, from Mr. Jennings—utilizing the new evidence after it has been introduced by the witness. The emphasis on first-hand information follows the courtroom model, as when Miss Clack complains that she has been instructed to keep her narrative “strictly within the limits of [her] own personal experience” (239) or when Franklin Blake refers to the “actual witnesses” (238). This accords with the process Jonathan Grossman has identified, wherein the novel becomes “a reinvented criminal trial” and “supplanted the spectacle of the gallows as the culmination of justice.”¹⁷⁴ Grossman does not note, however, the crucial role of the expert. The job of the witness is merely to testify to the evidence of the senses; the expert gives it meaning.

The observer is meant to be a conduit of sensory information; whatever he has seen, heard, or felt should be recorded as objectively as possible. The efforts of, say, Miss Clack or Gabriel Betteredge to infer meaning from these observations end inevitably in exposing the observer’s own biases or mere incompetence. Betteredge concludes his narrative by saying, “I am acting under orders, and that those orders have been given to me (as I understand) in the interests of truth. I am forbidden to tell more in this narrative than I knew myself at the time [. . .] In this matter of the Moonstone the plan is, not to present reports, but to produce witnesses” (189-90). Correctly interpreting the evidence that these witnesses present is the job of the professional, and each professional shores up his expertise by defining its particular boundaries, by marking out

¹⁷⁴ Grossman, *The Art of Alibi*, 2.

his specialization. Mr. Jennings' triumphant moment as an experimental scientist arrives when, in the excitement of the opium-induced recreation, "the Law (as represented by Mr. Bruff's papers) [was] lying unheeded on the floor. Mr. Bruff himself was looking eagerly through a crevice left in the imperfectly-drawn curtains of the bed. And Betteredge, oblivious of all respect for social distinctions, was peeping over Mr. Bruff's shoulder" (419). Mr. Jennings's expertise is most distinctly defined against the blurring of others' roles. They most succinctly express their belief in his expertise by relinquishing their own social delineations.

The mystery novel both creates the need for the professional and offers its fulfillment – much as it creates the chaos of mystery and offers resolution within one compelling narrative.¹⁷⁵ The Victorian professional's increasingly specialized training uniquely equips him to perform a job that has only recently become necessary. We have seen how, in *Bleak House*, Mr. Bucket offers his interpretive services to the upper-class characters who are not able correctly to interpret the evidence of their own senses. It is not merely the detective, however, who is able to afford qualified reassurance about the sensory deprivation of modern mysteries. The characters in *The Moonstone* offer an array of professional help, and Franklin Blake provides hope to the befuddled upper classes in employing all of the other characters' services. Here we see what Jeremy Bentham outlined as the ideal courtroom scenario: a series of sense-impressions gathered together and re-presented for judgment by the professional – and by the reader. Franklin matures over the course of the novel not by developing his own profession but by inheriting money and using his status to draw together a coterie of witnesses and the

¹⁷⁵ D. A. Miller discusses the resolution of sensation and its political significance in *The Novel and the Police*.

experts who can interpret their testimony. He then records this process as a kind of how-to manual for surviving in a changing world of foreign influence, advanced science, and legal entanglement. This process is not just a representation of professional interpretation in action, but also the creation of the need for these professional services and their acquisition. Franklin Blake's position as a gentleman is defined by his social and financial ability to seek out these expert interpreters and purchase their intellectual labor. And the availability of that intellectual labor is a testament to the creation of a newly-expanded professional class.

The Chain of Evidence

When the professional offers a solution to the mystery that prizes his interpretation above all others, he at once addresses and succumbs to the problems of variation and inference. If his solution is correct, it solves these problems. But when faced with a variety of solutions, the novel asks us how we might evaluate the professional's worth. The answer, I contend, is in the chain of evidence. Drawing on contemporary interest in what Jonathan Crary has called the "instrumentalizing of human vision,"¹⁷⁶ and striving for something approximating the objectivity of mechanism, the chain of evidence can be located within the mental processes of the professional. Reified, the professional's sense impressions, deductions, and conclusions can be offered for hire. It is an example of what Jennifer Ruth has identified as a crucial collaboration for the professional: "mental capital meets industrial labor."¹⁷⁷ The metaphor of the chain of

¹⁷⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Ruth identifies "industrial labor" for David Copperfield as "a mechanical submission to abstract rather than subjective time." Ruth, *Novel Professions*, 58.

evidence suggests that intellectual labor can compete in an industrial economy and bolster middle-class identity.

The chain of evidence is part of the professional's task of defining their services as specialized and available. Intellectual labor posed a problem in a world that increasingly valued the mechanical, the professional, and the scientific over the qualified and the indefinite. W. J. Reader has argued that "the professions as we know them are very much a Victorian creation, brought into being to serve the needs of an industrial society."¹⁷⁸ The 1850s and 1860s in particular were "a transitional period for all the professions,"¹⁷⁹ as they attempted to define their own status as salary- and wage-earners who were neither upper- nor working-class. Dickens himself joined the fight for copyright and patent legislation.¹⁸⁰ The question of professionalism centered on a variety of complex and intermingling questions that went beyond service and payment and encompassed ownership of services rendered and specializations. John M. Picker has noted, "Those aspiring to respectability needed to fight aggressively to mark their territory as professionals, to define themselves as industrious intellectuals who ranked above manual laborers" (54).

The metaphor of the chain of evidence relies on its interconnectedness and linear progress, crucial figures for how the mind—especially the professional mind—works. The professional must prove he can reliably interpret evidence and thereby construct an

¹⁷⁸ Reader, *Professional Men*, 2.

¹⁷⁹ Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*, 53.

¹⁸⁰ Pettitt quotes Thomas Hood on the complex interaction between authors and the government on the thorny issues of professionalization: "the legislature [. . .] will have *indirectly* to determine whether literary men belong to the privileged class, - the higher, lower, or middle class, - to the working class, - productive or unproductive class, - or, in short, to any class at all." *Patent Inventions*, 80.

understandable world. Alexander Bain emphasized the importance of repetition in moving from sensing to cognition: “repetition is necessary to render coherent in the mind a train or aggregate of images [. . .] with a sufficient degree of force to make one suggest the others at an after period.”¹⁸¹ Once the “train” clears the “way,” that path is then more easily available to successive thought processes that work in a similar way. This suggests that one can “train” one’s thoughts in order to produce the most efficient methods and results. And, calling upon the image of the chain, this is exactly what the professional does. The fictional professional draws on metaphorical solidity in order to prove the trustworthiness of his conclusions, or the reliability of his wares.

The professional draws upon the standard for scientific knowledge production in proving his expertise. For instance, in *The Moonstone*, Mr. Bruff begins his narrative, a narrative noticeably concerned with establishing his professional credentials, by describing his thought process as “Tracing my way back along the chain of events, from one end to the other” (264). By representing his perspective as links in an interconnected chain, Mr. Bruff counters the uncertainties of subjective sensing with a universalizing, progressive process. In this same section, Mr. Bruff also asserts, “I am in a position to throw the necessary light on certain points of interest which have thus far been left in the dark” (262). In determining his professional perspective, Mr. Bruff’s narrative position becomes one of particular sensory powers, as he is able to bring darkened events to light, to make them out to be as clear, understandable, and as easily navigable as links on a chain.

¹⁸¹ Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect*, 318.

The metaphorical potency of the chain perhaps derives from its earlier use as the “chain of circumstances.”¹⁸² Jeremy Bentham made an influential case against circumstantial evidence by dismantling the persuasive language of the chain of circumstances. Rather than capitalizing on the previously popular image of a chain of circumstances that tightens around the truth, Bentham’s chain is pointedly weak at each link, every link being an instance of inference. Bentham called instead for a plethora of direct evidence so that the court could most closely approximate the series of sense impressions that he considered to be “the nature of the fact,” or the truth of the crime. Later in the century, J.F. Stephen wrote in *A Digest of the Law of Evidence* that evidence “must consist of an assertion by the person who gives it that he directly perceived the fact of the existence of which he testifies.”¹⁸³ Circumstantial evidence in doubt, the professional resituates the strength of the chain in his own deductive powers. He shows how the professional mind can reliably move from what William Carpenter differentiated the “objective senses,” those caused by a “real material object,” from the “subjective senses,” or internal response.¹⁸⁴

Non-professionals frequently misuse the chain metaphor. Franklin Blake, for instance, says that Rachel has “overlooked something in the chain of evidence,” meaning that Rachel’s private, feminine thought process cannot move from link to link (342).¹⁸⁵ Perhaps Guppy’s failure in *Bleak House* to change his professional status is due to his

¹⁸² W. David Shaw sees the chain metaphor operating as a “model of repressed knowledge” in *Bleak House*, “a slowly collapsing chain of carefully separated events,” rather than a construct of professional expertise. *Victorians and Mystery*, 25.

¹⁸³ Stephen, *A Digest of the Law of Evidence*, 6.

¹⁸⁴ Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology*, 229.

¹⁸⁵ For a different treatment of gender and detection in *The Moonstone*, see Tamar Heller, “Blank Spaces: Ideological Tensions and the Detective Work of *The Moonstone*.”

reliance on the old form of the “chain of circumstances,” when he presents his gathered evidence to Lady Dedlock. Motivated by his aspirational fervor, Guppy never learns to guide his sensory acuity in a way that instantiates his desired class identity. His intellectual labor is admirable, but he remains unprofessionalized, stuck with his too-loud vests and ridiculous diction. He suggests that all he has done is “put together” the “chain of circumstances,” not giving himself credit for his actual intellectual product, a chain of evidence linking Lady Dedlock to Esther (431). In contrast, the lawyer Mr. Bruff speaks of the “chain of evidence” and works against the competing image of the “labyrinth” or the “blindfold,” both figures of spatial disorientation that offer alternate, negative images of ignorance or confusion (286). In this way, the professional’s expertise, already a property for hire, becomes reified, an object, a chain that is unified and, at least in the idealized world of the mystery novel, infallible. It offers solidity to counteract the sensory confusion of the labyrinth or the blindfold and is a concrete image to replace the more insubstantial and subjective mental processes the professional actually offers. The intellect may be understood as property while the mental process becomes a tightly-linked chain.

The chain of evidence is not simply a figure in these two novels; it is central to mystery fiction more generally. We see the professionalizing dynamics of guided sensing working successfully for Robert Audley in a contemporary sensation novel, *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1861-2). Audley transforms himself from a smoker, French novel reader, and non-practicing barrister to a “rising man upon the home circuit” (435). He effects this transformation by learning to pay attention to the evidence, as when he initially draws up a record of the facts and remarks to himself, “I begin to think that I

ought to have pursued my profession” (104). He finds himself almost too adept at making correct inferences, arriving at a solution that saddens his uncle, asking with anguish, “must I go on adding fresh links to that fatal chain until the last rivet drops into its place and the circle is complete?” (159) Robert Audley’s professionalization occurs in direct correlation with his growing “chain of evidence [. . .] slowly forged in the only criminal case in which he was ever to be concerned” (54-5).

Making reference to an object that is both common and culturally charged gives the specialist claim to a body of knowledge that is understandable and credible. The professional marks out his area of expertise by seeming to quantify his mental process. Drawing on the strength of what Ronald Thomas has termed the “endangered authority of the culture at large,” the professional insists on his individual autonomy, his essential difference from women and non-professional men.¹⁸⁶ That the professional would particularize his knowledge makes sense in a period when, as Hermann Von Helmholtz claimed in 1862, “every student is forced to choose a narrower and narrower field” (78). The specialist is increasingly valued over the generalist. Indeed, Alan Rauch has remarked that by mid-century, the increase in specialized knowledge hampered the belief in an all-encompassing body of work like the encyclopedia.¹⁸⁷

This model of sensory professionalism, then, depends on the appearance of expertise and objectivity. The desire to present a series of events or thoughts that are as familiarly solid and connected as a chain suggests a desire for an external referent of objectivity, one that backs up the specialist’s claims with the everyday, rendering his

¹⁸⁶ Thomas, *Detective Fiction*, 10.

¹⁸⁷ Rauch, *Useful Knowledge*, 39.

thought process both reliable and accessible.¹⁸⁸ This use of the mechanical external raises the question of what Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have identified as a movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century toward “mechanical objectivity,” which “attempts to eliminate the mediating presence of the observer.”¹⁸⁹ Here we have a mistrust of both the sense-impression and its inference, as well as a belief in the mechanical that goes beyond using the mechanical as a referent for sensory reliability. The ways in which the sensing professional draws on images of mechanistic thinking are one step in this direction, I believe—an attempt to wrestle with the problems of individual sensing perspective. The chain of evidence produces an epistemology that is rooted in subjectivity and simultaneously draws on the market forces of the mid-nineteenth century in its bid for trained objectivity.

In proving his expertise and objectivity, the sensing professional becomes a cultural arbiter. The solution to the mystery does not just restore order; it creates new order. As Franco Moretti puts it, “everything that is *repeatable* and *obvious* ceases to be criminal and is, therefore, unworthy of ‘investigation.’”¹⁹⁰ We see this most vividly at work when Mr. Bucket comments to Mrs. Rouncewell about George, “he’s a fine-made man, and you’re a fine-made old lady, and you’re a mother and son, the pair of you, as might be showed for models in a caravan” (795). Given the contemporary fascination

¹⁸⁸ We can see this external referent working in other Dickens fiction, too. In *Great Expectations*, for instance, Pip views the span of time as a chain. In doing so, he draws on the same images of inexorability and interconnectedness that Franklin Blake does in *The Moonstone* when he refers to the chain of evidence. Pip exhorts the reader to think of the “long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day” (72).

¹⁸⁹ Daston and Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” 82-3.

¹⁹⁰ Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*, 135, his emphasis. Moretti calls its uniqueness and mystery the “cultural quality” of the crime; it is what motivates the detective to flush out the criminal.

with exhibitions, this is an intriguing choice of similes. It suggests that the public at large would have much to learn from the display of this mother and son – that even their fictional depiction has a lesson to impart for the reader. Mr. Bucket turns his signature assertion to Esther when he says, “You’re a pattern, you know, that’s what you are [. . .] you’re a pattern” (834). The repetition of Mr. Bucket’s affirmations turns this sentence into a pattern itself, a mimetic replication of the self-perpetuating cycle: the desire to know, the masking of that desire with the assertion of extant knowledge, and the new knowledge that often comes from those assertions. In each case, he determines the correct interpretation of the evidence at hand and pronounces what the reader has already been lead to expect. This is an act of confirmation of the moral standards already implied, the cultural arbitration of what interpretations can and should be repeated and what stands alone.

By deeming George and Mrs. Rouncewell “models” or Esther a “pattern,” Mr. Bucket assures them of their place in orderly society. These comments come after George has been exonerated and reunited with his mother and when Esther is helping Mr. Bucket find her mother. Mr. Bucket, as the detective, decides who blends into the existing society and who does not belong. Clare Pettitt identifies the other side of this cultural anxiety when she comments, “in a culture in which it is increasingly difficult to detect the difference between the copy and the original, the ability to discriminate is paramount, and ideologically bound.”¹⁹¹ Hortense is branded a criminal by her uniqueness and is ejected from this society – an example of what Tim Dolin has called

¹⁹¹ Pettitt, *Patent Inventions*, 108. See also Lillian Nayder’s work on Dickens’ and Collins’ collaboration and its challenges to the single-author model of professional creativity: *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Victorian Authorship*.

the “right and might” of the normative world view in legal fiction.¹⁹² Even before she commits a crime, she stands out as a foreigner, for having a strangely genteel air for a servant, for being an angry, vengeful woman in a world of passive, self-abnegating women.

By ejecting Hortense from the world of the novel, Mr. Bucket determines what constitutes order and instantiates his own middle-class professionalism. He offers his reified mental process, the chain of evidence, and, in doing so, sells his assurance of concrete specificity to counteract the proliferating forms of evidence. Both *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone* present models of masculine guided sensing that prescribe a way of instantiating professionalism. Learning to correctly interpret the evidence of the senses means showing the world how to sense, how to single out a particular, correct way of interpreting the world. The stakes for guided sensing are high – both for readers aspiring to middle-class status and for a world that desires that kind of definition.

¹⁹² Dolin, *Fiction and the Law*, 22.

III.

High Fidelity, High Realism: The Value of Being Real in *The Eustace Diamonds*

Class aspiration and replicable sensation are at the crux of the crisis of fidelity in Anthony Trollope's 1871 novel *The Eustace Diamonds*. Lizzie Eustace's failure to secure her upward mobility through repeated pledges of romantic faith undercuts the value of directed sensory experience. The evocation and revocation of pledges of fidelity test the limits of repeatable sensing. The novel's pledges of romantic fidelity instigate the desire for the perfect transcription of sound fidelity. No record – story or phonograph – offers a perfect copy, the ability to replicate an event over and over again so as to provide assurance of its occurrence against the fleetingness of the sense impression. Fidelity's ephemerality testifies to the value of being real.

The Eustace Diamonds centers on the beautiful conniver Lizzie Eustace and her desire to retain the diamonds that, the novel implies, rightfully belong to her late husband's family, the Eustaces. Although she rightfully has worn the jewels during her brief marriage, the legal and moral authorities of the book demand that she return the diamonds to the Eustaces' trust. Lizzie's foil is the true-hearted governess Lucy Morris, affianced lover of Frank Greystock, Lizzie's cousin and sometime paramour. Lizzie's fight for the diamonds becomes embroiled in the other gossip-worthy events of her life, including her search for a second husband and her attempts to shore up her uncertain place in society. Lizzie's lies about the diamonds prove to have greater staying power than the stones themselves and cause her trouble in negotiating her relationships with suitors, friends, relatives, and even the law. Chief among these troubles is the pressure

on Lizzie to *tell the truth* about her knowledge of the diamonds (which she rarely does), and, in turn, Lizzie's own pressure on others to *be true to her* in her time of trouble.

The differences between these two kinds of truth are reflected in their grammatical construction. Telling the truth suggests a single form of truth that is either expressed or not; it is a standard against which one's speech can be assessed and found sufficient or lacking. To be true to another, though, requires a preposition, a transfer of truth from one to another. There is a change from a standard that is singular to a standard that inheres in duality. The told truth is judged in utterance only, while truth to another is judged beyond the utterance, in the iterations that follow. This is the difference between truth and fidelity, truth in its own right and truth to another. The novel is filled with pledges of fidelity, and fiction, especially realist fiction, concerns itself with how to make those speeches sound real. What it means to sound true and what it means to be true, then, are unexpectedly intertwined.

Thomas Edison used the term "fidelity" as measure of the quality of a sound's transcription from original utterance, a measure of the quality of the grooves on tinfoil. Jonathan Sterne has argued that the term fidelity did not grow organically out of innovations in sound quality. Edison's use of it in 1878 is evidence of the emergence of a way of listening to, and commenting on, sound and sound mediation.¹⁹³ Edison did not invent a new meaning for the term fidelity when he used it in 1878. Rather, he drew on a cultural value already in place, one that, for instance Ruskin used when discussing "fidelity to nature." I argue that we see fidelity being given nuanced treatment as both cultural value and realist practice in *The Eustace Diamonds*. Like Ayelet Ben-Yishai, I

¹⁹³ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 222.

examine this novel for formal reasons; she argues, “*The Eustace Diamonds* shows how the highly conventional form of Trollope’s realist narration exposes the premises of its own epistemological conventions.”¹⁹⁴ I situate Trollope’s “highly conventional form” within a matrix of cultural and literary values. Understanding the realist novel’s dependence on romantic fidelity, the premium placed on pledges of troth, means understanding the desire for sound fidelity, a sound so pure it can be mistaken for an original. Both are rooted in the desire for a record, for sound made material.

Phonography and realist fiction are both motivated by the desire for a record of life’s sounds and sights. Several scholars have noted that Edison imagined the phonograph’s possible uses could include business correspondence, courtroom transcription, and recordings of famous peoples’ voices – hence the use of the word “record” for the cylinder or disc that played back voices.¹⁹⁵ The number of “written explanations” demanded, produced, and quoted in *The Eustace Diamonds* is noteworthy.¹⁹⁶ Words, this suggests, are ephemeral and must be captured. This attempt at capture adds another layer to the already-complex practice of writing a novel that sounds like real life. *The Eustace Diamonds* evinces a desire for written record, a preoccupation with transcription.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Ben-Yishai, “The Fact of a Rumor,” 88.

¹⁹⁵ John Picker writes about the recordings Tennyson made in *Victorian Soundscapes*. Jonathan Sterne argues in *The Audible Past* that the urge for a permanent aural record came from a wider cultural urge for preservation, such as the preservation of food through canning.

¹⁹⁶ *The Eustace Diamonds*, 549.

¹⁹⁷ Interest in sound transcription pre-existed both this novel and the phonograph. For example, stenography was an attempt to capture sound in writing; one form, invented in 1837, was called phonography. Ivan Kreilkamp categorizes the Victorians as “obsessed with print’s relationship to voice and with the effects of transcribing or writing voice.”¹⁹⁷

The possibilities and problems of considering fiction as a kind of transcription raise several questions. What is the relationship of copy to original in a novel overtaken by repetition – of proposals, of stories, of lies? Is one version more valuable or trustworthy than another? What does the “real” part of “realism” mean in this context? That is, can there be versions of reality that are just as real as their originals? *The Eustace Diamonds* tackles what Michael McKeon has termed “questions of truth”: “What kind of authority or evidence is required of narrative to permit it to signify truth to its readers?”¹⁹⁸ Truth, in this instance, is the register of truth that exists in sound and its transcription. Lizzie’s attempts to instantiate her social status rest on her own pledges of truth about the diamonds and her attempts to evoke pledges of fidelity from men. I argue that this novel interrogates guided sensing for two reasons. It investigates the sensory, repetitive, and self-controlled aspects of a thoroughly bourgeois value, fidelity. It is also a self-consciously high-realist novel, and realism interrogates the very thing that guided sensing offers: seeming like the real thing.

Guided sensing depends upon a narrative of individualism that is essential to class aspiration, but ultimately realism cannot support this ethos of self-improvement. Realism is characterized at once by its devotion to the class status to which guided sensing aspires – what George Levine has called the “‘middling’ condition”¹⁹⁹ – and by the very aspects of middle-class life that foreclose guided sensing. Levine claims, “The primary conventions of realism are its deflation of ambition and passion, its antiheroism, its

See Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines*. Kreilkamp, *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller*, 30.

¹⁹⁸ McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, 20.

¹⁹⁹ Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, 5.

tendency to see all people and things within large containing social organizations.”²⁰⁰

Guided sensing, I contend, occupies what Tom Lloyd has called the “radical uncertainty at the heart of realism, as it continually questions itself in the process of creating relative order out of a world in social and cultural flux.”²⁰¹ Guided sensing is always asking what it means to be real.

The Eustace Diamonds encompasses these conflicting aims: Lizzie’s desire for self-fashioning, the literary and cultural values of fidelity, and the antiheroism of realism. The novel must consider guided sensing and must find it lacking, for reasons formal, imaginative, and cultural. When Lizzie tries to assure her suitor Lord Fawn that the diamonds are unquestionably hers, she tells him, “They are my own – altogether my own. Sir Florian gave them to me. When he put them into my hands, he said that they were to be my own for ever and ever” (129). Her repetition of the word “own” suggests that, of course, the opposite is true – they are not her own. It also highlights the absurdity of Lizzie’s latest recounting of her ownership; what husband would give his new wife a gift of diamonds and assure her absolutely of her ownership “for ever and ever”? But Lizzie tells his story not because it is true or even believable, but to secure Lord Fawn’s pledge of fidelity. In doing so, she hopes to make herself into a woman who can marry and secure her social standing. But she fails not because she is unworthy of Lord Fawn (who is not worth much), but because she cannot train herself into telling a replicable story that is – or at least sounds – real.

Trollope was a self-conscious practitioner of fictional realism, a term that for him meant the replication of lived sensory experience. He conceived of the realist author’s

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁰¹ Lloyd, *Crises of Realism*, 11-2.

goal as making “his readers so intimately acquainted with his characters that the creations of his brain should be to them speaking, moving, living human creatures.”²⁰² He wanted the sensory world of the novel to look and sound enough like the lived world to elicit a response of recognition. I agree with Harry Shaw’s attack on the premise that “realism promises to give us ‘direct’ and unproblematic access to the world, pretending that what is really a *version* of the world is in fact natural, inevitable, objective, and immediately available for our inspection.”²⁰³ But I think that it is important, too, to examine the ways in which that availability is an important part of realism’s premise – as is its inevitable failure. This chapter suggests that fidelity is important as a realist practice and as a cultural value precisely because of the ways that it is exposed as a convention.

The realist novel’s interest in replicating lived sensory experience was part of the bigger question of what signified a realistic representation. Nineteenth-century discussion of realism often debated the merits of realism vs. “copyism,” a question also taken up by technologies of sensory replication like the photograph or phonograph. The difference of one sensory experience, the copy, from another, the original, became a measure of that technology’s success. In an article about the relatively new invention of photography, *The Edinburgh Review* refers to, “the art of Photography, by which we obtain perfect representations of all objects.”²⁰⁴ More than thirty-five years later, a report on a phonograph exhibit stressed similar qualities: “Readings from Emerson, Shakespeare, and other writers were repeated with echo-like exactness, and distinctly heard all over the

²⁰² Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 149.

²⁰³ Shaw, *Narrating Reality*, 38.

²⁰⁴ *The Edinburgh Review* [January 1843], in *Photography in Print*, 52.

theatre.”²⁰⁵ Discussions of realism often focused on the truth of the writing, meaning its truth to life, its ability to make the copy look and sound like the original – a topic of particular interest for those interested in trainable, replicable perception.

The pledges of romantic fidelity in the novel investigate the way the spoken word instigates the desire for faithful transcription of sound to record, the seemingly traceless transcription of perfect fidelity. Doing so initiates, in turn, an attempt to separate original and copy in hope of a larger, original truth beyond language. The novel suggests, however, that this desire is ephemeral, tempting, and wholly beyond the capabilities of literature or technology. The attempt to erase mediation inheres in very process of realistic representation. Ultimately, the novel suggests, fidelity is meaningful for realism as it defines the sound of real life, which does not inhere in transcription. Rather than encoding its own failure to capture reality, then, realism strives for a standard that exists purely within the world of the novel, a fidelity that hearkens back to no original.

For a novel obsessed with recording truth and fidelity, *The Eustace Diamonds* is remarkably full of instances of falsehood and broken faith. Lizzie lies under oath, but is not proven guilty of perjury. Multiple men make and break multiple pledges of faith. Through it all, Lizzie proliferates varying versions of the truth and asks for seemingly endless reiterations of faith. In the end, she accepts a pledge of faith from the only person more false than she. When fidelity fails, when the pledge cannot be reiterated and the marks of realism undercut its goals, we begin to really understand what is at stake. The fleeting sense impression is valued far more than its marked transcription, exposing a

²⁰⁵ *Illustrated London News*. 5 April 1879.

paradox at the heart of guided sensing. It is in the failure of the replication that its value lies.

The Value of a Word

Trollope reverses the usual priority for realist fiction of description over dialogue, eye over ear. Compared to, say, Dickens' lists of objects or Eliot's paragraphs of detailed perspective, *The Eustace Diamonds* is a remarkably spare novel of sounds and speech. Its fundamental concerns with truth are concerns with *telling* the truth, with producing a story that accurately represents an event or fact. Critics, however, have considered the visual description a measure of mid-century realistic effect. Nancy Armstrong, for instance, refers to the "visual description we associate with literary realism."²⁰⁶ *The Eustace Diamonds* does not consistently adhere to this standard of photo-realism, however. Although Trollope is identified as an author in the high realist tradition, the novel contains very little visual description; the longest run we get comes at the beginning, when the narrator dedicates four chapters to introducing the key characters. At the end of these chapters, the narrator justifies them as a lengthier sort of *dramatis personae*, suggesting that visual description acts primarily as a set-up for realistic dialogue. The narrator comments that he "has been driven to expend his first four chapters in the mere task of introducing his characters" (74). The meat of the high realist novel – the physical description of characters and the details of their situations – is reduced to a "mere task," a nod to the visual particulars before we can get to what, this aside implies, is the real business of the novel: what these characters say to one another.

²⁰⁶ Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, 3.

Through the proliferation of different versions of events, *The Eustace Diamonds* questions the value of the Victorian desire to create – and recreate – speech at all in a world where talk is abundant and often meaningless. The stories that circulate about the diamonds exhibit amazing changeability, an anti-realist standard of story-telling, where there is no established original. They circulate within a novel, however, that remains committed to bourgeois, high-realist values – a juxtaposition we see most clearly in the threats to Lizzie that she has committed perjury, an attempt to give legal and social consequence to inventing “any form of words she pleased” (80). The perjury plot asks the reader to question what it means to have words proliferate, what the value is of one’s word – does it float, an ephemeral original, or does it have continued value in reiteration? Trollope considers these questions by playing with repetitions of certain words and stories, considering what value they retain, lose, or gain when circulated, sometimes too freely, other times, not freely enough.

We hear perhaps the most about the titular diamonds. Their contested ownership, disappearance, and investigation drive the novel’s plot. The diamonds become ever more a topic of conversation as the stones themselves fade as a material presence in the novel. We get a few early glimpses of the diamonds, as when they “outshine all other jewellery in the room,” but as their ownership becomes more contentious, their material form shifts (195). When the Eustace family lawyer attempts to seize the diamonds from Lizzie, they become metonymically transformed into their container, an iron box: Lizzie “hated the box, and yet she must cling to it now. She was thoroughly ashamed of the box, and yet she must seem to take a pride in it. She was horribly afraid of the box, and yet she must keep it in her own very bedroom” (223). Not long after this scene, the box itself is stolen

– but proves to be empty. Even though Lizzie secretly retains possession of the diamonds, the theft of the box equals, in public at least, the theft of the diamonds. While, as William Cohen has noted, “the box itself becomes a thing of value,”²⁰⁷ that value inheres not in its monetary or exchange value, but in its conversational circulation. The eventual, actual theft of the diamonds matters little, for at this point they have no monetary value (for Lizzie could not sell them) or social caché (she could not wear them), and by the end of the novel, they cease to exist as “the Eustace diamonds” since they are disassembled and recut, made into a different set of material objects altogether. Lizzie’s ownership of the diamonds, however, remains a story to be told, retold, circulated, altered, and debated. The story is markedly separate from the material reality of the diamonds themselves.

The novel’s concerns with truth revolve around the use of language, particularly the word “truth” and a related word, meant to indicate absolute truthfulness, “gentleman.” These words have original, discrete meanings, but they accrue additional meaning through their proliferation in the novel – a meaning of shade and utterance, but also inextricably tied to the original meaning. When the governess Lucy Morris dares to respond indignantly to her employer’s son’s imputations against Frank Greystock, her “terrible words” are the following: “Mr. Greystock is a gentleman. If you say that he is not a gentleman, it is not true.” This causes “great commotion” for Lucy, her interlocutor Lord Fawn, and Lord Fawn’s mother and sisters, all of whom are overcome with

²⁰⁷ Cohen, “Trollope’s Trollop,” 237. Cohen configures a different relationship between the diamonds, property, and value: “In using the diamonds to render explicit the putative differences between male and female property, the novel relies on a distinction between two conflicting accounts of their legal status: one, which takes them to have a price determined in the marketplace, and the other, which values them according to absolute, immutable standards” (236).

heightened senses of the wrongdoing committed by Lucy's implication that Lord Fawn may have told an "untruth." Lord Fawn "rose from his seat and slowly left the room. Augusta followed him with both her arms stretched out. Lady Fawn covered her face with her hands, and even Amelia was dismayed" (283). Lucy and Lord Fawn must hash this out through several stilted conversations. The word "lie," however, does not appear in any of their conversations, only the negatives of truth. Lucy insists to Lord Fawn's sisters, "It was untrue" (283), and again, later, when Lucy attempts to reconcile with Lord Fawn, he reaffirms that Frank's conduct was "ungentlemanlike" and she helplessly reiterates, "It isn't true!" (286). All of Fawn Court reacts so dramatically to the invocation of these particular words not necessarily because of their original meaning, but because of what they have come to mean in the social context, in their iteration, suppression, or proliferation.

Trollope's particular preoccupation with the word "gentleman" stems not just from his ardent belief that it is a meaningful, if complex, ideal, nor from his nostalgia for a time when that ideal was lived out, although certainly these play a part. What *The Eustace Diamonds*, among other Trollope novels, captures is the way this word is bandied about as if it has at once a secure, universal meaning and as if it means nothing at all. Words gain and lose meaning in their use, in the repetition of their sounds. What makes the words "gentleman" and "truth" (and the unsaid specter of the word "lie") more significant than they would be in other contexts is what Juliet McMaster calls "the ritual and taboos" that surround those words.²⁰⁸ To be a gentleman implies not just social status, but is a direct invocation of truth-telling. The undercurrent beneath this added

²⁰⁸ McMaster, *Trollope's Palliser Novels*, 91.

meaning is the fear of its meaninglessness, the specter of needless hype over an utterance behind its time. This treatment of words, of the attention paid not just to their specific meanings but to the meaning they acquire through repetition is, of course, part of Trollope's realistic project, for this is the way language is used and understood. But it does not go unremarked. Though this may be a realistic representation of language, it is also a study of how repetition affects value.

Lizzie Eustace, a consummate liar, provides a test case for the ways that the telling of stories is subjected to – and fails – the appraisal of repetition. To tell a story in *The Eustace Diamonds* is almost always to tell a story about ownership. The perjury plot investigates a one owner-one story model, where every story can and should be traced back to a single speaker. Ownership is never merely a set of material circumstances, but rather a condition of verbal circulation. By mediating the truth of what is heard through the idea of ownership, *The Eustace Diamonds* asks how we value the spoken word in a world where it endlessly proliferates.

Lizzie Eustace realizes that her value (as a marriageable woman, as a social being) depends upon her creation of the story of her property. That is, her actual property is almost less important than her fictional version of it. The Eustace family lawyer Mr. Camperdown is furious that “she still goes about everywhere declaring that the Ayshire property is her own” (79). For Lizzie, however, the conditions of her ownership are less important than her ability to take that property and make it into a topic of conversation, an item of language to be put into circulation. The Eustace diamonds are the ultimate example of this conflation of real and linguistic property. Lizzie realizes quite early that “She could swear that her husband had given them to her, and could invent any form of

words she pleased as accompanying the gift” (80). The invention of “any form of words she pleased” is the invention of her property – as it solidifies (or attempts to solidify) her connection to the diamonds, it is itself a form of property. And, as Lady Eustace’s property, the story of the diamonds enters the conversational circulation of the novel. Of course, there is not one, unified “story of the diamonds.” Lizzie tells Lord Fawn one version: “‘There,’ said [Florian Eustace] – ‘those are yours to do what you choose with them’” (129). And, following the encroaching legal implications, Lizzie chooses her form of words to handily include Portray Castle as a setting: “Lady Eustace explained the nature of her late husband’s will, as far as it regarded chattels to be found in the Castle of Portray at the time of his death; and added the fiction, which had now become common to her, as to the necklace having been given to her in Scotland” (429). Her legal ownership of real property varies according to the changes in the story.

The more the story is modified and circulated, the more the story becomes the viable form of property. The copy, the story, takes on meaning divorced from the original. Trollope’s verbal realism draws the reader’s attention to the ways that the value of speech resides in its truth – or rather, its evaluation of truth. Whether or not the written word sounds “real” does not mean that the written word must or must not be a transcription of actual language. Yet in nineteenth-century debates about realism, “truth” was often a substitute for “real,” as when G. H. Lewes argued that “Art always aims at the Representation of Reality, i.e. of Truth.”²⁰⁹ The truth of any individual utterance is always contested in *The Eustace Diamonds*. The truth of the characters’ utterances is

²⁰⁹ [G.H. Lewes], “Realism in Art,” 273.

always at once a self-aware evaluation of its truthful sound, its realistic effect, and a contestable truth according to the events of the novel.

The layers of truth in story-telling are sometimes staggeringly numerous, as when the narrator periodically reminds us that the truth as the reader knows it is different from the truth as perceived by the characters supposedly living these events. For example, he tells us, “That Lizzie Eustace had stolen the diamonds, as a pickpocket steals a watch, was a fact as to which Mr. Camperdown had in his mind no shadow of a doubt. And, as the reader knows, he was right. She had stolen them” (289). The reader’s sense of the truth, or the “right” story, and Mr. Camperdown’s idea, however mutually corroborating they may be, do not take hold in the minds of the other characters, leaving Mr. Camperdown (and perhaps the reader) in a constant state of misunderstood frustration. This disjunction in truths is perpetuated by the stories that the characters generate. Lizzie grasps at telling her cousin Frank the truth of her perjury in the hope that he will be able to advise and defend her. So “she told him the whole story” – but we are quickly assured that means “not the true story, but the story as it was believed by all the world. She found it to be impossible to tell him the true story” (451). The impossibility of telling “the true story” and its simultaneous alliance with and difference from “the whole story” implicate Lizzie in the problems of authenticity. That stories – spoken and written – might never be truthful worries all discussions of story-telling in the novel. But the truth of the story is not necessarily inherent in its events or even in the words told. The truth of the story is in its originality.

Perjury

When, in *The Eustace Diamonds*, the detective Mr. Gager prepares to meet Patience Crabstick, Lizzie's former maid, he takes out a photograph of her and looks at it. Mr. Gager has, through repeated glances at this photograph, become enamored of Patience: "he had studied her face carefully, expecting, or, at any rate, hoping, that he might some day enjoy the pleasure of personal acquaintance. That pleasure was now about to come to him, and he prepared himself for it by making himself intimate with the lines of the lady's face as the sun had portrayed them." The photograph offers Mr. Gager access to a kind of intimacy with Patience that depends entirely upon his ownership of the photograph. How the photograph came to be his remains murky; we know only that that "[t]he little picture had fallen into Gager's hand" and that it used to belong to a footman, "who, had not things gone roughly with them, was to have been her lover" (565). The prospect of being Patience's lover seems entirely dependent on ownership of her photograph; intimacy hinges on exclusive access to her reproduced image.

The feeling of exclusivity this photograph engenders is inextricable from its status as property, what Miles Orvell has called the feeling of "surrogate ownership" that a photograph invokes. This reification of a visual image offered what a painting or sketch could not: a feeling of owning a sense impression, one that was exoticized by the temporal and spatial distance from the original yet substantiated by its technological innovation. The photograph is a sense impression made into property. Orvell details the armchair pleasure of "owning" tourist sights, works of art, and architecture. This scene in *The Eustace Diamonds* shows how photographic portraits could also give that frisson

of owning “what could not be owned outright.”²¹⁰ It is not just views or objects that were involved in surrogate ownership but the sight of people, the experiences of sociality and of intimacy.

This photograph is only one example, however, of the multiple ways that truth, specifically the truth of what one perceives sensorily, is mediated through the idea of ownership in the novel. The image Mr. Gager gleaned from her photograph must be truthful – an accurate representation of the real-life Patience – or his infatuation will presumably fade. The “lines of the lady’s face” that he feels he knows must prove to be a replication of the lines of the face that he meets. And we do eventually learn that they marry, that the photograph proves true. Ownership yokes together a representation of sensory input with its presumed original – the way the photograph is compared to the real-life Patience in order to question whether or not that representation is true. Mr. Gager’s ownership of Patience’s photograph, particularly the courtship it implies, is a measure of the truth of that likeness to its original. We are told that he “in the flesh, had not as yet seen Miss Crabstick.” Ownership, which permeates the plot at every turn, appears here as a necessary condition for the opportunity to compare the photographic image of Patience with her fleshly original. Throughout the novel, ownership is invoked as a means of tying a representation, visual or aural, back to its original.²¹¹

Ownership gains urgency first through the question of Lizzie’s ownership of the Eustace diamonds. But more urgent, ultimately, than the ownership of the diamonds is

²¹⁰Orvell, *The Real Thing*, 73.

²¹¹ Roland Barthes concludes that the photograph offers a kind of evidence of its own existence that language cannot. “No writing can give me this certainty. It is the misfortune (but also perhaps the voluptuous pleasure) of language not to be able to authenticate itself.” *Camera Lucida*, 85.

the ownership of one's words. The perjury plot of the novel interrogates the connections between words and goods, stories and material property. Perjury is made inextricable from ownership, attempting to make consequent the link between the truth of ownership and the truth of speech. The threat of perjury is the threat that spoken words have repercussions, that their ephemerality is transformed into materiality, reversing the dematerializing power of story-telling. Perjury attempts to make consequent the social ramifications of lying by working out the relationship between speaker, story, and ownership. By making loss of property the outcome of lying, Trollope implies, these characters might conceptualize the gravity of concocting falsehoods. Mrs. Carbuncle threatens Lizzie, "When a woman has committed perjury [. . .] nothing too bad can possibly be said to her [. . .] That they can sequester your property for your creditors, I know" (690). Mrs. Carbuncle connects the menace of socially uncontrolled language – "nothing too bad can possibly be said to her" – with the threat of material loss – sequestered property – through the term perjury. The violation of the one owner-one story model is ostensibly punished by another violation of the social contract, a fall in status enforced by a loss of material goods.

This equation, however, does not work out; although Lizzie lies and, eventually, commits perjury, she is never legally punished. The effects of lying are not made material; rather, they are contained – and sometimes punished – within the system of dialogue, of conversational circulation, within which they were initiated. Ayelet Ben-Yishai notes this blurring of "[t]he neat division whereby legal facts belong to the realm of the empirical and the facts of rumor belong to the communal."²¹² Facts and rumors

²¹² Ben-Yishai, "The Fact of a Rumor," 90.

mix precipitously and it becomes difficult to determine which is worth more. As Mrs. Carbuncle's note suggests, the way that any story – but particularly a false one – is told and evaluated is both a meditation on the truth of ownership and how that truth affects the creation of dialogue. There is a slippage in the novel between what the characters identify as the truth within the events of the novel and the realist dialogue's own self-aware project of fictional truth-telling, of attempting to replicate the real-life cadences of speech into a representation that will be true in a way that reveals the messiness of language.

The model of perjury rests on the establishment of a single speaker whose authority of specified statements is unquestioned. It depends on the idea that an utterance can be judged on its one-to-one relationship to fact. The perjury plot, however, suggests that this understanding of verbal truth is a wishful confabulation of legal minds, of those who, like the lawyer Mr. Camperdown, believe that it can be said that "Lizzie Eustace had stolen the diamonds, as a pickpocket steals a watch." And even while the narrator assures us, "as the reader knows, he was right. She had stolen them," that consensus does not mean that the tenacious Mr. Camperdown is ever able to prove the truth of Lizzie's theft or of her perjury. These two issues become so convoluted that it is impossible to prove either one. When property ownership becomes entangled in the confused relationship between speaker and story, the relationship of spoken truth to verifiable fact slips also. Then the characters resort to analogy in attempting to define ownership, as when Mr. Camperdown compares Lizzie to a pickpocket, or when she protests to Frank that the diamonds were her own, "as much as the coat you wear is your own" (684).

Poetic diction indicates the inability ever to tie a statement securely back to its speaker, to own language once it is released from the speaker.

Fidelity

From the beginning of the novel, Lizzie Eustace and Lucy Morris are set up as a dyad of original and copy. Lizzie possesses real material wealth while Lucy is “as good as gold” (314). They are synecdochally represented, Lizzie as a “voice,” while Lucy is an ear: “of listeners she was the very best” (54, 62). Lizzie’s voice is various and multiple: “It was powerful when she called upon it for power, flexible and capable” (54). Lucy, however, is stationary, stuck at Fawn Court, listening to everything that others say and “master[ing]” it (63). Their aurally-defined positions seem strikingly like utterance and transcription or original and copy, the terms of phonography, positioning the stationary recording device in opposition to a mobile speaker. By showing how the copy can differ from the original, their positions question what Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth has called “the verisimilitude of realism, the truth found in similarity.”²¹³ Lucy’s truth inheres in her difference. And Lizzie’s status as the original, the “mouth,” does not accord her utterances any kind of truth – in fact, Trollope goes out of his way to prove again and again how false and how prolific her statements are. There is nothing inherently more truthful in the original – in fact, Trollope, suggests, the listener, the copier, may in fact be more truthful than the original. Lucy may be an “ear,” but we never see her replicate or record Lizzie’s lies, the kind of truth offered by unmediated transcription. Instead, her truth is the unflinching recognition of all Lizzie’s lies, which “had never had the ring of

²¹³ Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus*, 17.

true metal in Lucy's ears" (176-7). If Lucy is the copy, she passes judgment on, and mediates, the original. The truth of realism, Trollope ultimately suggests, is not the exact transcription of life – not the “true” copy of the original – but one that doles out judgment on a reality that is, itself, full of both truth and falsehood.

When truth is invoked in the novel, it is often turned into a predicate object, requiring a preposition, a transfer from one person to the next. In a frequently replayed dialogue in the novel, Lizzie asks her cousin Frank, “you’ll be true *to* me?” and he unhesitatingly replies, “I will be *true to you*” (277, my emphasis). The truth that Lizzie asks for and Frank pledges is not honesty; it is fidelity. It requires an object, a recipient, a listener. The pledges of fidelity in the novel are what J. L. Austin would categorize as “performatives”; that is, they are actions rather than descriptions.²¹⁴ As such, they are not subject to judgments of truth or falsehood. Austin uses the marriage vow as an example of the performative, and his reasoning for why performatives evade judgments of truth or falsehood might well be a discussion of Frank’s pledges of fidelity in *The Eustace Diamonds*: “the promise here is not even void, though it is given in bad faith. His utterance is perhaps misleading, probably deceitful and doubtless wrong, but is not a lie or a misstatement.”²¹⁵ The realist novel is famously concerned with pledges of truth. The marriage vow is rarely performed or narrated, while the words of engagement almost

²¹⁴ In *Touching Feeling*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick reverses what she sees as the trend in Austin studies and re-emphasizes the “grammatical moment” of performatives. She refines the term “performative” into “explicit performative utterances” by composing a list of grammatical pre-requisites (4-5).

²¹⁵ Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 11.

always are.²¹⁶ These pledges are unavoidably speech acts and fiction, especially realist fiction, concerns itself with how to replicate the sound of that speech.

The performative of fidelity is not a truth or lie in itself. When Frank pledges to be true to Lizzie, he has already pledged his troth to Lucy. These dual pledges – one in writing, the other in voice – do not cancel one another out. The narrator comments dryly on the expectations of fiction, “If it were to be asserted here that a young man may be perfectly true to a first young woman while he is falling in love with a second, the readers of this story would probably be offended.” He also indicts modern morals by suggesting that “undoubtedly many men believe themselves to be quite true while undergoing this process, and many young women expect nothing else from their lovers. If only he will come right at last, they are contented. And if he don’t come right at all – it is the way of the world, and the game has to be played over again” (254). But underneath the narratorial carping about youthful insouciance lurks a more significant relationship between the reader’s expectations and the lover’s. The dual pledges of truth and troth are always both pledges within the world of the novel and pledges of the writer to reader. The relationship between utterance and its transcription – the fidelity of realism – is implicated in the characters’ pledges of fidelity.

Lizzie also seeks reiterations of fidelity from her intermittent and roguish suitor, Lord George. When Lizzie asks him, ““You will be true to me; - will you not?”” she asks both that he will be faithful to his hints of marriage and true in his promise to keep her

²¹⁶ Elaine Scarry explains this phenomenon thus: “we continue to be intrigued by literary depictions of courtship for reasons that are formal and imaginative: we see the marriage contract (the assertion of a human bond as binding and enduring and inalterable as a biological bond) as a product of man’s fiction-making powers and consequently as an analogue to other products of man’s fiction-making powers such as literature in general or the novel in particular.” *Resisting Representation*, 61.

secrets (503). He responds by asking, ““What is a broken promise?”” and Lizzie answers ““It is a story”” (617). As this moment reveals, the novel’s preoccupation with truth and the relationship of truth to fidelity is constantly implicated in the process of story-telling. The utterance of a promise of fidelity (“I will be true to you”), as Austin points out, “is, or is part of, the doing of an action,”²¹⁷ separate from other kinds of vocalizations. But when Lizzie equates a “broken promise” with a “story,” she elides the difference between a narrative and a lie. That is, the promise (a performative) cannot be judged as true or false, but the story that follows can be. The fidelity of one person to another is not merely a matter of iteration, nor of *reiteration*, just as sound fidelity is not just a matter of the exactness of the replication of copy from original. The fidelity of transcription to utterance attempts a truth that lies outside the realm of either. Fiction occupies the gap between utterance and transcription just as it occupies the gap between truth and lie.²¹⁸ In order to register as real, however, it must also register as faithful to the attempt to bridge those gaps, to read in such a way that *sounds* real to “the ear, quick and true”²¹⁹ – striving for fidelity more than truth.

Both romantic fidelity and sound fidelity are rooted in the desire for a record, for sound made material. Edison imagined the phonograph’s potential to create a “complete and durable record,” a material catalogue of sound.²²⁰ During the summer of 1878, when Edison exhibited his new phonograph, audience members vied for the torn-up scraps of tinfoil on which sound had been recorded and played back, even though these scraps

²¹⁷ Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 5.

²¹⁸ Walter Kendrick makes a related point when he concludes, “The paradox of Trollope’s realism is that it lives on the energy of what it condemns: only the lie of fiction allows the truth to be told” “*The Eustace Diamonds*,” 57.

²¹⁹ Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 116.

²²⁰ Edison, “The Phonograph and its Future,” 535-6.

could not ever produce sound again. Lisa Gitelman notes that “tin foil records offered a profound and self-conscious experience of what ‘speaking’ on paper might mean.”²²¹

This both was and was not a new experience, however; certainly the technological and sensory experience of hearing sound replayed from the paper or tin foil was new. But the idea of reading for sound, the transcription of utterance so that it might be played back again and again – we see this desire manifested in the pages of the novel. Trollope is famously concerned with capturing the sound of dialogue, praised by Henry James for his “good ear.”²²²

This novel shows the attempt to make sound material – especially in the marks of realistic speech, including the dash. In *The Eustace Diamonds*, the dash indicates not just a hitch in the flow of words but also usually a hitch in the speaker’s thoughts. For instance, when Frank, in his frustration at Lizzie’s lies, exclaims, “I have been led to make so many statements to other people, which now seem to have been – incorrect!” He is hesitant to use the troublesome word “lies,” and so pauses (whether infinitesimally or grossly is up to the ear of the reader) and inserts the innocuous “incorrect” (685). Use of the dash draws attention to the novel’s own awareness of human speech. The dash surfaces again in the narrator’s account of “when Lucinda’s marriage was – postponed, as the newspapers said!” (700). Here the voice could be Lizzie’s or it could be a generalized voice of gossiping society, but the slight pause again indicates the substitution of a milder word, the way that people talk about each other in a certain tone. It is not necessary that the reader recognize this particular word substitution but merely that she recognize the fact of substitution, the kind of verbal bait-and-switch that Trollope

²²¹ Gitelman, *Always Already New*, 29.

²²² James, “Anthony Trollope,” in *The Trollope Critics*, 1.

indicates so succinctly. The dash records the speaker's hesitation, the aural texture of speech.

At the same time, however, the dash marks its own project of transcription, makes us aware of how "realistic" this speech is meant to sound to the reader's ear. Sound fidelity for fiction depends upon marks of punctuation, yet it is also betrayed by these reminders of its status as transcription. When Frank realizes that his infidelity has ensnared him in a tangled web of legal, social, and moral difficulties, he muses, "The really honest man can never say a word to make those who don't know of his honesty believe that it is there" (521). He makes explicit the ways that fidelity is always undermined by its own need for reiteration in the face of doubt.

The popularity of the photograph and the phonograph both depended on their status as record and the logic that a record of an event documents its truth – that it is more reliable because it has been recorded. And this is the same logic that scholars of photography and realism draw on to connect these modes of representation. Indeed, *The Eustace Diamonds* makes this logic explicit, as when Mrs. Carbuncle ensures that her niece Lucinda's engagement to Sir Griffin "should be made known to all the party, and should be recognized by some word spoken between herself and the lover" (414). The instantiation of the marriage proposal in repetition is used to guarantee its present truth and eventual occurrence. This is the kind of logic Walter Kendrick uses when he assesses Lizzie thus: "Her idea of truth lacks the fixity of repetition, the infinite respectability of true statements."²²³

²²³ Kendrick, "*The Eustace Diamonds*," 142.

There are also attempts to instantiate a marriage proposal in writing, as when Lizzie spreads the news of her engagement to Lord Fawn through letters, although the narrator pokes fun at Lizzie's lack of affectionate ties: "The first 'friend' to whom she wrote was Lady Linlithgow." Not only the action of writing the letters but also their transcription are included in the narrative, as we are told that "[t]he reader shall see two or three of her letters, and that to the countess shall be the first" (133). Whether the instantiation-through-repetition occurs verbally or in writing, what is noticeable is that it is not a repetition of the initial performative, not an exact replay of the pledge, but an attempt at transcribing it in a way that instantiates its social significance. This transcription happens not between the lovers but between one of the lovers and the wider social world – as when Lizzie writes to Lady Linlithgow or Sir Griffin confirms his engagement to Lucinda by a word to her aunt.

The way of thinking, however, is not ultimately substantiated by the novel, even though it is considered and given due weight. The novel may seem at first to fit Katherine Kearns' description of nineteenth-century realism: "the text may mimic those devices of repetition and connection that generate a mutual understanding." Ultimately, however, it resists Kearns' final outcome of "mutual understanding."²²⁴ Repetition is held out as a test of fidelity, only to prove its unreliability. In fact, Lucinda responds to Mrs. Carbuncle's continued assertions of the engagement's viability: "'You'll find you have worked for very little, Aunt Jane. I shall never marry the man yet.' This, however, had been said so often that Aunt Jane thought nothing of the threat" (634). The two opposing stories that Lucinda and Mrs. Carbuncle tell (the wedding will happen or it will

²²⁴ Kearns, *Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism*, 13-14.

not) are not rendered more or less truthful because they are repeated. The search for such instantiation through repetition is a search for fidelity, for a match-up between original and copy. No copy, though, – neither story, photograph, nor phonograph – offers assurance of its recurrence against the ephemerality of sense impression.

The Eustace Diamond evaluates its own process of copying and the different valences of truth and fidelity in that process. The narrator muses, “It is very easy to depict a hero [. . .] a man honest in all his dealings, equal to all trials, true in all his speech, indifferent to his own prosperity, struggling for the general good, and, above all, faithful in love.” But this hero is not, as the subtext of romance over realism in the novel makes clear, the goal of any art that strives after truth. Instead, the novel suggests that it is more truthful to create a character “who is one hour good and the next bad, who aspires greatly, but fails in practice, who sees the higher, but too often follows the lower course” (355). It is the debunked hero, however, who has much to tell us about realism and fidelity. He is described as being both “true in speech” and “faithful in love,” qualities that are often conflated in the pledge of fidelity. This unrealistic hero manages always to tell the truth and to be true – precisely what the novel spends much of its time proving to be impossible. The job of the realism, this implies, is to narrate *and* perform that impossibility – not just to show it to us, but to let us hear it, as well.

The highest goal of this unrealistic hero, “above all, faithful in love,” says more about the expectations of realist fiction than it does about any real-life impediments to fidelity. The narrator’s point is that we should not fault Frank too much for his unfaithfulness to Lucy, but it is also a theoretical discussion of realist methodology. The novel makes clear that no one character could ever know as much as the reader does

about the characters and events, as the characters have only what they hear while the reader has the narrator's description and asides. In pledging to "be true to" Lucy, he is not lying at the moment, is not, as Austin says, subject to that judgment. But the reader's accumulation of performance and narrative allows us to judge him nonetheless, to determine that he will not, ultimately, be true to Lizzie and will, in fact, return to Lucy. Visual narrative descriptions are always subject to judgments of truth or falsehood. It is only utterance, Austin's performatives, that are not subject to those judgments. They are, however, subject to a different standard of truth, the one that they most often invoke: fidelity.

The verbal pledges of fidelity in the novel are both utterance and transcription. Within the world of the novel, they are utterance, but under the rubric of realism, they are a kind of transcription, a record of what the characters have said in the author's mind. Trollope, in particular, conceived of his writing this way, arguing that "Of each man I could assert whether he could have said these or the other words."²²⁵ This is no naïve view of realism, however, as Trollope is aware that this effect of transcription depends upon invention, upon crafting, as he describes it, "the ordinary talk of ordinary people."²²⁶ Thus, the standard of fidelity is not only a moral standard within the novel, a test of whether the protagonist deserves a happily married ending; it is also a test of whether or not the transcription reads as faithful to the test of utterance – whether or not it sounds "real." The value of sounding real is inextricable from the value of being real in this novel. But the test of fidelity can never bear repeating; the very standards for the

²²⁵ Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 150.

²²⁶ Trollope, *An Autobiography*, 154.

trainable perception of guided sensing lose meaning in a world where value inheres in originality and ephemerality. Fidelity cannot be replicated.

The Value of Failure

Towards the end of the novel, Lizzie tries desperately to replay Frank's earlier promise of fidelity, hinting, "What was it that you promised me when we sat together upon the rocks of Portray?" Instead of a replay of Frank's pledge, however, Lizzie gets . . . silence? A change of subject? We cannot tell, because instead of the performative of fidelity, we get a narratorial aside: "It is inexpressibly difficult for a man to refuse the tender of a woman's love" (523). The refusal to replay Frank's pledge is a limit test of his and the novel's fidelity. Frank can preserve his fidelity to his fiancée Lucy only by revoking his fidelity to Lizzie. But reading a narrator's comment instead of speech draws our attention out from this particular scene to the novel's meditation on fidelity as cultural value as well as realist practice.²²⁷

The phrase the "tender of a woman's love" asks us to examine the ways in which fidelity is valued – or, rather, the ways that in which it is *not* valued. Almost every pledge of fidelity in the novel is violated – and the ones that remain at the end of the novel are of questionable worth. In a moment of supreme irony (or perhaps poetic justice), Lizzie, left with no other options, accepts a pledge of fidelity from the "greasy, fawning, pawing, creeping" Mr. Emilius, whose courting words are "not compatible with

²²⁷ In her 1856 essay on realism, "Natural History of German Life: Riehl," George Eliot conceptualizes the connection between realistic dialogue and cultural values that I see in *The Eustace Diamonds*: "Language must be left to grow in precision, completeness, and unity, as minds grow in clearness, comprehensiveness, and sympathy" (181).

humdrum truth” (639, 711). Yet it is Mr. Emilius who nails the paradox of the value of fidelity: he claims his heart “forces from me words – words which will return upon me with all the bitterness of gall, if they be not accepted by you as faithful, ay, and of great value” (762). Fidelity’s value resides in the acceptance of its value. That is, the cultural urgency of romantic fidelity, the desire to accept pledges of troth “as faithful,” spurs the reader’s desire to believe in fiction’s ability to tell us the truth about ourselves and not have our words “return upon” us “with all the bitterness of gall.” This is a value that is social and specific to the morals of the era, but that does not make it less urgent. It is this premium, I would argue, that Thomas Edison tapped into when choosing the term “fidelity” for the exactness with which the tinfoil grooves replicated the sound of speech.

The failures to replicate sound through transcription evoke James Lastra’s argument about recorded sound: “What we want is not simply to recognize or understand this speech but to touch what is ‘behind’ the sounds – presumably something which, unsullied by transformation into the common coin of language, is more real.”²²⁸ *The Eustace Diamonds* uses the language of romantic fidelity and the attempts at sound replication that surround it to narrate this same originary desire. However, the limits of sense perceptions, the fleetingness of sound, mean that that added meaning or reassurance remains tantalizingly out of reach. In addition, the language of romantic fidelity invests the spoken pledge of romantic fidelity (and thus, sound fidelity) with added value. Jonathan Sterne, among others, has argued that the definition of sound fidelity is flawed because it focuses on what we cannot hear – the absence of distortion or mediating hisses

²²⁸ Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema*, 144.

and pops – rather than what we can.²²⁹ But it is this essential negation that haunts the realist novel in general and *The Eustace Diamonds* in particular.

Romantic fidelity and sound fidelity are both negative measures; what isn't done (cheating) or heard (distortion) is determined by what *is* said. This is rendered even more starkly in an exchange between Lizzie and her third suitor Lord George, when he demands, "Who can believe that a woman will always love her husband because she swears she will? The oath is false on the face of it." Women's performances of fidelity are valued less than men's because women need fidelity more. As Lizzie plaintively responds, "But women must marry" (437). Despite being far richer than most of her suitors, Lizzie needs the moral, emotional, and social security that marriage offers her. She attempts to extricate and replicate performances of fidelity from men far more urgently than they from her, demonstrating that the sound of fidelity is always a social bargain, even when it is presented at its most intimate. For Trollope, marriage is always shadowed by the economic logic of the market.²³⁰ The value of fidelity is moral, emotional, and economic, a heavy load for a fleeting sound to bear.

Critical discussions of realism have noted its self-conscious awareness of the ways that realism must always fall short of unmediated representation. George Levine's classic description, for instance, focuses on the "struggle inherent in any 'realist' effort – the struggle to avoid the inevitable conventionality of language in pursuit of the

²²⁹ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 222.

²³⁰ Kathy Psomiades argues that we can see the "invention" of heterosexuality in *The Eustace Diamonds* as a new way of understanding economic exchange: "alliance may be collapsed back into sexuality by becoming a sort of market precursor, and what is actually a new sexual identity based on cross-sex object choice can be systematized, archaized, and universalized." "Fictions of Heterosexual Exchange," 94.

unattainable unmediated reality.”²³¹ The concept of fidelity, the connections between realist dialogue and the courtship plot, moves beyond an awareness of what language cannot represent. The realism of *The Eustace Diamonds* is not nostalgic or hopeful for a realism that matches up original and copy, utterance and transcription. It is aware of these projects – and even attempts them – but ultimately reveals that fidelity means a kind of dialogue that sounds real, even though it has no basis in a real source. The idea of fidelity is debunked in the mimetic realm by showing the multiple ways that it is undermined in the social realm. This novel takes the common trope of courtship and shows the ways that the utterance of faithfulness is almost always false.

Yet it does not, for all that, undermine the project of realism, of representation that reads as real. Instead, Trollope stakes his realism on what sounds real, rather than what looks real. And he argues theoretically and in his fiction that the sound of reality need not pretend to be transcription. The standard of fidelity, of audio fidelity and of romantic fidelity, is not the faithfulness of the copy to the source but a free-floating quality of the copy, taken on its own merits. When Frank promises to be true to Lizzie, we can assess his only truth in that moment – it cannot be guaranteed by repetition. There is no greater fidelity through replication, no guarantee of greater realistic effect inherent in the repetition of transcription. Realist fiction reads as most real when it originates a self-contained standard of fidelity, one that refuses the utterance-transcription model.

The cultural weight attached to the perfect replication of utterance inheres *because of its difficulty*. Perfect fidelity is valued because it is impossible. Ultimately, *The Eustace Diamonds* suggests, all we have are instants. They float, discrete, alone,

²³¹ Levine, *The Realistic Imagination*, 8.

sounds and images that can never be perfectly recreated. Guided sensing relies on repeatable sensory experiences, while *The Eustace Diamonds* suggests that the value of a moment resides in its ephemerality. Lizzie attempts to recreate the instant when she says to Frank, “What was it that you promised me when we sat together upon the rocks of Portray?” But Frank’s pledge to “be true to” her remains at the “rocks of Portray,” a moment that cannot ever be replicated in a way that will be satisfying – the urge for that kind of fidelity goes beyond social institutions like marriage or generic conventions of troth. The “rocks of *Portray*” are the shoals of realism: the human need to see and hear our world recreated and played back to give it meaning – and the record’s failure to capture that meaning. Far from suggesting that meaning resides only in the original utterance, however, this novel shows how meaning inheres in the very gaps in fidelity. It is where the copy fails that we learn the most; not being faithful is so very real.

IV.

The Woodlanders and the Cultivation of the Senses

Cultivation is a double formation that implies both nature and culture. By improving through artificial means what already exists in a natural state, cultivation suggests that improvement is attainable through labor. When the cultivation in question is social rather than agricultural, the separation between worker and worked-upon becomes uncertain. A cultivated person may be one who has labored, through education, to become cultivated; in this case, the worker and the worked-upon are the same. Being a cultivated person implies a status of education and refinement, but that status is never static. Cultivation is work that is never done.

When the narrator of Thomas Hardy's 1887 novel *The Woodlanders* relates that Grace Melbury "was proud, as a cultivated woman, to be the wife of a cultivated man," the novel defines its central metaphor of class mobility (173). But the parallel use of the term "cultivated" for both Grace and her husband is misleading; they are not equally cultivated. Grace's cultivation has been purchased in the form of her education, while her husband Fitzpiers' cultivation is a result of his birth. Grace's hollow pride in her cultivation depends on her upward mobility by marriage, a mobility that is arrested almost immediately by her reversion to her woodlander roots and the dissolution of that marriage. Through the idea of cultivation, I contend, the novel explores the possibilities of individual self-fashioning inherent in guided sensing. Grace's questionable cultivation is only one of many instances in which the novel first offers and then revokes the

narrative of upward mobility common to Victorian literature and culture.²³² This instance is representative of the larger form of the novel, in which Grace's middle-class education and marriage make up only the first half of the narrative; the other half undoes these signs of mobility. Explicitly concerned with how perception changes in a changing world, the novel refuses to adhere to either a trope of modern self-improvement or rural nostalgia. Instead, it explores how the tension between class mobility and nativity – between moving up and out or staying put – is expressed through the senses.

Cultivation rests uneasily on the paradox inherent in guided sensing: that sensory experiences are at once unmediated, authentic experiences of the world and that those experiences can be learned and instilled. Cultivation at once insists on the possibility of upward mobility through self-fashioning, yet is always haunted by its artifice and its labor. When Grace returns from her “fashionable school,” her father, Mr. Melbury, worries that the woodlanders “shall look small, just at first – I only say just at first” (32). He is concurrently worried, however, by his own reassurance. That the woodlanders will look small only “just at first” proves to be the crux of Melbury's angst about Grace and the novel's consideration of upward mobility in general: although her education has, indeed, changed her perception of life at Little Hintock, that change is reversible. However differently she senses the woodlands now, that difference is only the difference of a moment. The narrative of upward mobility is always, problematically open to reversal, deferral, or dilution.

²³² I am thinking specifically about a narrative of upward mobility through marriage, typified by, for instance, *Jane Eyre*. How marriage effects changes in wealth and status is often depicted in great detail, from Lizzie Bennet's marriage to Mr. Darcy to Dorothea Brooke's marriage to Will Ladislaw.

The Woodlanders explores the narrative of upward mobility primarily through Grace Melbury's courtships and marriage. Educated at great expense by her timber-dealer father, Grace returns to the remote hamlet of Little Hintock to find her childhood home and her childhood love changed by her own rise in status. She has been promised since childhood to the native woodlander Giles Winterborne. At her father's insistence, however, she rejects Giles and marries Edred Fitzpiers, a doctor who is new to the area and from an old, esteemed family. She makes what is known as a good marriage, but it signals not a resolution to the novel but an added layer to the problems of social mobility. Grace's unhappiness with Fitzpiers is in part due to her own ambivalence about where and with whom she belongs. Fitzpiers finds his confidence in his social position undermined by his tie to the woodlands through Grace. Their marriage falls apart: he leaves Grace for another woman, and Grace attempts a reconciliation with Giles that ends in Giles' death. The novel leaves Grace and Fitzpiers reunited but with little hope for their future happiness as a cultivated couple.

By drawing explicitly on the agricultural meaning of cultivation and using it to imply a modern practice, Hardy situates his understanding of cultivation within the nineteenth-century tension Amanda Anderson articulates between modern "self-critical practice" and a "lost, prereflective unity."²³³ Cultivation here is not the modern counterpart to a pre-reflective way of being; it is a modern way of training the self that is understood in terms rural and belated. At the beginning of the novel, Grace returns to Little Hintock, having been "mentally trained and tilled into foreignness of view, as

²³³ Anderson figures cultivation more generally as a form of modern abstraction, but I think that Hardy's cultivation exists within the tension between these categories, as evidenced by his description of the cultivated Grace, "who combined modern nerves with primitive emotions" (298). Anderson, *The Power of Distance*, 20, 13.

compared with her youthful time” (108). Cultivation is not just an abstract way of expressing class-specific manners. The “mental tilling” that gives Grace a “foreign view” brings together the novel’s concerns with how sensing shapes class (and vice versa) and how class-based sensing is related to location. Mental training and tilling suggest a deeply invasive way of understanding the role of social practice in the body – a digging, shaping, and planting of mental processes that forces into new order what might, on its own, be luxuriant, wild, and forceful. Nature is not idealized here; it is ruthlessly competitive as well as beautiful.²³⁴ We have already seen, however, that Grace’s “foreign view” is only temporary. This novel suggests that cultivation offers a false sense of telos, a tempting but ultimately unsustainable idea of personal fulfillment. Critics have fruitfully explicated Hardy’s enduring concern with class mobility insofar as it relates to sexuality. Penny Boumelha comments that Hardy could “almost be described as obsessive” in his interest in cross-class romance, “in which the ‘otherness’ of the other class is conceived through a kind of melancholic desire.”²³⁵ I extend this discussion of the physical expression of class to focus on sensory perception. Indeed, Hardy articulated his main challenge as a writer as capturing the vivid sensations of the moment’s “length, breadth, thickness, colour, smell, voice.”²³⁶ In *The Woodlanders*,

²³⁴ See, for instance, Hardy’s poem, “In a Wood: From *The Woodlanders*,” where the speaker comes “Heart-halt and spirit-lame, / City opprest,” looking for respite from modern life in nature (ll. 9-10). Instead he finds the forest is “to men akin - / Combatants all!” and concludes that in the city, “at least smiles abound, / There discourse trills around, / There now and then, are found / Life-loyalties” (ll. 37-40). *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, 17-8.

²³⁵ Boumelha, “The patriarchy of class,” 132.

See also ed. Margaret Higgonet, *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*; George Levine, “Shaping Hardy’s Art: Vision, Sex, and Class” in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*; and J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*.

²³⁶ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy*, 59.

Hardy considers class mobility not just as it relates to desire but also as an important framework for understanding the formation of the sensing subject at the close of the nineteenth century. The social practices that define and are defined by class strictures are often expressed in fiction by sensory details – what Janice Carlisle has termed “a structure of sensations.”²³⁷

In this chapter, I explore the novel’s figuring of class and sensing through two related models of sensory subjectivity: cultivation and observation. I then explore the narrative effects of those models, how they diffuse the narrative drive of upward mobility into the less linear configurations of return and community. In Chapter One I argued that the 1850s issues of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* touted trained sensing as modern, seemly, and desirable. Thirty years later, *The Woodlanders* destabilizes that certainty, measuring the costs and rewards of encroaching urbanization through the body, showing how class and location intersect through the measured and modified processes of sensing.

The Woodlanders suggests that the process of cultivation elides the subject-object distinction in a way that is troubling for maintaining agency, particularly for Grace. At the same time however, the novel holds the perhaps paradoxical position that being aware of one’s own object status is a necessary condition for sensory subjectivity. These mutually resistant models of percipient subjectivity dilute the narrative drive of upward mobility represented by cultivation. The novel is comprised of different loops and doublings, formally echoing the theme of cyclical, seasonal return. That return interrogates the idea of progress at stake in Grace’s education and marriage and in the

²³⁷ Carlisle, *Common Scents*, 9.

implicit urbanization encroaching on the rural setting. The individual self-fashioning of cultivation is never realized, or it is realized in ways that are ephemeral, undesirable, or unsatisfying. Instead, *The Woodlanders* insists on moving outside the narrative confines of the individual, locating percipient subjectivity in the tension between the individual and the community. Modern observational dynamics are an inevitable part of constituting one's sense of self and one's place in the world. Hardy locates the senses, intimate bodily practices, within the tension between individual and social to demonstrate that self-improvement is never simply about the self.

Sensing Class Differences

Thomas Hardy began his long and esteemed authorial career with a novel that was never published, *The Poor Man and the Lady*. He submitted the manuscript to Alexander Macmillan with a letter proposing that “now a days, discussions on the questions of manners, rising in the world, &c (the main incidents of the novel) have grown to be particularly absorbing.” Hardy continued to believe in and draw on the public's (and his own) absorption with “rising in the world” for the remainder of his novel-writing career. He claimed to offer “novelty of *position* and *view* in relation to a known subject,”²³⁸ and in this sentence we can hear Hardy begin to create his authorial persona. As the upwardly mobile son of a master mason, he brings his own complex matrix of education, marriage, nativity, and urbanity to the “known subject” of class mobility.

²³⁸ *Letters*, 7, original emphasis. 25 July 1868.

Hardy's depiction of upward mobility in *The Woodlanders* is itself absorbed with teasing out the particularities of how perception and class intersect in this belated location. Cultivation paradoxically elides the senses, often offering only a sense of distance. Grace's cultivation means that her perceptions become disconnected from her judgment, interpreted instead through the men – her father, her husband – who seek to reassure themselves of her improved status by way of her sensations. The elision of bodily sensation recommended in the fancy-work patterns of Chapter One has become the wearing away of bodily sensation to effect the concurrent erasure of the upwardly mobile from an older way of life and the eventual disappearance of that life. The language of class-based sensing is infused with the agricultural processes of tilling, planting, transplanting, and refining. With this language, the novel locates the process of determining class identity both in the body and in the land – the way that one senses this particular location is fundamentally rooted in familiarity or foreignness, and those sensations are indicative of social standing.

The words used to describe social status in the novel are rich with sensory meaning: the obvious “taste,” but also “roughness” and “delicacy,” and an attention to what might “catch a dainty woman's eye” (285, 89, 32). These terms mark the embodiedness of class difference. Status is understood – both by the novel itself and by its characters – in terms of perception, the sensory experience of living with or without education and wealth. Melbury articulates this idea when he cautions Giles to brush the horses' hooves when picking Grace up from school. He presents Grace's change in status as especially acute perception: “We, living here alone, don't notice how the whitey-brown creeps out of the earth over us; but she, fresh from a city – why, she'll

notice everything!” (32). The woodlanders are made out to be visually inseparable from the “whitey-brown” earth that is their livelihood, an inseparability that is noticeable only with difference.

This difference is further explored when Giles throws a party to court Grace. The scene becomes an index of Grace’s perceptual difference from the rest of the woodlanders. The inescapable sight, sound, and feel of Hintock life is explicitly contrasted with Grace’s former existence, a sense memory whose status is performed by its very lack of sensation. In this way, she is the epitome of the aspirational woman who has instilled in herself middle-class sensation. The woodland life, represented by Giles’ home and his guests’ behavior, is marked by an excess of sensation: his furniture is “greasy” and “mirror-like,” genteel ears are “harshly intruded on by the measured jingle” of the other guests, and each playing card has “a great stain in the middle of its back” (75). The scene relentlessly catalogues the markers of class hierarchy, from the time that Mrs. Melbury allies herself with the coarse woodlanders by taking off her silk train and “hang[s] it up to a nail” to help finish the pies while Grace “potter[s] idly about” to when the party breaks up and the lowest guests, having covered “Giles’s mahogany table with chalk scratches,” depart “vociferously singing” a vulgar song, stamping out the beat with “vigorous step” (72, 76, 77).

In contrast, Grace retreats to the ephemeral imagination of her middle-class education, dancing with “a bevy of sylph-like creatures in muslin, in the music-room of a large house” (76). These rarified “creatures” elude materiality as sylphs, which inhabit

the air. They defy the enclosures of the human body, corporeally and environmentally.²³⁹ The light fabric they wear seems not even to touch the skin as they dance in the airy spaces of a “large house,” a far cry from Giles’ “awkwardly built premises” where the even the “remoter recesses” display their embarrassing contents (72). Grace is divided from the rest of Hintock by her lack of materiality.²⁴⁰ Her silk train is unmentioned – unmentionable – because it remains intact to preserve her idleness and, thus, her difference.

Upon closer inspection, however, the perspective of these perceptual differences shifts slightly. Usually, they are jarring not for Grace, but for Mr. Melbury. Grace shuts out untoward sensory information, “wink[ing] at the deficiencies in Winterborne’s way of living” (73). She uses her own sound to convey her unchanged feelings about Giles; after the party, she speaks to her father in “such a tone as to show that [Giles] stood no lower, if no higher, in her regard than he had stood before” (77). It is Mr. Melbury who reacts “contemptuously” to the entertainment and comments “indignantly” about the “‘sort of society we’ve been asked to meet!’” (76, 77). Thus the contrast between Grace’s educated ways and life in Hintock is more important for Mr. Melbury’s perception of Grace than for Grace herself. He stresses her perceptual difference in order to strengthen Grace’s middle-class identity, to insist that she is fundamentally, physically changed.

²³⁹ For more on materiality as a marker of class difference, see Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*.

²⁴⁰ Rachel Hollander notes that Grace’s education makes her “an individual divided from herself.” Hollander’s description accords with my understanding of the corporeal and material nature of class identity in *The Woodlanders* – especially for Grace, about whom these markers are most ambivalent. Raymond Williams, additionally, has argued that Hardy plays out his own ambivalence about social mobility in the character of Grace. Hollander, *Ethics of Representation*, 102. Williams, *The Country and the City*, 198.

The ways that people of different classes give off and interpret sensory information within the novel are not just an *effect* of status (e.g. Giles smells of apple pomace after losing his home and becoming a cider presser); they are *constitutive of* class identity (Giles's smell marks him as an itinerant laborer).²⁴¹ And as such, they are always performances that require an audience. We are introduced to Grace at the beginning of the novel by way of Marty South, and the physical contrasts between the two women work to display Grace's changes in status. When Marty walks the twelve miles to Sherton Abbas in pattens, she leaves a plethora of unpreserved prints, her passing noted only by a transitory "Click, click, click" (34). In contrast, Melbury's preservation and contemplation of Grace's shoeprint (which we hear him describe through Marty's ears) reminds him of her worth, always measured as a "sacrifice" to Giles (19). Marty wears pattens as a result of her working life and economic position (pattens saved wear on shoes and skirt hems), but it is the way that the novel records the value of their different marks on the world, one preserved, one ephemeral, that suggests that these marks are more than just results of differing material circumstances. Their sensory reception by others constitutes Marty's and Grace's class identity.

Location and its perception are also imbued with status connotations. Nativity, particularly nativity in Little Hintock, becomes synonymous with a more modest way of life, not only one that is threatened to become obsolete, but one that is not necessarily worth saving. The value of native perception is never taken for granted, even while the complications of "implanted tastes" are never ignored (81). When Giles asks Grace,

²⁴¹ Janice Carlisle notes, "Victorian fiction, whose primary orientations seem so much more obviously moral and social than physical, has much to say about what Bain calls 'the discrimination of material bodies.'" *Common Scents*, 9.

“Don’t Brownley’s farm-buildings look strange to you, now they have been moved bodily from the hollow where the old ones stood to the top of the hill?” her response walks the line between her original and changed perceptions. “She admitted that they did, though she should not have seen any difference in them if he had not pointed it out” (41). Grace’s perceptions of Little Hintock are an ongoing measure of her social mobility, of Giles’s chances of success, and even of the balance of nostalgia and foreboding that characterizes Hardy’s setting – all delicately caught in flux. The woodlanders’ whitey-brown stains and the small changes in topography are perceived in terms of difference, the difference between various characters’ notice of them, and that notice is always framed in terms of social class.

The values assigned to native and foreign sense impressions are expressed in ways that are particular and material. When Giles follows Grace and Melbury to the auction, he “saw amongst the large sole-and-heel tracks of an impression of a slighter kind, from a boot that was obviously not local, for Winterborne knew all the cobblers’ patterns in that district, because they were few to know” (52-3). Giles’s intimate, native understanding is sharp and swift. But it is also denigrated – “they were few to know” – by its limited scope. Later, Marty identifies Fitzpiers’ footprint because it is “of a lighter weight than usual,” his more delicate, expensive shoe leaving a lesser mark (100). These “mud-picture[s]” and their interpretations capture the ways that both moving through and perceiving the world are located acts. Melbury’s footprint brands him as a local, while Fitzpiers’ marks him as foreign. But those brands are useful only with native knowledge, an understanding of what is local. Giles’s and Marty’s identification, like their mutual

true understanding of the woodlands, is endangered, yet its worth, the urgency of its safety, is questionable.²⁴²

The novel manages to entertain concurrent senses of the woodlanders' intrinsic value and of their devaluation in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. It avoids the pitfall that Raymond Williams calls a "myth functioning as a memory," each era thinking it has just missed a primitive, pre-lapsarian community.²⁴³ Instead, Hardy captures the moment that these alliances are shifting; the woodlanders are certainly endangered, but they are not extinct. The ways that they differ from the cultivated outsiders are at once quotidian and visceral. When Melbury convinces Grace to give up Giles, he asks her, "[H]ow could a woman, brought up as delicately as you have been, bear the roughness of a life with him?" (89). A life with Giles would be "rough," would feel uncomfortable, difficult, grating. The choice of words suggests that class status is not an abstract hierarchy or measure of wealth. It is everyday life, felt in the body.

Grace's delicacy is contrasted with Giles's roughness in order to highlight the sensory immediacy of class distinctions. This difference, however, does not occupy a straightforward place in their love story. Giles's roughness grows more pronounced as his fortunes fail, and while Grace's love grows more steady regardless, she is nevertheless sometimes brought up short when "confronted by this contrast" (285). Grace rejects Giles while standing at the base of a tree; he is in its branches, lopping them off. She can see "the nails in his soles, silver-bright with constant walking" (93). Her sight of the

²⁴² Hardy felt strongly that one's locality mattered fundamentally, as when he wrote to R. D. Blackmore (author of *Lorna Doone*), "A kindred sentiment between us in so many things is, I suppose, partly because we both spring from the West of England." *Letters* 38. 8 June 1875.

²⁴³ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 43.

nails and their brightness from wear is part of the ongoing measure of Grace's social mobility through her perceptions of Little Hintock and its woodlanders. Giles's position above Grace is paradoxically demeaning, as it reveals the wear of work on his shoe. Her notice of the nails is registered as sensory evidence of their unsuitability for one another. The glib moral fairy tale that true love conquers class difference is constantly invoked, only to be overturned. In the face of Fitzpiers' return, Grace flees her home for Giles's "rough accommodation," while he moves to a "wretched little shelter of the roughest kind" (303, 304). Their seclusion in roughness, like their attempts to maintain propriety there, reveal the inevitable intrusion of the wider social world into the most remote remove. Grace's housewifely acts in Giles's hut at first seem to perform the pair's true suitability, the life they might have had if not for intervention of superficial concerns about wealth and status.²⁴⁴ Giles's death is a tragic testament to the exigencies of poverty. Grace and Giles might have been happy together, but the novel starkly reminds us that there is a limit to the amount of roughness a body can bear.

Cultivation

The Woodlanders deliberately employs the double formation of cultivation to signal the tensions between culture and nature, refinement and roughness, urban and rural. Within this doubleness reside the problems posed to modern subjectivity that the

²⁴⁴ Hardy's critics have always had to grapple with his particular blend of natural and human tragedies. In an early critical essay on *The Woodlanders*, William Matchett observed, "Man must always suffer, for he must always desire beyond the possibility of fulfillment. It is Nature's law." "*The Woodlanders*, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing," 261.

novel takes up: cultivation is at once self-practice and an erasure of self.²⁴⁵ Rather than being solely a process of self-improvement, an active training of the self, cultivation – especially for Grace – more often marks a loss of agency. And that loss is noted through the novel’s reorientation of characters’ sense perceptions, even the very characters whose sense perceptions are depended upon to mark their cultivation.²⁴⁶ Cultivation is always haunted by its own reversion. By exposing how Grace’s cultivation takes place in her body but is measured and watched primarily by men, Hardy demonstrates that the most intimate, unmediated perceptual practices are always performed, watched, and interpreted according to prevailing social codes. As much indictment of modernity as it is manifestation, *The Woodlanders*’s figuring of cultivation explores how self-definition arises from wealth, education, locality, and labor.

The Woodlanders uses “cultivation” as both agricultural process and class mobility metaphor and that overlap is significant. The “mental training and tilling” of the metaphor of cultivation relies on a pre-existing idea of the shaping of the senses. In Chapters One and Two I posited the mid-Victorian belief in a trainable, modern understanding of the body influenced by industrialism and scientific rationalism. Hardy

²⁴⁵ In this way Hardy’s cultivation is different from Michel Foucault’s “care of the self,” which relies on self-conscious practice. Cultivation in *The Woodlanders* participates in both parts of Foucault’s chronology of self-care: the writing and study that are part of the ancient dictum, “Take care of yourself,” but also the complicated mixture of self-renunciation and relations with others that characterizes the later Christian and secular belief, “Know Thyself.” “Technologies of the Self,” 16-49.

²⁴⁶ The cultivated characters rarely live out any upwardly mobile ideal and are much more like the “cultivated plants” on which Darwin grounds his methodology in *On the Origin of Species*. Cultivated plants best display the effects of those around them, the workings of variation and natural selection. *On the Origin of Species*, 110. For a sample of the Darwinian influence specifically in *The Woodlanders*, see Gillian Beer, *Darwin’s Plots*; George Levine, “*The Woodlanders* and the Darwinian Grotesque” in *Thomas Hardy Reappraised: Essays in Honor of Michael Millgate*; and Ronald D. Morrison, “Love and Evolution in Thomas Hardy’s *The Woodlanders*.”

shows us how cultivation and its sensory performances can be both unconscious and highly conscious. Kate Flint has established the Victorians' nuanced understanding of the individualism of perception: "both the individualism of consciously evoked social knowledge and experience and of factors of memory and association which belonged to the increasingly investigated world of the unconscious."²⁴⁷ The idea of cultivation I discuss in this chapter combines both of those definitions of individualism, being both "consciously evoked social knowledge" and drawing on "factors of memory and association." As such, cultivation is a kind of individual perception that is inescapably social, a training of the body to register certain sensory experiences in a way that is defined as middle class.

That definition proves difficult, however; the novel's class delineations are initially rigid but soon prove to be more nebulous, dependent upon the ephemerality of bodily feeling. When Grace and Fitzpiers return from their honeymoon, their position within Little Hintock immediately causes tension. Fitzpiers is no longer accorded the courtesies based on his status as a stranger from an old family; Grace's liminal status reveals that her cultivation has not effected as complete a transformation as Fitzpiers – or Melbury – would have liked. Fitzpiers defines himself as a member of a "different species" from the working people of Hintock, but Grace allies herself with them, "for my blood is no better than theirs." The nexus of class differences is thus laid out: is it practice or inheritance, work or blood? Their conversation cannot arrive at a consensus, but the terms are unsettling and suggest that the division that Fitzpiers "feels" is not as well defined as he would wish. He believes that Grace's status is based on her education,

²⁴⁷ Flint, *Visual Imagination*, 311.

her cultivation, but he bases his own superiority on blood, on what he, with faux humility, calls his “poor old ramshackle family” (179).

He is reminded that, although “in their travels together she had ranged so unerringly at his level in ideas, tastes, and habits,” she will always be a Hintock native and, thus, lower on the social scale than he. Outside of Hintock, she is safely genteel. But as soon as they return, Fitzpiers must assert, “Ah, *you* – you are refined and educated into something quite different.” That he says this “self-assuringly” suggests that it is not Grace who questions or even cares about the permanence of her new “ideas, tastes, and habits” but rather Fitzpiers who defines these as “refined” and wants desperately to believe that they are fundamental to Grace’s identity rather than extraneous (179). Fitzpiers wants Grace’s cultivation to be a finished product that can be equally well established either by training or by birth.²⁴⁸ Grace’s difficulties in maintaining her difference, in remaining cultivated, suggest that upward mobility is an ongoing process. Grace’s cultivation is more contested than Fitzpiers’ because it is work, not blood, artifice rather than nature – as evidenced by Melbury and Fitzpiers’ turn to Grace’s bodily expression for authenticating evidence of her cultivation. Paradoxically, Grace’s cultivation is questioned because it is unstable, yet others turn to her unstable bodily expression for proof of her cultivation.

The novel relies on the tension between Fitzpiers and Grace, particularly the tension of their alliance as “cultivated woman” to his “cultivated man.” Is cultivation what unites or divides them? Is Grace’s cultivation as valuable, as lasting as Fitzpiers’?

²⁴⁸ Pierre Bourdieu has described this difference as the “labour of deculturation, correction and retraining that is needed to undo the effects of inappropriate learning,” as opposed to those born to “legitimate culture, from the beginning.” *Distinction*, 71.

The pressures on the term cultivation arise from its dependence upon and separation from particular forms of wealth and labor. Raymond Williams has described a historical trajectory for both culture and cultivation; in the seventeenth century, “the tending of natural growth was extended to a process of human development.”²⁴⁹ From that process, then, “culture” was further extended in the nineteenth century to mean “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general.”²⁵⁰ *The Woodlanders* often reads like an attempt to capture this kind of culture, recording practices, as when Marty hand-hews spars, that have already almost vanished by the time that the novel is published.²⁵¹ This kind of culture, however, means being uncultivated.

Furthermore, cultivation does not simply indicate wealth. Assertions such as Eugene Goodheart’s, that Felice is “the most cultivated character” in the novel, reflect a conflation of wealth and cultivation that the novel itself does not bear out.²⁵² Its interest in exploring what makes Grace and Fitzpiers’ cultivation different (and using that term only in relation to those characters, not to Felice, the wealthiest character) suggests that cultivation is a mixture of wealth, birth, and, in even more complicated relation, work. The novel demonstrates how Grace’s educated cultivation differs from Fitzpiers’ bred cultivation by showing how her cultivation is the result of labor, “mental training and tilling” (108). By showing both sides of cultivation – agricultural and social – the novel suggests that cultivation always involves repetitive labor. Both the anthropological meaning of culture and the Arnoldian sense (“the best that has been thought and known

²⁴⁹ Williams, *Keywords*, 87.

²⁵⁰ Williams, *Keywords*, 90.

²⁵¹ See also James Buzard’s *Disorienting Fictions*. Buzard characterizes the end of the nineteenth century as a time “when *culture* was still striving to acquire its ‘s.’”

Disorienting Fictions, 7.

²⁵² Goodheart, “Thomas Hardy and the Lyrical Novel,” 220.

in the world”) position themselves in opposition to industrial production and what Arnold labels “our worship of machinery.”²⁵³ Yet *The Woodlanders* emphasizes that the repetitive labor of agriculture is akin to the repetitive labor of the factory: “Copse-work, as it was called, being an occupation which the secondary intelligence of the hands and arms could carry on without requiring the sovereign attention of the head, the minds of its professors wandered considerably from the objects before them” (26).²⁵⁴ Elaine Scarry has noted that, for Hardy, work is always repetitive, even when it is paused, allowing “work-as-perpetual-activity to continue even when work-as-an-action has stopped.”²⁵⁵

Multiple references to Grace’s “training” unite her cultivation with these other kinds of repetitive labor – with the difference, of course, that she is both worker and product, mindless laborer and one who is labored upon. Melbury makes himself both through his cultivation of timber and, later, through Grace’s cultivation. The second form of cultivation is made possible by the first. The novel works to demonstrate how, as far removed as a cultivated man like Fitzpiers wants to believe he is from the woodland practices, cultivation and culture are always the result of labor. Melbury labors to purchase Grace’s cultivation, and his body carries inescapable reminders of this labor,

²⁵³ Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 70, 7. Williams also discusses the “folk culture” that developed in the nineteenth century “to attack what was seen as the ‘mechanical’ (q.v.) character of the new civilization then emerging” *Keywords*, 89.

²⁵⁴ In this way, Hardy gives us a portrait of the Deluzean distinction between habit and repetition, or in this novel’s terms, between the reality and the ideal of cultivation: “habit never gives rise to true repetition: sometimes the action changes and is perfected while the intention remains constant; sometimes the action remains the same in different context and with different intentions” *Difference and Repetition*, 5.

²⁵⁵ Elaine Scarry. “Work and the Body in Hardy,” 105. While Hardy’s cultivation is based on an idea of repetitive labor, both the nineteenth-century anthropological meaning of culture and the Arnoldian sense position themselves in opposition to industrial production and what Arnold labels “our worship of machinery.” *Culture and Anarchy*, 70.

recording a topography of work: “He knew the origin of every one of these cramps; that in his left shoulder had come of carrying a pollard, unassisted, from Tutcombe Bottom home; that in one leg was caused by the crash of an elm against it when they were felling; that in the other was from lifting a bole” (26).

As hard as the novel works to tie cultivation back to labor, to show how cultivation can be worked toward and purchased, it also insists on the perhaps contradictory position that cultivation is separate from wealth. Grace’s attraction to Fitzpiers has little to do with his money or professional standing and much to do with her unrealized dream of the tenor of their life together. The narrator tells us, “His material standing of itself, either present or future, had little in it to give her ambition, but the possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life, of subtle psychological intercourse, had their charm” (164). By delineating this separation, cultivation is pushed even further inside the body. It is not just the home, dress, or manners purchased by wealth, it is an “inner life.” Notably, it is an inner life that is defined by its “intercourse” with others, not necessarily an end unto itself. Although most of the characters in the novel suffer crippling loneliness at some point, it is the cultivated characters who suffer the loneliness of isolation. The interiority of cultivation is maintained, paradoxically perhaps, by intercourse, an inner life created by reaching outside oneself. While Grace may stay up late reading as a child, she becomes cultivated by going off to school.

The effects of her cultivation are tested when her intercourse is more homely. And while Grace is the novel’s test case, it also asks us to consider Fitzpiers’ own cultivation and its relationship to wealth and birth. When they return from their honeymoon, Grace and Fitzpiers move into the Melbury home, “one wing of which was

quite at their service, being almost disused by the Melburys.” Melbury has the wing “scrupulously” refinished in their absence, and they return home to find that “[t]o make it all complete, a ground-floor room had been fitted up as a surgery, with an independent outer door, to which Fitzpiers’s brass plate was screwed.” Melbury’s attempt at completion is as ineffective as his attempts to eradicate Grace’s Hintock roots. This wing of the house can never be “complete” because it will always be attached to the rest of the house, a hybrid of new and old, professional and laboring-class, cultivated and rough. The marriage of Grace to Fitzpiers is not merely one of marrying up, of cultivation paying off; Fitzpiers flagging practice needs Melbury’s financial support. Hardy’s interest in familial degeneration here is physically constructed in the house and its wing, remodeled with paint, white-wash, and brass plate. Cultivation needs wealth, even as it needs to detach from it to claim its disembodied ethereality.

Through these assertions and reversions, the novel exposes the fallacy that cultivation is progressive. This expectation and its refutation are raised clearly and early in the form of Mr. Melbury, the uncultivated but “self-made” man who raises a cultivated daughter (31). When a hunter speaks rudely to Grace and her father, it is Mr. Melbury who is horrified that someone could speak so to Grace, “so well read and cultivated.” Although Grace’s educational accomplishments are foregrounded here, his next sentence establishes the economic reality underpinning those accomplishments: “Hasn’t it cost me near a hundred a year to lift you out of all that, so as to show an example to the neighborhood of what a woman can be?” By naming the cost of Grace’s education, he advertises his own wealth and his concurrent awareness that this money has not changed his own status. He does not feel entitled to be overtly offended at “the epithet applied to

himself,” but he does feel justified in channeling his offense through Grace and her questionable exemplification of all that “a woman can be” (85). Yet it is not the lack of recognition of Grace’s reading and cultivation that stings, but rather the realization that his investment has not paid off, and his wealth isn’t recognized either in its original form or its progeny.

Moving even further away from a discussion of Grace herself, Melbury follows up by offering to tell Grace “the secret” of the interaction: “’Twas because *I* was in your company. If a black-coated squire or a pa’son had been walking with you instead of me he wouldn’t have spoken so” (85). In attempting to bolster Grace’s improved status, Melbury conjectures about Grace’s companion, rather than Grace herself. Neither subject nor object, Grace disappears from Melbury’s imagined genteel scenario. She registers as neither embarrassingly native nor noticeably foreign, neither coarse nor genteel. Instead, she registers only the status of her companion. Thus, Melbury makes the decision on her behalf to reject Giles, as Giles will never give her the status that a “black-coated squire or pa’son” would. In measuring Grace’s status through her companion’s, Melbury attempts to erase his and Grace’s labor in purchasing and effecting her cultivation. In the desire to achieve Bourdieu’s “ease,” cultivation turns from practice to reception, as Grace turns from subject to object.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Ian Gregor attributes Grace’s confused subjectivity to the effort to “attune her ‘modern nerves’ to her ‘primitive feelings,’ the one giving her an almost painful awareness of herself as a subject, the other subduing that self in a powerful but indefinable longing for community. The conflict leads to deadlock.” “Hardy’s World,” 283.

Observation

The class divisions that are perceived – felt in the body and judged in others – are based not just on sensing rightly, but also on sensing wrongly. Vision is the dominant sense of cosmopolitanism, and it does not work in the Hintock woodlands.²⁵⁷ The native woodlanders primarily rely instead on touch or sound; this difference bolsters the division between Hintock and the outside world and orders status differences within Hintock, as well. Status is determined by the ways that characters carry with them a sense of unfamiliarity, defined at least in part, by the misuse of the senses. The wider world outside Hintock – London, Italy, even, incongruously, South Carolina – and the characters who breach the borders of the woods inscribe their external value systems, from a place where the woodland way of life is unknown and undesired. Certain characters carry with them a sense of the foreign, a sense that is both within them, shaping their perception, and without, shaping others' perceptions of them. This accords with Patricia Ingham's idea that "what distinguishes these outsiders is a high degree of self-awareness, a perception of themselves as social performers." What they perform is their sensed *misperceptions* of Hintock.²⁵⁸

When Giles, driving the heavily-loaded timber carriage, is obstructed by Mrs. Charmond's carriage, their stand-off exemplifies the politics of sensing in Hintock. The jam should have been prevented by the timber carriage's elaborate set of bells, "carried on a frame above each animal's shoulder, and tuned to scale, so as to form two octaves" (95). The anthropological description of the bells suggests both the ways that this custom

²⁵⁷ Lynda Nead describes the Victorian city as "written and consumed as a visual spectacle." *Victorian Babylon*, 57.

²⁵⁸ Patricia Ingham, "Introduction," *The Woodlanders*, xxiv.

is antiquated – “Melbury was among the last to retain horse-bells” – and how it is uniquely suited for this landscape, “where the lanes yet remained as narrow as before the days of turnpike roads” (95). On narrow, foggy roads, the bells are a better warning system than the Charmond lamps. But the Charmond coachman trumps that with logic not particular to any topography: “our time’s precious [. . .] You are only going to some trumpery little village or other in the neighborhood, while we are going straight to Italy” (96). The Charmond way of moving through Hintock is implicitly informed by their Italian destination. The “clanging of the sixteen bells” ultimately signals only annoyance to the powerful Felice Charmond (96). Despite their suitability, Giles’ “sound-signals” communicate only his powerlessness, as this incident influences Felice’s later decision to evict Giles (95).

Giles’ ability to sense the woodlands rightly is part of his own belatedness. The novel at once valorizes Giles and records his worthlessness. “The casual glimpses which the ordinary population bestowed upon that wondrous world of sap and leaves called the Hintock woods had been with these two, Giles and Marty, a clear gaze” (330). Giles and Marty’s keen sensing of their environment does not prevent, and may even enable, their lives as itinerant, manual laborers, unrewarded materially, unappreciated socially. In contrast, Fitzpiers, as for Felice Charmond, is “extrinsic” and, thus, “unfathomed” (183), and that marks their class distinction more strongly than wealth, since the novel makes it clear that Fitzpiers is accorded a respect that “Melbury had to do without though he paid for it over and over” (184). Fitzpiers experiences not the “clear gaze” of Marty or Giles, but rather “distaste,” a distancing sensory reaction that gives no helpful orienting

information (183). He reinforces his own sense of class superiority, as well as others' perception of it, with this reaction.

Fitzpiers half-drunkenly articulates the mutually reinforcing relationship between location, status, and nativity after Melbury picks him up from a fall off his horse. Fitzpiers complains about his return to Hintock from London: "Ah, there's the place to met your equals. I live at Hintock – worse, at Little Hintock! – and I am quite lost there. There's not a man within ten miles of Hintock who can comprehend me" (255). Fitzpiers' claim that he is "quite lost" in Hintock corroborates his disorienting sensory reaction of distaste and his willful sense of unfamiliarity. That he has just been thrown after mounting the wrong horse reinforces his unfitness for country life. His next statement, that no one can "comprehend" him, suggests that he is also lost as object, not subject. When Melbury discovers Fitzpiers has been thrown, he does not *look* around for him, he *feels*, the darkness of the woods making this rescue mission one of groping touch (253). Fitzpiers lies, helpless, until he feels "Melbury's touch," then the older man "poured [rum] down the surgeon's throat" and hoisted him onto the horse without identifying himself (254). Part clumsy plot maneuver, Melbury's manhandling of Fitzpiers also gives physical dimension to Fitzpiers' own sense of being helplessly hidden in the woods, obscured by the woods' darkness from what he perceives to be his proper place, the big city.

The tension between those who sense the woodlands rightly and those who do not translates to a greater tension, that between the anchor of locality and the possibility of removal inherent in upward mobility. *The Woodlanders'* tie to its circumscribed location cannot exist without a concurrent, continual awareness of what lies outside that location.

These complex tensions of removal are expressed by Marty South's hair and the trope of transplantation. Her hair begins the novel as her "own" and ends as "false tresses" that have been "transplanted" onto Felice's head (13, 327). Native woodlander Marty is introduced – by way of her hair – to the novel in its first pages, through Barber Percomb's gaze, which forms an "impression-picture of the extremest type, wherein the girl's hair alone, as the focus of observation, was depicted with intensity and distinctness, while her face, shoulders, hands, and figure in general, were a blurred mass of unimportant detail, lost in the haze and obscurity" (11). The part of her destined to leave (her hair) is thrown into high visual relief, while her body, so rooted in Hintock, remains a "blurred mass of unimportant detail," an invisibility that endures to the end of the novel, her "contours of womanhood so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible" (366).

Only Marty's hair is presented visually, "chestnut" colored, a tree not native to England but naturalized during Roman times (11). Her hair is both native and foreign, common enough to blend into and become part of the woodland scenery, yet "rare and beautiful" enough that she shares the color only with Felice Charmond – "a shade you can't match by dyeing" (11, 12). While Marty never leaves Hintock, her hair is destined for more exotic locales, desired by Felice because there is a "foreign gentleman in her eye" (14). She will only wear the hair once she has "go[ne] off abroad" (13). The blended language of nativity and sensing suggests that only that which is unfamiliar can be seen clearly in the world of the novel: Marty's hair, Felice's lover. Visual clarity and detail, then, are ways of measuring relief, of measuring difference.

But the initial visual clarity of these objects eventually leads to unexpected consequences: Fitzpiers leaves Felice after the discovery of the "false tresses" that

attracted him to her; the “foreign gentleman” of Felice’s eye kills her. Visual clarity does not necessarily signal understanding. The novel suggests that insight and foresight have very little to do with actual sight, as that which can be seen clearly often is not seen rightly.²⁵⁹ The perceptual hierarchy imported by the outsiders, whereby the woodlanders’ methods of sensing the world are made into evidence of lower class status, is not only inappropriate in the woodlands but generally illusory. In 1887, at the time of *The Woodlanders*’ publication, Hardy recorded in his notebook, “I was thinking a night or two ago that people are somnambulists – that the material is not the real – only the visible, the real being invisible optically. That is because we are in a somnambulistic hallucination that we think the real to be what we see as real.”²⁶⁰ This way of thinking is demonstrated in *The Woodlanders* when Melbury has “a tragic vision” that “traveled with him like an envelope” (229). The visual, this suggests, can be an illusion reflective only of the individual’s inner state, a recursion to the modern preoccupation with self-reflection.

The novel insists that sensory subjectivity is neither purely visual nor entirely comprised of interiority. Elsewhere the novel suggests that observation – a multi-sensory activity – is a necessary condition for subjectivity in *The Woodlanders*. This form of sensory subjectivity is predicated on the individual’s formation as a particular body in a particular world – not just a pair of eyes, but a complete sensory being. Hardy’s observational dynamics have been exclusively discussed in visual terms, what George

²⁵⁹ Kate Flint touches on this idea in *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, reading *Aurora Leigh* and John Everett Millais’s painting *The Blind Girl* to argue that blindness, while a handicap, was also a potential source of insight, vision turned inward. *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, 64.

²⁶⁰ Hardy, *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, 186.

Levine has called the “self-consciousness about seeing or being seen.”²⁶¹ Julie Grossman rightly notes that Hardy’s movement between characters’ and narrator’s points of view examines the “psychological relationships between seeing and understanding, observation and meaning.”²⁶² At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that Hardy’s observation scenes are not exclusively visual, that observation is a multi-sensory activity, one that involves not just the distancing act of looking but the more intimate senses of hearing and touch.

Both the observer and the observed depend upon their surroundings to hide or reveal information. We are told, for instance, that for Felice, the woods “had the advantage of being a place in which she could walk comparatively unobserved” (233), while Suke Damson ensconces herself in a hedge, “to watch unseen for a passer-by” (349). The detailed delineation of the observer’s contact with the natural world rises out of the novel’s concerns with the tensions of location – specifically, how a subject’s physical proximity to the woodlands prohibits or enables her class mobility. The plot device of observation, steeped as it is in sensing the woodlands, becomes a way for the reader to observe the observers, to discern the different ways that subjects position themselves in the natural and social worlds. The resulting subjectivity, situated in a community of observers, is predicated on its own awareness that the subject is always also an object.

Jonathan Crary’s description of the condition of spectacle, “the arrangement of bodies in space,” characterizes Hardy’s careful, sometimes ponderous, positioning of the observers and observed. Hardy’s project, however, cannot be captured by Crary’s

²⁶¹ George Levine, “Shaping Hardy’s Art,” 545.

²⁶² Grossman, “Thomas Hardy and the Role of the Observer,” 620.

discussion of spectacle as “not primarily concerned with *looking at* images but rather with the construction of conditions that individuate, immobilize and separate subjects.”²⁶³ Hardy’s representation of spectacle is never immobile. It is always relational, concerned with the reciprocities of observation: the ways that the observing subject can always be (and often is) turned into the observed object. When Suke Damson climbs into her hedge to watch Fitzpiers walk by, “Her light cotton dress was visible to Tim lounging in the arbor of the opposite corner, though he was hidden from her” (349). These bodies are not necessarily separated by their spectatorship; often, the condition of being an observer is a reminder of one’s inescapable place in the community.²⁶⁴

It is also important to distinguish that spectacle, for Hardy, is at once a part of the frenzied visual culture of modernity and something separate, something that pre-exists that culture. It is both part of what Cates Baldridge calls “modernity’s attack upon Little Hintock” and something pre-modern, essential to the woods.²⁶⁵ We are told that, for Marty and Giles, “The artifices of the seasons were seen by them from the conjuror’s own point of view, and not from that of the spectator’s” (341). Nature is a spectacle, we are reminded, and one that we all observe. By their very alignment with the spectacle of

²⁶³ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 74.

²⁶⁴ Hardy may here be drawing on Adam Smith’s eighteenth-century idea of sympathy, which is conceived primarily in spectatorial terms: “The compassion of the spectator must arise altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation, and, what perhaps is impossible, was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment.” Hardy turns this around, though, in considering what others sense when looking at the self. Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 8.

²⁶⁵ Baldridge, “Observation and Domination,” 192. This reading accords with George Levine’s insight that the politics of observation in Hardy’s fiction leave protagonists “damned by respectability *and* by resistance to it, for convention is not merely outside them like a police force but inside them like a conscience.” Levine, “Shaping Hardy’s Art,” 534.

nature rather than with man or technology, Giles and Marty are marked as belated characters. It is not just their rural knowledge; it is their position as the “conjurers” of nature, a spectacle that does not turn its own observing subjects into objects. Neither Marty nor Giles is sufficiently aware of him or herself as an object – indeed, very few others think of them as worthy of observation. When Marty, “a motionless figure,” is observed in the closing paragraphs of the novel, the woodland men who see her no sooner recognize her than they forget her. By manipulating the spectacle of nature, Marty and Giles inadvertently get left behind. They are not just economically and erotically disadvantaged; they are temporally truncated through the novel’s conception of a subject predicated on objectification.

We see a particular kind of modern subjectivity being constructed here, one that must necessarily be aware of itself as an object, but is not necessarily less of a subject in that awareness.²⁶⁶ In fact, it is often those who are not aware of themselves as objects who suffer a loss of sensory agency in the novel. Early in the novel, Giles “fancied he discerned a woman’s dress through the holly-bushes which divided the coppice from the road.” Giles is not the only one who observes this woman walking down the road, however; he also “became aware of the presence of another man, who was looking over the hedge on the opposite side of the way.” Giles and Fitzpiers stand off on either side of the road, watching the “figure of the unconscious Grace.” Unaware of her status as observed object, Grace is reduced to a visual metonymy of her full self, just a “woman’s

²⁶⁶ The dynamics of subject-object perception in Hardy have also been explored by William Cohen, who argues that Hardy imbues the landscape of *The Return of the Native* with sensory perspicacity, which enables “a fluid shift between roles as object and subject” to show connection between individual and epochal time scales. “Faciality and Sensation in Hardy’s *The Return of the Native*,” 448.

dress,” a “figure.” She is represented as “unconscious” not just of the men’s scrutiny, but of her own sensory experience.

Fitzpiers, on the other hand, notices Giles watching him (watching Grace) and, “Seeing that Winterborne was noticing him, he let his [eye-]glass drop with a click upon the rail which protected the hedge, and walked away in the opposite direction.” Fitzpiers is aware of his own status as object of observation and reacts with an agency that Grace does not have. Observing and being observed – being a subject who is aware of one’s own object status – creates the possibility for a stronger subjectivity, thrown into relief by the juxtaposition of who senses and who does not. Fitzpiers, at once subject and object, emerges as a new, mysterious, yet important arrival. Grace, newly returned to Little Hintock, is always the “interesting object of their contemplation,” where “their” is Giles and Fitzpiers in this instance but could also be Melbury, Felice, or the woodlanders. She is always the object, her own contested cultivation at once insurance that she is “interesting” and that she does not do the contemplating.

While Giles and Fitzpiers emerge as fully sensing subjects in this scene, there remain sensory details included that do not accord with any one sensory perspective. The “click” that Fitzpiers’ glass makes is one of many aurally magnified moments in the novel. It is unlikely that Giles, across the road, standing in a rustling, scratching “belt of holly,” could hear that click – or, if he could, that it wouldn’t also alert Grace. The scene, although told from Giles’ visual perspective, conveys a more omniscient sense of acoustics, wherein the narrator conveys the sounds of the woodlands in detail so minute as to be impossible for one person to discern, assembling a collage of sounds that no one person would be able to hear (65). The characters’ handling of these objects – holly, rail,

glass – creates a sensory experience that none of them shares. The reader receives an exaggeratedly acute sense of woodland life, while the characters, by comparison, seem to get a very small slice of the sights and sounds of any given moment. This further enforces the place of object status in subjectivity through the reader's own awareness of herself as an observer and of the characters as objects, still more sensory information lying outside any one perspective.²⁶⁷

Return

Thus, *The Woodlanders* explores two, mutually resistant ideas about subjectivity that are never resolved: that cultivation undesirably reduces subjects to objects but that being a subject in the world requires an awareness of one's own object status. This reading of the novel has ramifications for our understanding of late-Victorian conceptions of class mobility. Hardy's darker vision of the possibilities of cultivation suggests that middle-class identity cannot be instilled or recognized with the confidence inherent in the upward mobility narrative.²⁶⁸ Middle-class identity here is neither reliably attainable nor sustainable. In the training and tilling of cultivation, new supplants old supplants new: a

²⁶⁷ Interestingly, Hardy felt himself to be too sensorily keen at times. Gillian Beer reports his "hypersensitivity to tactual experience." *Darwin's Plots*, 236.

²⁶⁸ Hardy's depiction of the failures of upward mobility may be colored by his own ambivalence about the changes brought by urbanization and by education, the sort of upward mobility that he shares with Grace Melbury. Michael Millgate describes the "central conflict" in Hardy's life as the changes wrought on English rural life during the nineteenth century. Hardy remembered his own childhood happily, Millgate maintains, as part of "[t]he old rural England of ballads, folk dance, the organic community, and the oral tradition," and resented the continuity destroyed by the emergence of modern life. Yet he recognized the social, economic, and ethical improvements. *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, 34-5.

cyclical narrative of return rather than progress. An incident early in the novel embodies this return. At Giles' party to court Grace, her dress is marred; a servant "in his zeal to make things look bright, had smeared the chairs with some greasy furniture-polish, and refrained from rubbing it dry in order not to diminish the mirror-like effect that the mixture produced as laid on." By rubbing off on Grace's dress, the polish adds to the feeling of the inescapable materiality of Giles and Grace's difference. Her efforts to reassure him (it was "not a new" dress) highlight their differences, the ways in which he lacks the polish to be her husband (73).

But "polish" here can be read as both material event and metaphor, a reading that suggests their positions are not so entrenched, that materiality does not indicate permanence. The furniture polish does not actually leave the desired "mirror-like" finish; it ends up merely greasy. The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of polish, "to bring to a finish or complete state," suggests that the furniture's greasy state undercuts the idea of polish. The finished state is an illusion, a mirror that is merely greasy. The false hope of telos offered by the idea of polish is carried out in nineteenth-century women's education, as the name "finishing school" suggests. The novel shores up this metaphor by juxtaposing the furniture polish incident with Mr. Melbury's categorization of Grace as a "gem he had been at such pains in mounting." He wants the Grace who returns to Hintock to be finished, polished, a gem he is loathe to "sacrifice" as if her polished state is static. Indeed, he wants explicitly to "preserve her on her elevated plane" (84).

Melbury's idea of Grace as a gem he is loathe to "sacrifice" highlights the false sense of completeness in class perceptions more generally. Even as he imagines her thus, he simultaneously observes that "the homeliness of Hintock life was fast becoming

effaced from her observation as a singularity” (84). Polish is caused by rubbing, but it is also something that can be rubbed off. Polishing and effacing are two processes that are opposed perceptually – polish adds while effacing detracts – but they are revealed as opposite sides of the same coin. Class positions feel entrenched, like the feel of the greasy polish, but that feeling is ephemeral, due to break down, rub off like all of Hardy’s nature, the friction of regular life effacing anything that stands out. Grace’s fortune is told with playing cards picturing “kings and queens [that] wore a decayed expression of feature” (75). Hardy’s interest in old families – Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders*, Alec d’Urberville in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* – resides in their degeneration, the ways that their lineage is expressed and changed through time. The playing cards at Giles’ party point to the decay of any queenliness that Grace attains, the way that time, in the form of players’ fingers, will always efface. The novel simultaneously delineates the perceptual differences indicative of class status and suggests that effacement is always on the other side of polish. Any attempts at individual change are temporary, as likely to polish up as to rub off.

The circular logic of personal fulfillment is echoed in the narrative’s form. Based on the seasonal cycle, it comprises other loops, repetitions, and doublings, which confound any notion of linearity and add a formal element of return.²⁶⁹ The novel works over and over at the same territory, adding in variations but never explicitly moving

²⁶⁹ Margaret Mahar makes a similar point about Hardy’s non-linearity in arguing that Hardy turned to poetry as an escape from the novel form, which he “found increasingly sterile as he attempted to fill – or fulfill – the demands of narrative form.” Mahar takes a different tack, though, in arguing that Hardy turns away from the Aristotelian plot, refusing or unable to generate meaning through the difference from beginning and end, and instead made meaning through the “identity of rhyme.” “Hardy’s Poetry of Renunciation,” 304, 305.

forward. Figures are lined up in patterns, as when Fitzpiers watches Suke, Marty, and Grace go through the newly-painted gate or when Grace is confronted with her “fellow-women,” Felice and Suke, when Fitzpiers is in danger (262). They are differentiated, but only to suggest they are always just different versions of one another, not individuals, capable of individual agency for change. The narrator makes these duplications most specific when Fitzpiers attends Giles’s deathbed. Twice in this scene, we are told that the “spectacle” of Grace at Giles’s deathbed is “the counterpart of one that had had its run many months before, in which [Fitzpiers] had figured as the patient, and the woman had been Felice Charmond” (319-20). The previous scene is “almost similar in its mechanical parts,” suggesting that any novelistic action is only the assemblage of concrete elements that can be arranged in different patterns – a point emphasized by the alliteration of the pairings, FFGG (314). From within this mechanical arrangement, however, we get a lesson in textual interpretation; these scenes are “infinite in spiritual difference,” a difference emphasized as much as their similarity in outline (315).

The texture of meaning here is at once more and less than the sum of the visual parts. While Grace and Giles’ bedside scene is more tender and more tragic than Felice and Fitzpiers’ mutual attempts to stave off ennui, the scenes’ similarity in outline and position is still significant. The novel’s explicit attention to the pattern of figures, combined with the difference in intention behind those figures, suggests that meaning accrues even in the absence of progress. The very similarity of the scenes, contrasted with their different emotional valences, subverts the narrative expectations for change, growth, or progress that are introduced in the beginning through Grace’s change in status. The Melbury-Grace-Fitzpiers class distinctions, so clearly delineated at the beginning of

the novel, begin to blend. Melbury's superior financial position gives him precedence over Fitzpiers, and Grace's class position grows ever more questionable. Other figures are swapped in, tried on: Suke and Felice for Grace, Giles for Fitzpiers, suggesting that this union of a cultivated man to a cultivated woman cannot sustain the specificity of those terms. The narrative drive of upward mobility is weakened, as its effects prove impermanent, its conclusions attenuated.

The paradox is that those who cannot sense the woodlands rightly are effaced from that way of life, but that does not prevent the simultaneous erosion of that life. Rather than a story of progress or nostalgia, it ends, simply, as a story of cyclical return. The novel retains both Grace and the reader in the frustrated telos of cultivation. By constructing this loop and undoing the linear narrative of upward mobility, we are contained by the circularity that is typically found to be part of Hardy's sense of doom. Without the closure afforded by the traditional ending of marriage, *The Woodlanders* holds the reader in a kind of stasis, exacerbated by the conflicting, unresolved models of sensory subjectivity.

This lack of resolution is part of the non-progressive nature of the novel, part of Hardy's refusal to guarantee the success of any individual efforts at self-transformation. Rural topography and modern spectacle alike render sensory subjectivity problematic, but the novel suggests that modern class mobility inevitably leaves certain members stranded, unconscious like Grace or left behind like Giles. The futility, the backwardness of making spars by hand for thatched-roof cottages – two obsolete trades – are marked on Marty's "red and blistering" palm. The fateful near-collision with Mrs. Charmond takes place because Giles and Melbury haul timber on twisty roads little used since the advent

of the railroad. But the counterparts to these practices – machine production, modern roofing materials, railroads – all take place outside the realm of the book, and those who come in as part of that world certainly do not triumph in their swelling modernity. Shorn of the ideals of rural community and modern self-improvement, the end-of-century sensing subject struggles for self-definition with an urgency that suggests it is at once more important and harder to find.

Never Only

Through the form of return, the novel at once embodies and transcends its own conflicted figuring of modern sensory subjectivity. Because the formal pay-off of upward mobility is diluted, the novel cannot sustain its focus on individual subjectivity. Guided sensing, this seasonal, circular novel suggests, may not work because it is overly invested in the individual and does not take into account the ways individual perception is also always communal.²⁷⁰ The novel's minute inquiry into individual consciousness concludes that even the most intimate processes of percipient subjectivity cannot be understood in isolation – nor can the social process of cultivation be understood in terms of individual control. Two of Hardy's most conspicuous plot devices, the lifehold and

²⁷⁰ Michael Irwin makes a related point about what is, to Hardy, the paradox of individual perception: "Our very capacity to apprehend humanity's unimportance in the larger scheme of things is an attribute of a consciousness startlingly unique." *Reading Hardy's Landscapes*, 49.

the man-trap, point toward a narrative of sensory subjectivity that is shaped by its inevitable entanglements with the community.²⁷¹

Giles clings to his property ownership – and thus, his right to court Grace – through a lifehold, his right to own his home for the term of John South’s life. Greater than just a condition of ownership, however, lifehold becomes shorthand for the entanglements of every subject in the community – not just what one holds for life, but what holds one *to* life. The language of ownership and livelihood is combined, as when South apologizes to Giles, exclaiming, “what will ye do when the life on your property is taken away!” a comment that proves very telling, as it is Giles’s life that is taken away because his property is taken away. Giles’ lifehold depends on John South, who in turn pins his own life on the life of a tree. John South fears he will die because the tree outside his window, exactly as old as he is, will fall and crush him. The maneuvers made by Giles and Fitzpiers to obviate this fear (cutting off branches and cutting it down entirely) only exacerbate this fear and, ultimately, cause South’s death. By moving back and forth between the life of a human and the life of a tree, Hardy suggests both that the scale of the tragedies in this novel are limited (to the span of a human life) and that they are epochal (the span of all nature).²⁷² The novel guides us in moving outward from a

²⁷¹ The lifehold and the man-trap, despite their compound parallel structure, form an unusual point of conclusion for critical discussions of *The Woodlanders*. The lifehold has rarely been discussed. For discussion of the man-trap, see Jonathan C. Glance, “The Problem of the Man-Trap in Hardy’s *The Woodlanders*,” and Mary M. Saunders, “The Significance of the Man-Trap in *The Woodlanders*.”

²⁷² These concerns are also tracked spatially. J. Hillis Miller sees “the novel as a paradigmatic representation of the way dwelling in a place, living and dying there, changes it.” I would add that we might also see “dwelling” here as a noun, a description of an actual house and how *a* “dwelling in a place” changes that place. Hardy’s personal writings also evince an enduring interest in location. In an 1883 letter to Percy Bunting (refusing his suggestion that Hardy write an article on this subject), Hardy refers to the

single life to the life of the natural world, a dialectical move that we are required make over and over again, in the lifehold plot device, in our understanding of sensory subjectivity, and in the novel's seasonal time scheme.

The man-trap is an equally minor plot detail that has unexpectedly important narrative ramifications. Hardy lends significance to the man-trap when Felice shows Grace a collection of man-traps at Hintock House, and their use for catching poachers gives added dimension to the subplot of Suke Damson's affair with Fitzpiers and Tim Tang's jealousy. Once Tim places the man-trap, the narrator carefully details the scene, laying it out with visual precision, if narrative inelegance. "The position of things at that critical juncture was briefly as follows": Fitzpiers is positioned "[t]wo hundred yards to the right of the upper end of Tang's garden," and Grace is "about two hundred yards to the left"; between them lies "the diabolical trap, silent, open, ready" (354). This explicit positioning reinforces J. B. Bullen's idea that Hardy "aligns the narrator with his characters as yet another 'consciousness' in the narrative."²⁷³

The narrative construction depends, however, not just on the narrator as another consciousness, but also on the characters' continual awareness of other consciousnesses. In the scene positioning the man-trap, the narrator goes on to say that, given this arrangement, Fitzpiers should reach the trap "a good half minute before" Grace. Instead, though, Fitzpiers lands short of the trap. Rather than meet in the middle, they arrange for a more secluded location "to escape the unpleasantness of being watched or listened to by

laborer's "dread of being turned out of his house," and opines, "It is obvious that there is no remedy for this growing dis-association with locality – this complete reversal of the old condition of things – but some system by which he could have a personal interest in particular piece of land." Miller, *Topographies*, 51. Hardy, *Letters*, 123. 5 November 1883

²⁷³ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, 171.

lurkers – naturally curious by reason of their strained relations” (355). That these potential lurkers are “naturally curious” attends to the novel’s sense of observation as an acknowledged condition of sensory subjectivity. But this sentence’s confused pronouns add another layer of meaning: the lurkers are “naturally curious by reason of their strained relations,” where “their” is meant to refer to Fitzpiers and Grace’s strained relations, but might equally well refer to the couple’s strained relations with the lurkers, with their community. The strain is further evidence of a relationship that is, itself, always lurking behind any assertion of individuality. The community is always part of any event, and the role of the narrator is to embody that consciousness when there is no novelistic figure to do that work. When Grace escapes the man-trap she exclaims that “there has been an Eye watching over us to-night, and we should be thankful indeed!” (357). She attributes her luck in escaping the man-trap to fate or God, but Fitzpiers – always more aware of his own object status – is more discerning of the situation, adeptly turning this “Eye” around when he tells Grace that her father will figure out her whereabouts, as “somebody has seen me for certain” (359). Nothing celestial or spiritual watches over Grace – merely the human eyes of her community of lurkers.

This instinct is confirmed when Melbury finds the man-trap with its bits of Grace’s skirt in its jaws. Fearing the worst, he comes upon a woodman who had seen Grace and Fitzpiers and questions him:

“Was he clutching her tight?” said Melbury.

“Well – rather,” said the man.

“Did she walk lame?”

“Well ‘tis true her head hung over towards him a bit.” (360)

The dark humor of this passage is that the signs of affection that Fitzpiers and Grace exhibit – his arm around her, her head inclined toward him – are the same signs that Melbury looks for as evidence of Grace’s injury. She may well be trapped, the woodsman’s answers imply to the reader, but not in the way that Melbury suspects. The multi-directional dynamics of observation suggest that characters, narrators, and readers form a community that inevitably transcends any one individual’s perspective.²⁷⁴ Indeed, as shown earlier in the scene where Giles and Fitzpiers watch one another watching Grace, the narrowness of individual perspective always limits the amount of insight any one person can have. Hardy ultimately strives for a sense of awareness of oneself as a sensing subject: awareness of the ephemerality of cultivation, awareness of the self as object, and awareness of the narrowness of individual perception. Together, these things coalesce the grounding dialectic of the subject within the community.

By insisting that subjects always exist only in communities, Hardy updates rural nostalgia for a modern spectacular era. But he also evades those categories altogether, showing how observational dynamics predate modernity and how nostalgia is, itself, thoroughly modern. Sensory subjectivity, for Hardy, is neither pre-reflective nor entirely abstracted. To be a fully sensing subject in the world, this novel suggests, one must be as aware of that world as of oneself as a subject. By creating a narratorial technique that insists on perception as at once isolating and shared, cultivated and uncultivable, Hardy refuses to allow the individual the primacy of self-fashioning. Instead, he insists that

²⁷⁴ Again, this is a descendent of Adam Smith’s sympathy, particularly the ways that Smith understands sympathy working differently for individuals and communities. Smith argues that from sympathy humans learn “the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness, but the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society.” *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 10.

subjecthood means enduring the moments when “the eyes of a multitude continuously beat like waves” while still finding “the still water of privacy” (11). Signifying neither disillusionment nor resignation, Hardy’s metaphors indicate that perception is shaped by modern society but is also tied to something far more elemental. The novel insists on the move outward from the individual as a necessary narrative technique, and perhaps also as a necessary technique of self-preservation in a pulsing, perceiving world.

Conclusion: *Howard's End*

E. M. Forster's *Howard's End* considers a class identity formed and felt in the body, but ultimately lodges class formation in more concrete class markers. In doing so, it denies the power of self-fashioning inherent in guided sensing and lodges improvement instead in the more external pursuit of wealth and education. While Leonard Bast walks with the "lilting step of the clerk," he is more tellingly, permanently characterized by his "scurf of books and china ornaments" (52, 254). The futility of his self-improvement is exemplified by his pathetic collection of books, and his suffocating surroundings of cheap knick-knacks. The narrative of upward mobility loses steam as it moves outside the senses. Forster does not just present this as a *fait accompli*, however; *Howard's End* considers self-improvement and self-destruction as part of its overall ambivalence about England's emergence into the twentieth century.

By moving class identity out of the body, Forster's novel moves away from the mid-Victorian understanding of sensing as an amalgam of inside and outside. Guided sensing depends on an understanding of interiority that is informed by sensory information, not solely understood through modern psychology. The fragmented modern consciousness repels any attempt at trainable corporeal class status. The psychology of the early twentieth century cemented the division between inside and outside; the senses became purely external. We see this paradoxically through the metaphor of sight in one of the central conundrums of *Howard's End*. "To see life steadily and see it whole" never considers sight-as-sense, only sight-as-cognition. The question of sight here is about differences in consciousness. Although Forster reviled Arnold's view of art as

morally redemptive, he nonetheless takes up Arnold's description of Sophocles' vision. It becomes at once mantra and question – is it possible to see life steadily (as the Wilcoxes do) and to see it whole (as do the Schlegels)? If it is not possible to have both, is one more desirable than the other? Ultimately, the possibility of learning another way of seeing remains remote. In a novel that considers the Schlegels and Wilcoxes in turn, Leonard Bast stands apart, a case-study and a tragedy.

Intellectuals Margaret and Helen Schlegel meet Leonard at a concert, which he attends as part of his program of “improving myself,” a program that includes his work as a clerk, his top-hat, his reading of Ruskin and Stevenson and other “beautiful book[s]” (51, 114). Leonard is an example of mid-nineteenth-century guided sensing brought forward to a recognizably post-Victorian world. The novel asks us to consider whether he fails to maintain his middle-class professional identity because of his own weakness or because of social forces. But it also asks us to consider the nature of class delineation and aspiration, refusing to accept either that class aspiration is invigoratingly individualistic or relentlessly pre-determined. Indeed, the novel ultimately suggests that individual desire for self-fashioning *and* the forces that prevent it are products of their age: specific to London, the twentieth century, and English imperialism.

Both Leonard Bast's desire to improve and the impossibility of improvement are considered intrinsically modern: “His mind and his body had alike been underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they were always craving better food” (43). To be modern and to be poor is a particularly bad combination, the novel implies. To rise or to be satisfied seem easier in the past, as with the Basts of previous generations, who have risen from “just nothing at all [. . .] agricultural labourers and that

sort” to the precarious gentility of Leonard’s generation of clerks and commercial travelers (234). Unable either to consolidate that gentility or to rise above it, Leonard is trapped in a no-man’s land of desire and dead ends.

One of questions of the novel is whether, as the imperial businessman Mr. Wilcox’s repeatedly claims, “there will always be rich and poor” based on work, or whether class differences can, and should, be mitigated. Leonard’s slide toward poverty reveals the very effort at improvement to be a luxury. He tells Helen that “there’s nothing like a bailiff in the house to drive it out of you. When I saw him fingering my Ruskins and Stevensons, I seemed to see life straight real, and it isn’t a pretty sight” (235). For Leonard, the life of the mind is a luxury that can be bought only with middle-class stability. When his professional life fails, he finds he can no longer read. Even though a lack of work would seem to produce leisure time, he cannot concentrate on what seem like superfluous, rather than fundamental, pursuits. Self-improvement is worthless as a pursuit available only to those who already have middle-class stability.

The problems of class mobility are presented in part as a generic issue. The subjects of the novel are explicitly delineated by the narrator: “We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet. This story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlefolk” (43). It is the latter category, those “obliged to pretend” gentility, that offers the greatest interest of interiority – those at once easiest and hardest to read. When the Schlegels first meet Leonard, Margaret thinks that “[s]he knew this type very well – the vague aspirations, the mental dishonesty, the familiarity with the outsides of books” (112). She both understands and does not understand him. The novel’s interest in

gentlefolk is at once sociological and emotional, a blend that fits somewhere between “the statistician or the poet.” The novel is concerned with the middle, is itself middling. It is the genre at once most concerned with interiority and also most aware of its limitations in representing interiority. The Victorian novel’s implicit focus on middle-class life has become a self-mocking Modernist truism.

Forster does not even narrate the false telos of cultivation. An even less effective version of Grace Melbury’s “mental training and tilling,” at once too ingrained and not ingrained enough, Leonard’s reading is just enough to dissatisfy him with his life and not enough to change it. He does not attempt to train himself to be a more successful middle-class professional. Instead, he attempts to find “culture” as if it resides inside a book or at a concert. The narrator comments that the great authors “mean us to use them for sign-posts, and are not to blame if, in our weakness, we mistake the sign-post for the destination. And Leonard had reached the destination” (117). Forster shows how Leonard sees culture as telos, strives for it, even reaches his destination, and yet never realizes that it is not a destination at all. Leonard’s inability to change himself is in part pre-determined by his circumstances and, as such, it bodes ill for all class aspiration. The rich will simply go on being rich and the poor, poor. Yet there is an element of whimsy, of social forces run amuck, that also pervades the novel.

At the end of the novel, Margaret muses that “cause and effect would go jangling forward to some goal doubtless, but to none that she could imagine.” She thinks that she can at least identify that “Leonard’s death brought her to the goal” of understanding Henry’s hypocrisy (332). But she doesn’t really understand him or her own relationship – his need for her brings her back again when he tells her that Charles will be jailed for

his part in Leonard's death. Even characters such as Mr. Wilcox, who believe very firmly in their own self-determination and improvement, are ultimately swept up in the unpredictable narrative of community. Individual self-fashioning is a necessary fiction, this novel implies, and it is the role of the novel to reveal both its necessity and its ultimate meaninglessness within the broader social world.

As we move into the twentieth century, we see Forster solidifying class distinctions, rather than making them more permeable. Leonard's hope that he will "come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus" through "effort" (48) is always accompanied by the opposite belief that "it was no good; this continual aspiration." He concludes, "Some are born to culture: the rest had better go on in for whatever comes easy." The narrative tension does not rest on Leonard's self-improvement or even on his self-destruction. He realizes that "[t]o see life steadily and to see it whole was not for the likes of him," and the novel does not prove him wrong. There is no attempt to suggest that Leonard may train his senses; if anything, the sensory training works the other way, as he becomes more like Jacky, even "catching her degraded deafness" (52). The cultural values of the middle class have become less important here than concrete particulars, like the return tickets that Helen mistakenly takes with her when she flees Oniton, an event that "crippled the Basts permanently" (317). Her attempts at reparation only leave her "rather richer than she had been before" (254). The only mobility is regressive, as the Basts decline and the Schlegels become wealthier. Rather than representing possibilities for self-improvement, *habitus* is presented as a self-fulfilling prophecy, a marker of class identity that is impossible to escape.

Forster's modernism suggests a different kind of interiority, one not open to the lessons of science. The shortcomings of guided sensing are summarized thus: "Science explained people, but could not understand them. After long centuries among the bones and muscles it might be advancing to knowledge of the nerves, but this would never give understanding" (331). Guided sensing suggests that it is possible to train bones, muscles, even nerves, to feel a certain way. But that explanation, Forster suggests, does not constitute understanding. Understanding means a less linear explanation for class mobility, one more focused on the inertia of concrete particularities. Margaret muses that the sequence of events leading up to Leonard's death can be explained, but it does not help her understand "In this jangle of causes and effect, what had become of their true selves" (330). Margaret sees these warring forces – cause and effect, true selves – as the key social components. But in guided sensing, there is no one true self, only a self who is able to harness cause and effect in service of self-improvement. Already partially undone in later Victorian novels, guided sensing drops out entirely in Forster's understanding of class mobility. Here there is only one true self – jostled, destroyed, or left intact by the random, impersonal forces of cause and effect.

Works Cited

- [Addison, J.]. *The Spectator*. Edited by Gregory Smith. Introduction by Peter Smithers. London and New York: Everyman, 1907. Originally published 19 June 1712.
- Agnew, Jean-Christophe. "A House of Fiction: Domestic Interiors and the Commodity Aesthetic." In *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America*. Edited by Simon J. Bronner, 133-55. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989.
- Anderson, Amanda. *The Power of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Armstrong, Nancy. *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- , *How Novels Think: The Limits of British Individualism from 1719-1900*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Edited by J. Dover Wilson. 1869. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- Austin, J. L.. *How to do Things with Words*. Eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975 [1962].
- Bain, Alexander. *The Senses and the Intellect*. 1855. Edited by Daniel N. Robinson. Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1977.
- Baldrige, Cates. "Observation and Domination in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 21 (1993): 191-209.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflection on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1981.
- Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary narratives in Darwin, George Eliot, and nineteenth-century fiction*. 1983. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Beetham, Margaret. *A Magazine of her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Women's Magazine 1800-1914*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Ben-Yishai, Ayelet. "The Fact of a Rumor: Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 62 (2007): 88-120.
- Bentham, Jeremy. *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*. 1804. London: Hunt and Clarke, 1827.

- Berg, Maxine. "Women's work, mechanization, and the early phases of industrialization in England," *The Historical Meanings of Work*. Edited by Patrick Joyce, 64-98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Besant, Walter. *Fifty Years Ago*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888.
- Bizup, Joseph. *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003.
- Black, Jeremy. *Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005.
- Boumelha, Penny. "The patriarchy of class: *Under the Greenwood Tree, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Woodlanders*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Dale Kramer, 130-144. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- , *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Briggs, Asa, *The Age of Improvement*. London, New York, and Toronto: Longman, Green, and Co., 1959.
- Bullen, J.B. *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Works of Thomas Hardy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Burnett, John. *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1978.
- Buzard, James. *Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Word of Nineteenth-Century British Novels*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Carens, Timothy L. *Outlandish Subjects in the Victorian Domestic Novel*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Carpenter, William B. *Principles of Human Physiology*. Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1845.
- Carlisle, Janice. *Common Scents: Comparative Encounters in High-Victorian Fiction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

- Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.
- , *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1999.
- Cohen, Deborah. *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Cohen, William A. "Faciality and Sensation in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*." *PMLA* 121 (2006): 427-52.
- , "Trollope's Trollop." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 28 (1995): 235-56.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone*. Edited by John Sutherland. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- , *The Law and the Lady*. Edited by Jenny Bourne Taylor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, transnational Exchanges*. Edited by John Brewer and Frank Trentmann. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006.
- Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. 1859. Edited by Joseph Carroll. Toronto: Broadveiw, 2003.
- Daston, Lorraine and Peter Galison. "The Image of Objectivity." *Representations*. 40 (1992): 81-128.
- Davidoff, Leonore and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. 1968. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*. 1853. Edited by Stephen Gill. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- , *Great Expectations*. Edited Angus Calder. London: Penguin, 1965.
- Dolin, Kieran. *Fiction and the Law: Legal Discourse in Victorian and Modernist Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Edison, Thomas "The Phonograph and its Future." *North American Review* 126 (1878): 527-36.

- Eliot, George. *Middlemarch*. 1871. Edited by Rosemary Ashton. London: Penguin, 1996.
- , "Natural History of German Life: Riehl." *Miscellaneous Essays*. Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1887.
- Ellis, Sarah Stickney. *The Women of England, Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*. Philadelphia: Herman Hooker, 1841.
- Ermarth, Elizabeth Deeds. *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Flint, Kate. *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Frank, Lawrence. *Victorian Detective Fiction and the Nature of Evidence: The Scientific Investigations of Poe, Dickens, and Doyle*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Freeman, Sarah. *Isabella and Sam: The Story of Mrs. Beeton*. New York: Coward, McGann, and Geoghegan, 1977.
- Freedgood, Elaine. "Fringe." *Victorian Literature and Culture*. 30 (2002): 257-63.
- , *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Forster, E. M. *Howard's End*. London: Edward Arnold, 1910.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1978.
- , "Technologies of the Self." In *Technologies of the Self*. Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton, 16-49. Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us About the European and American Past*. Edited by Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Gallagher, Catherine. *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

- Gerard, Alexander. *An Essay on Taste, To Which is Added, A Dissertation on the Same Subject by M. de Montesquieu*. Philadelphia: Engles and Stiles, 1804.
- Gitelman, Lisa. *Always Already New: Media, History and the Data of Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.
- Glance, Jonathan C. "The Problem of the Man-Trap in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*." *Victorian Newsletter* 78 (1990): 26-9.
- John Gloag. *Victorian Comfort: A Social History of Design, 1830-1900*. London: Adam and Charles Back, 1961.
- Goodheart, Eugene. "Thomas Hardy and the Lyrical Novel." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 12 (1957): 220.
- Goodlad, Lauren M. E. *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Grass, Sean C. "The Moonstone, Narrative Failure, and the Pathology of the Stare." *Dickens Studies Annual* 37 (2006): 95-116.
- Green-Lewis, Jennifer. *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Gregor, Ian. "Hardy's World." *ELH* 38 (1971): 274-93.
- Grier, Catherine. *Culture and Comfort: Parlor-Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.
- Grossman, Jonathan. *The Art of Alibi: English Law Courts and the Novel*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Grossman, Julie. "Thomas Hardy and the Role of the Observer." *ELH* 56 (1989): 619-38.
- Gunn, Simon. *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and authority and the English industrial city, 1840-1914*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Hancock, Stephen. *The Romantic Sublime and Middle-Class Subjectivity in the Victorian Novel*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Hardy, Florence Emily. *The Life of Thomas Hardy*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1970.
- . *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy*. New York: Macmillan, 1930.

- Hardy, Thomas. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- , *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Samuel Hynes. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- , *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Richard H. Taylor. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- , *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Edited by Margaret R. Higgonnet. 1891. London: Penguin, 1998.
- , *The Woodlanders*. Edited by Patricia Ingham. 1887. London: Penguin, 1998.
- Heller, Tamar. "Blank Spaces: Ideological Tensions and the Detective Work of *The Moonstone*." In *Wilkie Collins*, edited by Lyn Pykett, 244-70. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Hennelly, Mark M., Jr. "Reading Detection in *The Woman in White*." In *Wilkie Collins*, edited by Lyn Pykett, 88-108. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Hollander, Rachel. *Ethics of Representation in Novels by George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and Joseph Conrad*. Ph.D. Diss. Rutgers University, 2004.
- Holman, Andrew C. *A Sense of their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000.
- Hughes, Kathryn. *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton*. London: Fourth Estate, 2005.
- Humble, Nicola. Introduction to *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*. Isabella Beeton. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Irwin, Michael. *Reading Hardy's Landscapes*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- Jacobus, Mary. "Tree and Machine: *The Woodlanders*." In *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Dale Kramer, 116-34. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979.
- James, Henry. "Anthony Trollope." In *The Trollope Critics*. Edited by N. John Hall, 1-20. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981. Originally published in *Partial Portraits*, 1888.
- James, Louis. *English Popular Literature, 1819-1851*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

- Jay, Martin. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1993.
- Johnson, A.B. *The Physiology of the Senses; or, How and What we See, Hear, Taste, Fell, and Smell*. 1856. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.
- Joyce, Patrick. *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Kearns, Katherine. *Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism: Through the Looking Glass*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996.
- Kendrick, Walter M.. "The Eustace Diamonds: The Truth of Trollope's Fiction." *ELH* 46 (1979): 126-57.
- Kickel, Katherine. *Novel Notions: Medical Discourse and the Mapping of the Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Kreilkamp, Ivan. *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Kucich, John. *Repression in Victorian Fiction: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Charles Dickens*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- "Collins and Victorian Masculinity." In *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, edited by Jenny Bourne Taylor, 125-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Larson, Magali Sargatti. *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1977.
- Lastra, James. *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Levine, Caroline, *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt*. Charlottesville, VA, and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003.
- Levine, George. *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- "Shaping Hardy's Art: Vision, Class, and Sex." In *The Columbia History of the British Novel*. Edited by John Richetti, 533-59. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- , "The Woodlanders and the Darwinian Grotesque." In *Thomas Hardy Reappraised: Essays in Honor of Michael Millgate*. Edited by Keith Wilson, 174-198. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.
- Lesjak, Carolyn. *Working Fictions: A Genealogy of the Victorian Novel*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Lewes, G.H. *The Physiology of Common Life*. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1860.
- [-----.] "Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction." *Westminster Review*. 69-70 (1858): 271-87.
- Lloyd, Tom. *Crises of Realism: Representing Experience in the British Novel, 1816-1910*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1997.
- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 2 vols. Edited by Peter H. Nidditeh. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Logan, Thad. *The Victorian Parlour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Magnet, Myron. *Dickens and the Social Order*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.
- Mahar, Margaret. "Hardy's Poetry of Renunciation." *ELH* 45 (1978): 303-24.
- Matchett, William. "The Woodlanders, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 9 (1955): 241-61.
- McCuskey, Brian W. "The Kitchen Police: Servant Surveillance and Middle-Class Transgression." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28 (2000): 359-75.
- McKeon, Michael. *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- , *The Origins of the English Novel: 1600-1740*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- McMaster, Juliet. *Trollope's Palliser Novels: Theme and Pattern*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1978.
- Merish, Lori. *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture and Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000.

- Miles, Andrew. *Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Mill, J.S. *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*. Edited by J. M. Robson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973, I, 8.
- Miller, Andrew. "Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century." *SEL* 43 (2003): 959-1017.
- Miller, D.A. *The Novel and the Police*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1988.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "Interpretation in *Bleak House*," *Victorian Subjects*. Hemmel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990, 170-199.
- , *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- , *Topographies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Millgate, Michael. *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken For Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. London and New York: Verso, 1988.
- Morgan, Simon. *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century*. London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007.
- Morrison, Ronald D. "Love and Evolution in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*." *Kentucky Philological Review* 6 (1991): 32-7.
- Nagel, Thomas. *The View from Nowhere*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Nayder, Lillian. *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Victorian Authorship*. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Nead, Lynda. *Victorian Babylon: people, streets, and images in nineteenth-century London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Ogden, Daryl. *The Language of the Eyes: Science, Sexuality, and Female Vision in English Literature and Culture, 1690-1927*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Orvell, Miles. *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

- Perkin, Harold. *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Pettitt, Clare. *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Phegley, Jennifer. *Educating the Proper Woman Reader : Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004.
- Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*. Edited by Vicki Goldberg. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.
- Picker, John. *Victorian Soundscapes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Politics and Culture: Essays in Memory of Colin Matthew*. Edited by Peter Ghosh and Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Poovey, Mary. *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Psomiades, Kathy Alexis. "Heterosexual Exchange and Other Victorian Fictions: *The Eustace Diamonds* and Victorian Anthropology." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 1999 Fall; 33 (1): 93-118.
- Pullan, Matilda. *The Lady's Manual of Fancy-Work: A Complete Instructor in Every Variety of Ornamental Needlework*. New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1859.
- Rauch, Alan, *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Reader, W. J. *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.
- Redgrave, Richard. "Principles of Practical Art." A Catalogue of the Articles of Ornamental Art at the Great Exhibition, 1861.
- Roberts, Lewis. "The 'Shivering Sands' of Reality: Narration and Knowledge in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*." *Victorian Review* 23 (1997): 168-183.
- Ruth, Jennifer. *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006.

- Saisselin, Rémy. *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984.
- Saunders, Mary M.. "The Significance of the Man-Trap in *The Woodlanders*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 20 (1974-5): 529-31.
- Scarry, Elaine, *Resisting Representation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- , "Work and the Body in Hardy and Other Nineteenth-Century Novelists." *Representations* 3 (1983): 90-123.
- Schaffer, Talia. "Craft, Authorial Anxiety, and 'The Cranford Papers.'" *Victorian Periodicals Review* 38 (2005): 221-39.
- , "Taming the Tropics: Charlotte Yonge Takes on Melanesia." *Victorian Studies* 47 (2005): 204-14.
- Schramm, Jan-Melissa. *Testimony and Advocacy in Victorian Law, Literature, and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*. Edited by Margaret Higgonet. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Sensual Reading: New Approaches to Reading and its Relations to the Senses*. Edited by Michael Syrotinski and Ian Maclachlan. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001.
- Shaw, Harry. *Narrating Reality: Austen, Scott, Eliot*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Shaw, W. David. *Victorians and Mystery: Crises of Representation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Smiles, Samuel. *Self-Help*. New York: A.L. Burt and Co., 1866.
- Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. London: W. Strahan, J. & F. Rivington, W. Johnston, T. Longman; & T. Cadell in the Strand; & W. Creech in Edinburgh, 1774.
- Specimens of Needle-work Executed in the School of Great Cressingham*. Swaffham: John S. Gowing, 1845.

- Spencer, Herbert. *The Principles of Psychology*. 1855. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1897.
- Stephen, J. F. *A Digest of the Law of Evidence*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1877.
- Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Stuchebrukhov, Olga. "Bleak House as an Allegory of a Middle-Class Nation," *Dickens Quarterly*: 23 (2006): 147-68.
- Surridge, Lisa. *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005.
- Swafford, Kevin. *Class in Late-Victorian Britain: The Narrative Concern with Social Hierarchy and its Representation*. Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2007.
- Taylor, Jenny Bourne. *In the Secret Theatre of the Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology*. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Thomas, Ronald R. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- , "The Moonstone, detective fiction, and forensic science." In *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, edited by Jenny Bourne Taylor, 65-78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Titolo, Matthew. "The Clerk's Tale: Liberalism, Accountability, and Mimesis in *David Copperfield*." *ELH* 70 (2003): 171-95.
- Tracy, Robert. "Reading and Misreading in *Bleak House*." *Dickens Quarterly* 20 (2003): 166-71.
- Trollope, Anthony. *The Eustace Diamonds*. Edited by John Sutherland. London: Penguin, 2004.
- , *An Autobiography*. Edited by David Skilton. London: Penguin, 1996.
- Tyndall, John. *Sound*. New York: Appleton & Co., 1870.
- Vinge, Louise. *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition*. Lund, Sweden: LiberLäromedal, 1975.
- Welsh, Alexander. *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

“Western Circuit, Dorchester, July 23.” *The Times*, July 24, 1858.

White, Cynthia L. *Women's Magazines, 1693-1968*. London: Michael Joseph, 1970.

Wike, Jonathan. “The World as Text in Hardy’s Fiction,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*

Wilkinson, Sir J. Gardner. *On Colour and on the Necessity of a General Diffusion of Taste Among all Classes*. London: John Murray, 1858.

47 (1993): 455-71.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

----- . *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. New York: Harper and Row, 1958.

----- . *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Wornum. Ralph Nicholson, “The Exhibition as a Lesson in Taste.” in *The Art-Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Crystal Palace Exhibition*. 1851. Reprinted with introduction by John Gloag, New York: Dover, 1970.

Young, Linda. *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia, Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Megan Ward

Rutgers University
Department of English
510 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

2114 Fitzwater Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
Tel: (215) 694-5772
meward@rci.rutgers.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Literatures in English, Rutgers University, degree expected May 2008
M.A., Literatures in English, Rutgers University, 2004
M.Phil., Literatures in English, University of Oxford, 2001
Thesis: "Tactile Texts: Reading for Touch in George Eliot and Thomas Hardy"
B.A., English, Lawrence University, *magna cum laude*, 1997

OCCUPATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Rutgers English Department Mellon Summer Fellowship and Dissertation Workshop, 2007
Center for Cultural Analysis Fellowship, "Intellectual Property," 2005-2006
Rutgers English Department Mellon Summer Research Grant, 2005,
University of Delaware Special Collections
Qualls Fellowship for Victorian and Gender Studies, 2004-2005
Blum Teaching Fellowship, appointment as Barry Qualls' TA, 2003-2004
Rutgers English Teaching Assistantship, 2002-2003; 2006-2008
Rutgers English Department Coursework Fellowship, 2001-2002
Memorial Blood Centers of Minnesota, Donor Recruitment Representative, 1998-1999
Thomas J. Watson Foundation Fellowship, 1997-1998,
Funded one year of travel and research on George Eliot

PUBLICATIONS

"A Charm in Those Fingers': Patterns, Taste, and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*," forthcoming in *Victorian Periodicals Review*.

"*The Woodlanders* and the Cultivation of the Senses," under requested revision at *Studies in English Literature*.