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A Band of Sisters: Female Detectives, Authority, and Fiction from 1864 to the 1930s

A dissertation in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English

by

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May 2016
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Abstract:

Because mystery and detective fiction have been classified as “popular” genres, the complex ideas and ideologies that the authors work with and within reach a wide and varied audience through formulaic and familiar ways. The perceived conservatism of the genre allows authors to present and pursue distinctly anti-conservative views in disguise. For fictional detectives and, especially female detectives, disguise is an effective tool for solving their cases. Often, these detectives will disguise themselves as someone infinitely more conservative than they are in order to gain access to their quarry. Similarly, mystery and detective fiction wear a cloak of conservatism to gain closer access to their audience in order to effect change. While several stories and characters re-establish order and the status quo, several others allow for the possibility for the world to remain transgressive, allowing for women to pursue careers, to control their own destinies, to have authority that they would not normally have in an everyday domestic life. Many of these types of authorities appear at the same time in single works, often creating differing and competing attitudes within and about these stories and characters.

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crazy, infuriating, expensive, and fun dream. All I’ve ever wanted was a job where I would get paid to read books and talk about them, and now I have that (and a degree that says I’m an expert in talking about books). Thank you.

Dedication

To Nannaw, for putting up with me. I love you. To my mom and dad, who may not understand why I chose this path, or what I write, but support it anyway. To all the women and girls, both real and fictional, who forged new paths in all aspects of life not only for themselves, but for the many people their efforts and struggles impacted then and continue to impact. And finally, to Kate Warne, who had the boldness to know her own worth and to use it to her advantage.

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Introduction:

"It's like I always say, Penny. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. Then lick 'em."

It seems a bit odd to begin a study on the nineteenth century female detective with a line from the children's cartoon *Inspector Gadget*. However, I have fond memories of this Saturday morning staple that not only featured a detective who could call upon useful gadgets to assist him in his quest for justice, but also featured a young female behind the scenes who does most of the actual work and even apprehension of the criminal. However, because the Inspector is the official representation of the law, he receives the credit, and usually provides his niece Penny with some sort of wisdom about police work. However, as the story reveals, the work of detection is actually conducted by the Inspector's niece Penny and her intelligent, semi-speaking dog, Brain. The line quoted above also directly relates to how female detectives first joined the ranks of both real and fictional private and police forces. First women had to make their mark within the ranks of male dominated society and careers in order to establish their own authority on the basis of hard work, intelligence, and determination. Once women's authority had been established, sometimes through public activism and at times through fiction, authors began to deviate from the established traditions and conventions, allowing women more and more freedom to challenge authorities that prevent women from economic, social, and personal advancement.

While the first real recorded female detective appears already working in the pages of Allan Pinkerton's journals, and possibly in one surviving photograph, the fictional female detective was making her first appearance in print in England in 1864. Kate Warne's position within the Pinkerton Agency quickly grew from her initial pitch to Pinkerton to the head of an all-female division of the agency. Warne's personality and ability for quick and thorough

thinking solidified her as one of Pinkerton's top agents; from playing the southern belle to catch spies against the Union, to protecting President Lincoln from assassination attempts, to even dressing as a young man in Union uniform, Warne lived up to her promise of accessing and doing things that Pinkerton's male agents could not. Yet, it is unclear how aware the press was of Warne's, or of any other female agent's, existence; the only information we have today about Warne comes from Pinkerton's notebooks that survived the fires in his Chicago offices, and the newspaper advertisements for female agents that survive are scarce and most come from the 1880s. However, with the popularity of Edgar Allan Poe's tales of ratiocination and his detective C. Auguste Dupin, at least two British authors chose to create fictional female detectives at roughly the same time Warne was operating in the United States.

As these authors created their detectives, whether based on real accounts or not, the idea that these stories were nothing more than cheap entertainment took hold, and as a result many of these stories disappeared. Some were renamed and republished as the authors attempted to milk all of the monetary value out of publishers that they could. Others simply vanished. However, like Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's quest to reclaim forgotten women writers, this project seeks to recover and reclaim forgotten female writers and characters who made important comments and advancements in women's authority. While some of the authors examined in this project are male, their creations, these female detectives by both male and female authors from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, reveal important innovations and advancements in portraying women as intelligent, capable, career-minded, and independent individuals. The fictional female detectives who followed these early examples took many of these characteristics, which were written in the guise of a conservative genre, for a conservative audience, and transformed them into the adventurous, intelligent, even hard-boiled and tough-as-

nails detectives of the 1940s, and in even more recent publications, into detectives who can hold authority over their male colleagues on their own merit. The issues addressed by these characters, from sexism and earning respect, to domestic issues and questions of intelligence or intuition, have not changed since the first female detective was introduced in print. Even Pinkerton had his doubts about Warne until proven wrong by her own predictions and estimations of her worth. Yet, fictional employers were not so clear-sighted nor so progressive in their thinking; perhaps because the conservative genre of detective fiction required certain elements of the status quo to remain in place, or undisturbed, at least until the guise was ready to be torn away completely. However, as this study reveals, none of these authors waited for the populace's readiness to reveal the advantages to employing the minds of women in pursuit of justice, or in any pursuit for that matter. Many of these authors recognized what a character from *Dr. Horrible's Sing Along Blog* realized early on— "The status is *not* quo" (Act I. Blog 1)— and decided to create characters who challenged the audience's assumptions about female capabilities in what were considered male occupations.

In order to reclaim or rediscover these authors and characters, the first step was to identify the stories' existence. The likelihood of finding any of the stories in a library or private collection was a long shot. However, because so many of the stories were published and then republished under new titles or in collections, several stories survived while others faded into the shadows and were lost to time. Due to specific interests in preserving newspapers and magazines of the early 1800's, some have even been saved to microfilm, or preserved in special collections. And yet, what is left is only a fraction of what was produced during the century. In some cases, there are reasons that the stories did not survive— they were cheaply made and cheaply sold, and less intellectual reads, meant mostly to pass the time traveling by train.

However bad or outrageous the plotting and characterization might have been in these dime novels, they do still reveal strong female characters, who appear to outwit criminals and save the men they love, even if they do not end up with that man in the end. In fact, some of these stories, as terribly as they were written, turn out to be some of the most memorable works in this study, which shows that perhaps they were not so meaningless after all.

This project traces the beginnings of the female detective genre from its origins in the Gothic and Sensation heroines to the real women who fought for the right to be called citizens and even further for civil rights for themselves and other marginalized peoples to the women who appeared to challenge the authority of a male controlled polity, society, and economy.

Chapter one traces the beginnings of policing in both England and in the United States. Since the United States began as colonies of several European countries, the legal systems tended to mirror those of their home countries, so most of the chapter is spent on England's history of policing. I begin with the level of distrust that many people felt toward the police, or at the beginning, "thief-takers," who often turned out to be criminals themselves. Once a legitimate police force was proposed and implemented, the public's distrust did not abate. In fact, ineptitude and corruption were rampant in the first attempts at local law enforcement. Although it took dedication and many years, reforms were made and corruption was weeded out, and standards were raised regarding the level of education and experience a constable and detective should have. Eventually the police force earned the trust of the people they served by distinguishing itself from the past and distancing itself from the corruption that had plagued the force since its inception. This chapter also explores the anachronism of fictional female detectives, while in actuality women were not allowed in the ranks of the police until late in the nineteenth century (and only then as interviewers for female prisoners or victims) and officially

until the early twentieth century.

Chapter two discusses establishing the authority of detective fiction as a genre. As an emerging genre, there were and are no finite rules of detective fiction, other than there should be a crime or mystery to solve and that there should be someone to solve it. Beyond that, unless they follow the rules of the Murder Club from the 1930s, authors could choose to write anything into their stories. Because the rules were so fluid, authors chose to include elements from many sources in order to build this new genre. Even one of the first acknowledged detective stories, "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," includes elements of the Gothic that Edgar Allan Poe was so fond of using. As for other mystery and detective stories, particularly by women, Sensation fiction and domestic novels tended to influence the content of the genre as well. But these were not the only influences, for across Europe, Britain, and the United States, many other writers were creating the genre that would eventually become known as detective fiction (and I include the mystery genre here as well, because the person who discovers, pursues clues, and solves a mystery is, indeed, a detective, whether he or she is officially with the police or not). This chapter establishes the foundation that detective fiction as a genre has an inherent authority because of its "chaos to order" formula and therefore is specially situated to make social commentary while in the disguise of conservative and "easy" throw-away novels and stories.

Chapter three lays the foundations of women's rights activism and feminist thought, which began much earlier than the fight for the right to vote. Because women were not considered citizens, or considered at all, without legal or social status beyond that of her father or husband, a woman was practically a non-entity, legally absorbed into a sort of civil death. The fight for women's rights first took the form of defining a separate being who exists independently from men, particularly from husbands. From there, women activists could argue

their position as citizens who have certain rights to their own property and wages, and even further (and much later), the right to vote.

Chapter four explores the origins of the detective genre and the multiple influences that go into the making of a detective genre. Many genres combined to create what we know of today as detective fiction, such as the Newgate novel, Sensation fiction, social reform narratives, even many Enlightenment writings that stressed logic and reason over emotion. In this chapter, I focus mostly on the Gothic and Sensation origins of the detective genre because female protagonists feature prominently as detective figures in these narratives, and therefore directly relate to later representations of female detectives.

Chapter five studies the first two publications featuring official female detectives, W.S. Hayward's *The Revelations of a Female Detective* and Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective*, published approximately in 1864. The issues of whether these collections were mere novelty or are culturally and socially important become essential when discussing these characters who have been described as "honorary men" (Klein 29). However, because these stories begin what is to become a long history of female detectives, their actions and their statements, although written by men, are still important in the discussion of authority and how female characters react to the authority placed over them and the authority that is given them or that they take in their pursuit of criminals. The issue of the New Woman also becomes an important issue discussed in this chapter, for the concept did not just appear in the 1880s fully formed. It was a concept that was in conflict with the Cult of Domesticity during the 1860s that created this tension of authority and woman's place in the world. In fact, the idea of the gaze and who is doing the gazing are related to these concepts. In detective fiction, the detective figure must not be afraid of watching others in order to gain valuable information. However, for

a woman, this would have been seen as disreputable, for women should be the ones seen. And yet, in these first two examples, we have two bold gazers— one who is unafraid of meeting the gaze of her authoritarian employer and another who is unafraid of "soiling" her reputation by engaging in her employment, which includes watching those under suspicion.

Chapter six moves ahead twenty years into the 1880s, even though there may have been some female detective stories published during this interval. The majority of stories, however, multiplied during the 1880s-1900 and even beyond. And even though actual female detectives on official police forces were anomalies, this fact did not stop writers from featuring even more women in leading roles as detectives than in previous generations. Unlike the detectives of the 1860s, and more like the Gothic heroines, the female detectives of the 1880s tended to be younger and more attractive, even marriageable young women. Authors branched out to produce variations and different models of a female detective. At times she was a young, wealthy, amateur detective, at others not a detective at all, but a shrewd gypsy problem solver, or a young nurse with a grudge. And yet, no matter their station in life, all of these examples faced similar issues as women and as detectives. The authority they attempt to assert as representatives of their employers and for themselves at times leaves them vulnerable to not only physical violence, but to doubt from those they attempt to impress and from themselves. This chapter includes discussions on several detective figures, such as Madame Midas, whose use of surveillance becomes her most important asset in protecting herself and those she loves, and the first detective to actually voice and feel the dishonor in the profession of "spying" on people for money.

Chapter seven picks up the discussion of female detectives in 1900 and follows them to 1920. Anxieties over unsolved murders, England's place on the world stage, even the death of Queen Victoria led to several changes not only in history, but in detective fiction as well. Not

only this, but during these two decades, the female detective jumped from the fictional world and became an actuality, with the official appointment of the first women to the police force. Although the official woman police detective was still fiction at the beginning of the new century, that did not stop authors like Baroness Emmuska Orczy from creating her most famous detective, Lady Molly of Scotland Yard, another woman officially and anachronistically attached to the police. Lady Molly's detection tends to place particular emphasis on the threats that female criminals pose to society, in direct contrast to Arthur Conan Doyle's often mistreated avengers of misuse. Lady Molly's "Watson," Mary Granard, also hits upon one of the most debated issues in female detective fiction, stressing the use of intuition in Lady Molly's detection; yet, Mary is rarely on hand for most of Lady Molly's leg work and most definitely is not inside her head. As Joseph Kestner notes, "on the one hand she is independent, has a career, and takes risks; on the other, she is married and intuitive more than rational" (186). This chapter also focuses on a particularly interesting collection of stories about a lip-reading teacher of the deaf, who uses her gift to get into and out of trouble. Richard Marsh's heroine, Judith Lee, is a fascinating character, who establishes her rebellious nature and her desire to avenge wrongs done to innocents in the very first tale. Lee is direct and straight-forward, explaining everything in such a way that the readers feel as if Lee is speaking directly with them in a private conversation. And because Lee has no "Watson" to mediate between herself and the reader, Lee controls exactly what everyone sees and hears. Even so, Lee reveals incredibly personal details about herself within her tales, her "adventures," as she calls them, possibly without even realizing that she has done so. And yet, Lee is no weakling, she is fearless and can physically take care of herself without a weapon, and although she calls for backup at times, Lee has no plans of falling in love with her rescuers, or any man at all, for that matter.

Although Lady Molly and Judith Lee are not the only detectives examined in this chapter, the models that they follow, and the example that they and the others examined here have set for authors to come after is clear. Social, historical, economic, and personal changes can and should be discussed in more than just "serious" literature. The detective genre has always reached a large and varied audience, playing on and with the appeal of crime and of criminals, which allows the authors of such literature to comment on a variety of issues in a variety of ways. The conservative nature (or at least conservative disguise) of the detective genre allows authors to insert subtle social commentary, and as the years passed, clearly people were paying attention and making changes. For like Inspector Gadget, who had to join 'em, before he could "lick" the villains, both real and fictional female detectives and the detective genre had to merge with existing authorities in order to forge their own paths and establish their own power and agency.

Chapter 1
"Liberty or Death! Englishmen! Britons! and honest men!": The Police and Authority in England and the United States

In most mystery fiction, it seems as if the criminal authority is in control of each situation, particularly at the beginning of the detective's case and when criminals outnumber or overpower the detective. However, a detective automatically questions and challenges criminal authority just by taking the case, whether the detective is a man or a woman. Once an investigation begins and the criminal plot begins to unravel, the detective's authority takes over the plot, which includes the detective's own biases and ideologies. For the genre, authority tends to reflect more conservative ideals, and yet, in order to advance not only the genre/ form, but society as well, changes and challenges to these ideals must break through. For example, the introduction of a female detective allows authors to challenge the traditional, yet newly established, male authority of a police force. When female detective stories appeared, the Metropolitan Police force in London had been officially operating for around forty years and was still finding its own authority and efficacy questioned by the public. Yet, the public's interest in crime had not abated. In fact, the public's appetite for gory and detailed reports of crimes only increased as newspapers and magazines increased in number and distribution and decreased in price.

In spite of the public interest in detailed descriptions of gruesome crimes, the police force faced several challenges to its authority to prevent crimes from occurring and to detect the criminals once a crime had been committed. When circumstances allowed for the creation of detectives, both private and official police, society distrusted the authority given to or, in most cases, taken by the detectives and thief- takers. Their power created a circular pattern of causing

or outsourcing crimes, then taking the thieves in to face "justice." Often the ringleaders of criminal bands were the thief-takers themselves, gaining wealth from both sides of the law—their spoils of crime and the reward for catching the criminal. However, reforms governing organization and corruption and better selection process for patrol officers and detectives led to an increase in public trust in the police's authority in preventing and detecting crime. Government administrators and police officials, in order to keep and reform preventative and protective police services, had to reassure the public that their rights as citizens and as property owners would not be infringed upon, nor would they be spied upon, all while using the tools and abilities to prevent and detect crime; in essence, the police had to be radical in a conservative guise.

One challenge to the beginnings of an organized system of policing and detecting of crime deals with the public representations of the men (and later women) who chose or were chosen to keep order at state and local levels. For example, detectives have often been described in terms of animal behavior, hunting and trapping their prey, separating the law enforcer metaphorically from more civilized people. As Ian Ousby states, this characterization of the lawman and the criminal

> endows the policeman or detective with suggestions of impressive power and skill, [as well as] makes him a disturbing and suspect figure. Rather than appearing the embodiment of society's belief in justice and order, he belongs to an alien world, uncivilized, amoral, and potentially savage. He seems, in fact, far closer in spirit to the criminal than to the average citizen. (4)

Indeed, this relationship between the police and the policed as hunter and prey pervades the newspaper accounts and fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Including one of the first acknowledged detective stories, William Godwin's novel *Things As They Are, or The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), a portrait of "the operations of the criminal law [as] the

epitome of an omnipresent tyranny" (Ousby 20). In the novel, the thief-taker Gines hounds the narrator as the principal representative of the villain Falkland. It is Gines' history that shows the relationship between those who enforce the law and those who break it; Gines "fluctuated…between the two professions of a violator of the laws and a retainer to their administration. He had originally devoted himself to the first, and probably his initiation in the mysteries of thieving qualified him to be peculiarly expert in the profession of a thief-taker" (Godwin 359).

The apparent ease of transition between criminal and law enforcer plays only a part in the reasons and events that eventually lead to the establishment of a more organized and more effective mode of policing, detecting, and prosecuting criminal behavior. However, that mode was not established until the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century, the legislature stressed severity of punishment, adding capital offences to the criminal law at a pace which earned it the nickname of the Bloody Code, and reinforcing that code with public, frequent, and even popular executions. However, in spite of the government's stress on the punishment of crime, law enforcement was not a high priority. While those convicted of crime could be sure of a heavy penalty, most likely public execution for even a small offence, the legal system could rarely assure the actual apprehension of the criminal. As one critic explains, England at this time was basically a "policeless state" (Pringle 9). The principal system for administering justice fell to the parish, led by the justice of the peace and the parish constable. As Ousby explains, the justice of the peace was both the magistrate and chief of police for the parish, a voluntary and unpaid post, but it came with a certain social distinction (5). The parish constable assisted the justice of the peace in police work, but was not a constant and full-time position for one man; "the office was a compulsory duty rotated among local property owners, like modern jury

service. Since the post of constable was unpaid and unprestigious, its holders tended increasingly to delegate the work to hired substitutes" (Ousby 5).

In London, as Ousby describes, the "system achieved a baroque complexity but no greater coherence and effectiveness" (5). The nightly watch supplemented the assigned constable by patrolling the streets. The night watch was paid, but the wage was more of a retaining fee, and soon became a position for the old, infirm, and corrupt officers. In addition to the night watch, local and privately organized police patrols— usually in the form of vigilantes— sprang up to deal with specific problems and panics. Indeed, only a year before Robert Peel's reforms, "the responsibility for law enforcement in London remained divided among some seventy authorities, 'a tangle of independent establishments' lacking both central control and the willingness to co-operate" (Ousby 6).

However, there were the beginnings of more effective and efficient offices. The establishment of Henry and John Fielding's Bow Street Runners allowed a glimpse into their "belief in the importance of police organization" and reform (Ousby 7). The 1749 formation of the Bow Street Runners was an attempt to infuse the business of criminal investigation with some degree of professionalism. The Runners worked under the magistrates' directions and enjoyed unlimited jurisdiction, a considerable advantage considering the parish boundaries that usually hindered investigations and apprehensions even outside the boundaries of London. Nearly fifty years later in 1792, the Middlesex Justices Act created seven new police offices in London based on the Bow Street model, but these runners lacked the unlimited jurisdiction and fame of the more prestigious Bow Street office. For the most part, this system remained substantially unchanged until the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 took effect, despite the consideration of reforms by several parliamentary committees.

The need for police system reforms seems obvious; however, records that would prove the complaints that crime was on the rise and that the efforts of the system in place were ineffective to prevent and detect crime and their perpetrators are insufficient proof of that need. Not many records were kept, or they were destroyed. Yet, many critics of reforming the established system, as several historians have explained, were reluctant to enact the needed reforms in some part due to the necessary increase of taxes for funding the new system but also because many thought the old system was sufficient, or if not sufficient, at least good enough for the expense already paid out. Yet another reason that prevented reforming the police system was the belief that a centralized and nationalized police service would interfere with and infringe upon personal liberties of private citizens. A centralized and uniformed police evoked the imagery of a standing army and associations with political tyranny and the French, and "[f]ears of continental-style despotism threatening the liberties of the English people were to be found among a wide cross-section of society, from working-class radicals to provincial gentry" (Taylor 1); as Sir John Fielding writes, "The Police of Foreigners is chiefly employed, and at an immense Expense, to enquire into and discover the common and indifferent Transitions of innocent Inhabitants and of harmless Travelers, which regard themselves only, and but faintly relate to the Peace of Society; this Policy may be useful in arbitrary Governments, but here it would be contemptible, and therefore both useless and impracticable" (qtd. in Ranzinowicz v. III 6). These excuses for avoiding the implementation of a uniformed and centralized police force encouraged "self-policing," "for the average citizen, the police officer, and the criminal himself to detect and prosecute crime. Criminals were offered pardons for betraying their accomplices, while police officers could be fined for failing to carry out their duties" (Ousby 9). Rewards and pardons also served as open invitations for corruption and false accusations and perjury, as well

as a temptation to hold out for a more substantial reward for a conviction for a more serious crime. As Ousby relates,

> To the eighteenth century public the thief-taker could seem as disturbing a figure as the criminal himself. Indeed, the two appeared more than a little similar: often drawn from the same sector of society, they both served motives of crude self-interest and could both show a chilling disregard for the elementary rules of ethical conduct. (Ousby 13)

For example, one of England's most famous thieves/thief-takers is Jonathan Wild, generally remembered as the hero of Henry Fielding's novel by the same name, or as "The Thief-Taker General of Great Britain and Ireland." Wild's achievements included becoming both thief and thief-taker at the same time and one of the underworld's most powerful members, "investigating" the robberies that took place under his supervision and protection, even sacrificing several criminals each year to the hangman in order to keep his cover. As Gerald Howson relates: "the hundreds of criminals he…'brought to Justice' were casualties or 'fall guys' to use the best expression, in a dark and hidden gang warfare waged against enemies, rivals, and 'rebels'" (6). However, Wild's antics came to a close in 1725, when he was arrested for receiving stolen goods under an Act of Parliament, known as the Jonathan Wild Act, which had been enacted several years earlier. Wild's exposure, arrest, and execution drew him into the public spotlight and solidified the public's suspicions about criminals and detectives. Wild's double dealing cemented itself in the popular imagination as the incarnate of evil and dishonesty, preventing those who *were* honest from establishing authority for the right reasons, and even further in the future prevented the public from seeing the benefit of a more centralized police system.

Before the formation of the Metropolitan police in 1829, unpaid parish constables elected by the local justice of the peace carried out police work, while the city of London had its own system of watchmen. Clive Emsley's history of the police in England points out that local

custom and law determined how parish constables were chosen, some for one-year appointments, some for two, to overlap the out-going constable. Often, the constables chosen "had experience in other local government or community roles… [such as] overseers of the poor, surveyors of the highways, or churchwardens" (Emsley 11). As with all forms of law enforcement, there was a general mix of diligence and inattentiveness in the apprehension of offenders. As local men, the constables were aware that "after their brief term of office, they would have to continue living in the community which they policed; consequently they might try a variety of expedients to solve a dispute or settle an offence before recourse to the courts" (Emsley 11), only one of many reasons for the lack of statistics on crime and prosecution in the centuries.

Throughout the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the rapid socio-economic and political changes impacted the parish constables' work and those who wanted to serve. During this time, tenant farmers became more interested in becoming constables to control and better supervise landless laborers as tensions grew between the two groups, especially in the "cases where the wealthier farmers and villagers were inspired by Puritan concerns about the control and the reform of the ungodly" (Emsley 12). At the same time the growth of the central government led to increased attempts to exert more control over county administration and the administrative and judicial duties of parish constables. For example, in addition to the work they already performed in maintaining the king's peace, constables were "expected to enforce legislation on church attendance, keeping the Sabbath, drunkenness, swearing, and vagrancy, as well as on taxation and military recruitment" (Emsley 12). With each increase in a constable's duty, it is no wonder that some men were reluctant to serve; even Daniel Defoe describes the office as one of "insupportable hardship; it takes up so much of a man's time that his own affairs are frequently totally neglected, too often to his ruin" (qtd. in Webb 62).

While several historians disagree on whether crime rates had increased and/or the efficacy of the constables and watchmen had declined during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, as least a few have found that despite a perceived decline in the office of constable in the seventeenth century, by the end of the eighteenth century constables were "more active, more numerous, and more experienced…and…had contributed substantially to an improvement in the forces of order, especially in the capital" (Beattie 71). It is this perceived growth in an "epoch of criminality darker than at any of her annals" (Lee 203), mostly in crimes of larceny, radicalism, and rioting, that leads to a more concentrated effort to deter and prevent crime. And as Emsley states, "Whether or not the incidence of crime and disorder was actually increasing is of far less importance than the contemporary belief that it was increasing and the growing demands that a new threshold of order and decorum be established" (16).

In 1749, Henry Fielding's Bow Street Runners became the first detective force, and individuals could employ private thief-takers to capture criminals and ensure their appearance before a magistrate. Runners from Bow Street and other offices tended to take on cases that would provide them with the most reward from the fees they charged, but also from the potential extra reward from grateful victims. Offices such as Bow Street generally did not work much for the prevention of crime, but rather for recovery of stolen goods or apprehension of the culprits after the fact.

In contrast to offices like Bow Street, the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act established the principal duty of the police force— the prevention of crime through the use of visible and active patrols. Yet, as the nineteenth century went on, English policemen found themselves taking on and

> carrying out a variety of tasks which fitted the older definitions [of the word police]: they regulated traffic, ensured that pavements were unimpeded, kept a watchful eye for unsafe

> buildings and burning chimneys, administered first aid at accidents and drove ambulances, administered aspects of the Poor Law, looked for missing persons, licensed street sellers and cabs, and supervised the prevention of disease among farm animals… some of these tasks have subsequently been yielded to specialist agencies; yet the fact remains that since their creation the police have become more and more responsible for the smooth running of a variety of different aspects of society and not simply for the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order. (Emsley 3)

When in 1822, Robert Peel became Home Secretary, there were several proposals floating throughout the government for the establishment of a more unified police force. Even the Duke of Wellington urged the government in the wake of several radical demonstrations throughout the country "without the loss of a moment's time, to adopt measures to form either a police in London or military corps, which should be of a different description from the regular military force, or both" (*Despatches* 128). Yet, although Peel's early attempts to get a select committee to recommend the creation of a new police force based on the Irish police system failed, Peel's push for legislation that rationalized the criminal law proved a basis for promoting the establishment of a preventive police to bolster these new reforms.

While it is difficult to say exactly if there were an increase in crime, or if the government just started keeping better records, Peel effectively used the perceived increase of criminal behavior, at least, in the metropolitan area of London, to urge the passing of his Metropolitan Police Improvement Bill in 1829. Peel's evidence included the population data, which had increased by 19 per cent in London and Middlesex, and crime rates, which had increased by 55 per cent, within two seven year periods—1811 to 1818 and 1821 to 1828. These figures, according to Emsley, along with the "demand for a new threshold of order, the lurking fears of crowd action and radical agitation, the growing belief that some sort of police reform was necessary, astute political management, and the sidestepping of confrontation with the City of London by omitting it from the proposed jurisdiction of the new forces, all combined to help the

bill's passage" (24). Offices such as the one on Bow Street and other police stations in London had been directed with nominal supervision from the Home Office. At the time of the Metropolitan Police Act, the number of constables working from these offices was just over 300, and most of those formed the River Police. However, Peel's corresponding police system was ten times larger and included a much more rigid and hierarchical structure for increased responsibility and efficiency than previous systems. Peel's and his first two magistrates' (Colonel Charles Rowan and Richard Mayne) recognition of the "English antipathy to a standing army quartered at home" led to efforts that ensured that the new police looked as little like soldiers as possible: "they were given top hats, uniforms of blue, swallow-tail coats with the minimum of decoration, in contrast to the short scarlet tunics with colored facings and piping of the British infantry; the constable's weaponry was limited to a wooden truncheon, though cutlasses were available for emergencies and for patrolling dangerous beats, and inspectors and above could carry pocket pistols" (Emsley 25).

Those looking to join the Metropolitan Police faced specific requirements, which "included being under thirty, and if married, having not more than two children, being at least five feet seven inches tall, 'intelligent,' able to read and write 'plainly,' and providing at least two character recommendations, which were always checked" (Smith 39). Yet, literacy and the ability to write were largely overlooked due to the vast extent of illiteracy throughout the nation at this time, which became more obvious when the Civil Service Commission began administering examinations for promotions (39). Home Secretary Peel even specified the potential candidates' rank in society: "I have refused to employ gentlemen— commissioned officers, for instance— as superintendents and inspectors, because I am certain they would be above their work…A sergeant of the Guards at 200 a year is a better man for my purpose than a

captain of high military reputation" (qtd. in Reith 146). Peel's and Rowan's fears that "reduced gentlemen" would look down on their colleagues of equal rank on the force, but of lower social rank, seemed to materialize after an experiment making two former army commissioned officers into superintendents. Both were seen as failures, in comparison to the other superintendents from lower social status (Smith 44). The men who applied to become constables generally came from agricultural counties, rather than from urban areas, such as London. An 1856 article in the *Quarterly Review* attempted to explain the unlikely candidates' success as policemen:

> Intelligence of a certain kind, however, may be carried too far; your sharp Londoner makes a very bad policeman; he is too volatile and conceited to submit himself to discipline, and is oftener rejected than the persons from other parts, with whom eight-tenths of the force are recruited. The best constables come from the provincial cities and towns. They are both quicker and more "plucky" than the mere countryman from the village— a singular fact, which proves that manly vigor, both physical and mental, is to be found in populations neither too aggregated nor entirely isolated. ("The Police and the Thieves" 170)

It seems, based on the theory of "urban degeneration," prejudice existed against native Londoners or citizens of other major cities becoming police officers because outsiders were seen to be "agents of impersonal authority and free from local politics or social ties" (Smith 46) and would avoid an over-familiarity between the police and the public.

There was also an increased emphasis on the character of the officers and the public was eager to scrutinize police behavior. As many early advocates for the new police system established, the police force was meant for more than prevention of crime. As visual reminders to behave, the police constables were supposed to provide an example for the public in order to reduce the number of public disturbances; in essence, constables, as part and parcel of their regular duties, were to police the morals of the public, which endeared them more to the middle-class, and for a number of the working class, made them "enemies." Because the new constables were closely observed by the public, the magistrates and the Commissioner also kept a close eye

on their forces, sometimes by watching the newspapers for complaints or references to the police, and frequently replying to the complainants, and more often by referring to the journals kept by the sergeants of the various faults and misconduct of the constables (Smith 49).

The majority of dismissals during the formation of the new police was for violations of Victorian moral code, such as drinking while on patrol, "marrying a common prostitute," "Being in a filthy state from vermin," or "continuing to live with his wife after reporting he had found another man in bed with her" (Smith 49). In 1834, "Rowan and Mayne admitted that at least four out of the five men they had dismissed from the Metropolitan Police were guilty of drinking offences, and every other force appears to have had the same problem" (Emsley 59). The problems of alcohol and drunkenness were serious, but if kept discreet and non-interfering with duty, supervisors often ignored drinking on duty:

> Beer and spirits were a good deal cheaper and more readily available than most other drinks, and were widely considered a good antifreeze against the cold weather. Certainly indulgence in alcohol was a panacea for the long hours on duty, the darkness and the cold, and was facilitated by the convenience of a capacious top hat or helmet. (Smith 50)

And yet, Smith records the results that of only one month's dismissals or compulsory resignations, 38 of 51 involved drink (50). However, as the availability of cheaper, non-alcoholic drinks and as the pub and alcohol became less central to Victorian life, police drunkenness and in turn, dismissals for drunkenness, decreased.

Despite the attention paid to decrease the likeness between the army and the new police, much of the early criticism of the new force labeled them a "gendarmerie" and the *Weekly Dispatch* protested against "these military protectors of our civil liberties" (qtd. in Emsley 25). However, the military structure and rigid discipline were not the only complaints about the authority of the new police. Since the local government in London was expected to pay for the police out of the tax rates, the local authority that had previously had control over the watchmen

wanted to retain control over the local beats. However, the new police received orders directly from the superintendents in charge of the police divisions, who received orders directly from the commissioners, who, in turn, were answerable only to the Home Secretary. Along with the loss of control, the overall cost of the new police was greater than that of the watch. To frustrate the new system, parishes campaigned for more control over the system and even withheld money and lowered the valuation of house rentals to prevent paying higher rates. Yet, one of the biggest problems was the confusion over the authority and powers of the commissioners of the Metropolitan Police and that of the chief magistrate of Bow Street, an issue that was never clearly defined in the 1829 Act. In essence, the two systems "were performing separate, but overlapping, functions, and there is no reason why they could not have developed side by side—one concentrating on detection, the other on prevention" (Emsley 27). It was not until after three parliamentary committees had investigated some of the major complaints against the new police, and exonerated officers of any wrongdoing, and the effectiveness of the new system that the two systems were encouraged to merge in 1839, with the endorsement that "the new force was inhibiting crime but was not a restraint on English liberty" (Emsley 28). And in spite of the City of London's attempt to maintain its independence with a separate police system, many 'respectable inhabitants' "were no doubt delighted by the fact that, within days of the creation of the Metropolitan Police, squads of them were seen to be deployed in clearing the street of 'scenes of drunkenness, riot and debauchery'" (Emsley 30).

Outside of the Metropolitan area, however, local parishes remained hostile to the idea of a police system controlled by a central office. Peel himself made no secret that he hoped to expand the system that had taken hold in the areas around London into the rural areas and larger cities, especially in the wake of unrest and riots in several of the industrial towns. Rural areas

resisted a centralized force, yet that does not mean that these areas were unconcerned about the spread of crime. In 1833, The Lighting and Watching Act provided local authorities with a framework to create, or improve, day patrols and night watches. For a majority of these areas, the new system was slow in coming, as the system of constables and magistrates seemed to be efficient for the less populated areas. However, after the Lighting and Watching Act, many towns commented on the improvement in "the quiet and order of our streets since the establishment of a night police" (qtd. in Swift 215-216) as well as the decrease in laxity of the constables, sergeants, and night watchmen.

As the 1840s and 1850s went on, no one single model of policing became dominant, despite the influence of the Metropolitan Police, and debates and experiments with a variety of models continued throughout these decades. In the provincial areas, the new municipal constables often undertook the tasks that representatives of the unreformed boroughs had performed, and the constables often had little to do with the task the new system had specifically set forth— prevention of crime. As Emsley reveals, "town councils and their watch committees considered the police to be their servants who could be used at their discretion, and not simply for the prevention of crime. The town councils' dependence on the ratepayers, who elected them, ensured the optimum use of police men and not necessarily for tasks wholly related to the preservation of law and order" (42). Ratepayers, it seems, found the threat to their pocketbook to be more disturbing than the threat to order in their neighborhood, after all, "serious disorder could always be suppressed by use of the army and/ or squads of Metropolitan Police" (Emsley 44). In spite of the opposition, mostly due to cost, the newer system of policing seemed to eventually take root and to develop into what we think of British police today.

Although the shift from the old style of policing was much more gradual than traditional

histories admit, around the time of the 1851 Great Exhibition, public opinion began to shift more toward the positive, especially when the newspapers and magazines began to show their support in print. As David Taylor explains,

> Given the nature of nineteenth-century society, the priorities embedded in the law and the nature of practical policing, it is hardly surprising to discover that police work was inherently conflict ridden…It is unrealistic to expect to find near-universal support and affection for the police, but the persistence of anti-police sentiments and actions do not themselves necessarily invalidate the claim to have achieved policing by consent. The crucial distinction is between a dislike of (and even a violent response to) specific police action and a general rejection of the legitimacy of the police per se. (82)

Despite being physically run out of town in some counties, the expansion and continued existence of police departments into most areas and boroughs of England reveals the success of receiving the necessary level of public consent. And since the role of the police officer could vary between crime fighter, peace preserver, welfare agent, and moral missionary, public response could be complex and contradictory towards the officer and his role in society, particularly with the working class.

However, because the focus of the new model of policing became the prevention of crime rather than apprehending offenders after the fact, and in spite of periods of tension between the police and radical, political working class and opposition based on financing the police, the new system took hold and began to be looked on with a more positive attitude, particularly when the public became convinced that the police were not to be employed as spies. And yet, despite the more effective organization and trustworthy detectives, these incarnations, such as the Detective Department set up in 1842, had their share of setbacks. As Alice Spawls recounts, "The Road Hill House murder of 1860, which should have been a great success for the young department, was a terrible failure. Jack Whicher failed to prove that Constance Kent had murdered her baby half-brother whose body had been found in an outhouse horribly slashed. The public in any case

suspected the boy's father, Samuel Kent, a known adulterer, and when the 16-year-old Constance was acquitted they turned against her accusers (she later admitted to the crime)" (28). And yet in spite of extremely public failures, such as the Kent case and the Ripper murders, public support of the detective branch found supporters in positions to promote the police and their efforts, such as Charles Dickens. Dickens's articles in support of the police begin with a distinction between the humbug of the "Old Bow-Street Police" and the "extraordinary dexterity, patience, and ingenuity, exercised by the Detective Police" (Dickens 409). Dickens's characterization of the Bow Street system is not too far off the truth; and yet the old system did have some effectiveness, at least if you could pay for the service:

> Apart from many of them [the Bow Street Runners] being men of very indifferent character, and far too much in the habit of consorting with thieves and the like, they never lost a public occasion of jobbing and trading in mystery and making the most of themselves. Continually puffed besides by incompetent magistrates anxious to conceal their own deficiencies, and hand-in-glove with the penny-a-liners of that time, they became a sort of superstition. Although as a Preventive Police they were utterly ineffective, and as a Detective Police were very loose with some people, a superstition to the present day. (Dickens 409)

However, Dickens's portrayal of the recently established Detective Department is the complete opposite: "well chosen and trained, [it] proceeds so systematically and quietly, does its business in such a workman-like manner, and is always so calmly and steadily engaged in the service of the public, that the public really do not know enough of it, to know a tithe of its usefulness" (Dickens 409). As Dickens proceeds to introduce the detectives gathered for this interview, his descriptions hinge on the fact that each man has a particular specialty, but also an air of authority:

> Every man of them, in a glance, immediately takes an inventory of the furniture and an accurate sketch of the editorial presence. The Editor feels that any gentleman in company could take him up, if need should be, without the smallest hesitation, twenty years hence…They are, one and all, respectable-looking men; of perfectly good deportment and unusual intelligence; with nothing lounging or sinking in their manners;

> with an air of keen observation, and quick perception when addressed; and generally presenting in their faces, traces more or less marked of habitually leading lives of strong mental excitement. They have all good eyes; and they all can, and they all do, look full at whomsoever they speak to. (Dickens 410)

While Dickens's claim is to report on the usefulness of the Detective department, he actually succeeds in establishing both the authority and the humanity of the detectives. Little details, such as the detectives' physical traits and stories of their specialties within the department, allow glimpses into their manner of thinking and of conducting themselves when dealing with the public, which demystifies the seemingly covert, omnipresent, and nonhuman entity that is the police force. Gone are the portrayals of shifty, vulgar, unqualified thief-takers. What protects people and property now are intelligent, qualified gentlemen, who can look a person in the eyes and present themselves in good society with no hesitation or shame in themselves or their occupation.

Even with such public approval, the detective branch was still met with suspicion among the people they were to serve and among the Commissioners who employed them. In 1869, Sir Edmund Henderson, Sir Richard Mayne's successor as Commissioner of the Metropolitan police, after instituting a detective branch in every division, stated that the "detective system is viewed with the greatest suspicion and jealousy by the majority of Englishmen and is in fact, entirely foreign to the habits and feelings of the Nation" (*Parliamentary Papers* 3). Henderson's remarks reaffirm the notion that to have detectives and even plain-clothes policemen meant that the government is trying to entrap and spy on its citizens, much like the forces used in continental Europe, especially in France. A few well-publicized incidents seemed to support this view, such as the "Popay" incident, in which one overly zealous officer "on his own accord infiltrated the ranks of the National Political Union (NPU) in 1832 and vigorously incited the members to violence, denouncing the government and even the police. He was spotted in

uniform in a police station by a colleague in the NPU who then accused Popay of being an *agent provocateur*" (Smith 67-68). While the Select Committee of the House of Commons cleared the police of direct blame and even admitted that the use of plain clothes policemen was occasionally acceptable, the committee did find that Popay overstepped his duty and dismissed him from the force. After this incident the founding commissioners, Rowan and Mayne, expressed apprehension towards the use of plain clothes detectives, citing the original purpose of the police— to deter crime and reassure the public through an obvious presence of uniformed police.

However, for sensitive cases and surveillance, detectives eventually became an essential part of the police force. Like other departments and districts, the detective branch went through several reorganizations in order to find, train, and manage the efforts of detective police, usually after the occurrence of a public scandal or of corruption charges involving the police. Often, superintendents found that keeping detectives in close contact with the criminal classes for extended periods of time created problems; for example, detectives objected to the long and irregular hours, isolation, limited promotion opportunities, and degrading contacts. Their superiors often objected that "although the men were often experienced in the habits of thieves, they were mostly illiterate and ignorant 'with but very little knowledge of the world or mankind outside the circle in which [they] moved'" (Smith 69).

In 1878, the detective branch went through another reorganization. The Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D) was set up under Howard Vincent, a barrister who had studied the Paris sûreté as his model. This reorganization "had the virtue of placing all the detectives under one head and eliminating the conflicts of jurisdiction and lack of centralized coordination that had characterized the divisional detectives" (Smith 69). In six years, Vincent had expanded

the number of detectives from 250 to 800, raised the pay, and improved the training the detectives received. According to Vincent, the divisional detectives were mostly illiterate men, inefficient and doing very little, living "a life unprofitable to themselves, discreditable to the service, useless to the public" (qtd. in Smith 69). However, officers were often "caught between the need for adequate intelligence from a well-trained plain-clothes investigative body and the misgivings of the authorities and the public about such a body" (Smith 70), often forcing the detectives to draw intelligence unsystematically from a variety of external sources, such as "volunteer informers, alarmed citizens or government officials, outside police agencies, or simply paranoid cranks" and surveillance, in spite of the public's distaste for the un-English use of "spies" (Smith 70). Even the first commissioners noted that the use of paid informants was a far superior method to gaining information than the use of undercover or plain clothes detectives as spies on the public. And yet, as the end of the nineteenth century approached and passed, the use of plain-clothes detectives became more useful and accepted as legitimate police work, even if the public disliked the feeling of being spied upon.

In the United States, the police force developed much the same way as in England. As European and eventually mostly British colonies, America took most of its cues regarding crime control from its home countries. For the most part, England's systems were implemented in the settlements to provide some stability for the settlers. As Bryan Vila and Cynthia Morris explain,

> Serious crimes were rare in the earliest American colonies, and there was little need for formal law enforcement. However, as the colonies grew and became more diverse, it became more difficult to maintain the peace and enforce laws. Internal pressure and outside threats from pirates, Indians, and foreign enemies soon led the colonies to adopt variants of the night watch, constabulary, and sheriffs of their European homelands. (xxv)

Also, like their homelands, most of those chosen to help police the growing communities were ordinary citizens, well informed of the problems in their neighborhoods, but often with no

training, low pay, and little public regard. In spite of taking their cues from the systems in place overseas, the colonies and, after the revolution, the new country faced problems that these systems could not anticipate or control. Unlike the long settled countries these settlers were coming from, the newly established settlements faced issues with new frontiers, rapid expansion, little organization, and threats from the native population. Not only were these issues for new settlements, but England and Europe were using these colonies as a sort of "safety valve to relieve itself of the pressure of rapid population growth and political and religious dissent" (Vila and Morris 2). These "dangerous classes" not only included political and religious agitators, but also the criminal classes as well. As the "Bloody Code" of punishment was enacted in England, many of those prosecuted or detected in property crimes were given commuted sentences of transportation to a colony, as a more humane way of dealing with a punishment that many felt too harsh.

For the most part, crime, and in particular "crimes like murder, robbery, rape, and burglary," was rare due to relatively "small and fairly homogenous groups of people whose strong religious beliefs tended to provide the basis for social control" (Vila and Morris 2). Yet, as the colonies grew in number, in population, and in diversity, enforcing the laws became more difficult and more important. As a result, most colonies established variations of the policies and procedures that served to protect the people and enforce the law in their original countries, such as the night watch, constabulary, and sheriff.

As in England, the constabulary remained the chief officers of law enforcement during the eighteenth century, and also, like in England, were largely unpaid and untrained elected officials, whose job was "to keep their communities peaceful and orderly, supervise the night watch, administer punishments, and provide at least minimal protection from criminals during

the day" (Vila and Morris 4). Many of these constables' trades suffered from the time and energy that policing duties took from their work; not only this, but the constables could be fined for failing at their public duty and assaulted when making arrests, giving few men the incentive to serve as constable.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, rapid urbanization and increasing population called for increasing numbers of police to control crime and to keep the peace in their communities. However, much like in England, low pay and status and the hazardous duties they were at times called to perform increased the difficulties of finding and keeping solid citizens on the job; most preferred to pay the fines rather than perform the duties of a constable, which ultimately led to men of corrupt and suspect integrity in positions of authority. Many of these men, like some of the English constabulary, "took bribes, assaulted citizens, used the office to advance their personal interests, and committed numerous other crimes…[which] only served to further lower the status of the position of constable and weaken its authority in the eyes of the colonists" (Vila and Morris 11-12).

The perceived weakness of the constables led certain groups of citizens to form companies of men to protect the growing communities with or without official sanction from the constabulary's office. The southern towns and settlements, fearful of losing runaway slaves and slave rebellions, formed patrols to prevent slaves from running away and to watch for signs of revolt. Not only were these slave patrols active, but vigilante groups also formed when the "colonial government failed to protect citizens in the rural areas…from outlaws and highway robbers… When first formed, these 'Regulators' attacked outlaw groups that had been raping and pillaging across the rural countryside for several years" (Vila and Morris 5). Without formal protection from effective laws and those to enforce them, the leading men banded together and

began counter-attacking the outlaws. As the outlaws retaliated, the Regulators became more formal and organized. When the vigilante organization caught the attention of Charleston's Governor and the Charleston Assembly, formal court systems and assistance came in the form of two groups of mounted Rangers. Within two months, the Regulators-Rangers had not only caught and hanged sixteen outlaws and brought in many more to await trial, they also retrieved thirty-five young kidnapped girls and more than one-hundred stolen horses. Like many early forms of the police, however, these vigilante groups began to go astray from their original purpose once the outlaws were under control, attacking those they deemed "lower" and undesirable with corporal punishment, such as flogging and ducking, in order to remove them from the area.

Not only did vigilantism spread as the new country's borders spread further west, the large distances and new economic developments produced an increasing need for self-reliant defenses, particularly for railroads and livestock industries, who could not rely on the small and largely ineffective police force to cover the amount of territory they needed them to. These specific industries formed and provided their own private police forces, while in times of crisis private citizens formed vigilante groups. At times, the militia or military would be called in when disturbances become more widespread. And in Texas, the Rangers were organized to respond to the "spatial scope of law enforcement" and to "protect against bandits and Indian raids" in the vast territory of Texas (Vila and Morris 24).

In the unorganized territories, more formal law enforcement, such as the U.S. Marshalls, began to replace the impromptu justice often performed by vigilantes. And as territorial legislatures formed, government appointed or sometimes elected county sheriffs and constables, who eventually became romanticized heroes in much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'

fiction and film, assumed the role of policing the territories and "taming" the west. Like much of the representations of American and even British police, the reality was much different. As Frank Richard Prassel notes:

> Community lawmen, regarded as a necessary evil, rarely enjoyed public favor. Doing a job few diligently sought, they seldom reflected the heroic romanticism portrayed so frequently in fiction. While the town marshal courted political support, their patrolmen maintained a watchful eye on local activities. Violence occurred, of course, but it came in sudden and unexpected form. The empty street, the deadly gunmen, and the structured duel have little foundation in fact. (47)

In fact, the majority of the frontier town marshals' time "centered on subduing drunks and breaking up fights," much like their eastern and British counterparts (Vila and Morris 24).

As the country established itself as independent from England and grew in territory, the police forces in effect (night watches and part-time constables) struggled to maintain social order and protect lives and property due to the effects of rapid growth, especially in the cities, and increased cultural diversity. Many, like Charles Christian, advocated a full-time police system that, like in Britain, would act as a deterrent to crime. However, much like the "un-Englishness" of a police force that resembled the military, the American distaste for anything resembling a standing army, reinforced by the British soldiers' behavior prior to the Revolution, created barriers for implementation, even among those who argued for the new system, like Charles Christian. However, in the early to mid-1800s, "fears of social disintegration finally became stronger than distrust of a quasi-standing army, [and] America's larger and more disorderly cities began searching for a successful model" (Vila and Morris 25), a model similar to that Charles Christian had proposed— that of the Metropolitan Police of England, whose goal was to prevent crime by constant patrolling.

The Metropolitan Police's success in prevention through "highly visible well-coordinated, and pervasive patrols" appealed to the growing country as a "way to manage the

unwelcome side effects of rampant urban growth" (Vila and Morris 26). However, unlike their British models, the American police did not report to a national level cabinet officer. Instead, each U.S. city retained control over their own police forces. Over the years, the role of U.S. urban police evolved from the various duties of "lamp-lighting, election monitoring, and providing overnight lodging and food for the homeless to a clear emphasis on crime control" (Vila and Morris 26).

As the nation dealt with the Civil War and its aftermath, the beginning of the industrial revolution and massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe and Asia, the possibilities increased for corruption, fraud, and theft among those tasked with preventing the public from such behaviors. As Vila and Morris note,

> Robber barons such as John D. Rockefeller controlled whole legislatures. Scandal after scandal involving high federal and state officials came to light. In the cities, corrupt political organizations openly sold power and position. Machine politicians like New York's Chief of Public Works, William 'Boss' Tweed, stole over $200 million in less than six years. (27)

And, for the most part, this behavior eventually became acceptable and faced little, if any, policing. As S. L. Meyer explains, Americans "did not notice when excess became corruption" and "[c]orruption became as acceptable as apple pie" (325).

However, alongside these conditions of excess and corruption the reform movement emerged as America attempted to reconnect with the ideals with which the country originally began. Reforms came from all fronts— economic, religious, social— and from many different types of people. In the police departments, for example, Teddy Roosevelt, as the police commissioner in New York, implemented a new system style designed to base promotions, hiring, and management on merit rather than political spoils. As Roosevelt himself stated:

> As police commissioner, I shall act solely with a view to the well-being of the city and of the interests of the service, and shall take account only of the efficiency,

> honesty, and records of the men. Neither in making appointments, nor removals, shall I pay any heed to the political or religious affiliations of anyone. (qtd. in Berman 43).

Not only was the corruption addressed in these reforms, but issues facing women who had been arrested as well. The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Prison Association, among other women's and religious groups, began to argue for the establishment of police matrons to look after the needs of women who had been arrested and to protect them from abuse while in police custody. Early matrons, beginning in the 1830s, supervised women inmates in local prisons. However, it was not until 1878 that police departments in the United States began employing women as matrons to take charge of the women who had been brought into custody. In an 1890 interview with the *New York Times*, Chicago's chief of police, Frederick Ebersold stated of matrons:

> These women must be of irreproachable reputation, advanced in life, and must have kindly hearts, and keep a close watch upon themselves that they say no word of their business, either in the station or out, speak a kindly word to the girls, and when called into court, sit beside them. ("A Needed Police Reform" 20)

Others recommended similar attributes for the matrons. For example, a Mrs. Barney quoted in the same *New York Times* article recommends

> a middle-aged woman, scrupulously clean in person and dress, with a face to commend her and manner to compel respect; quiet, calm, observant, with faith in God and hope for humanity; a woman fertile in resources, patient, and sympathetic. She could hardly be this without possessing a generous endowment of good common sense. ("A Needed Police Reform" 20)

Many of these qualities became the basis for the fictional female detectives that appeared at roughly the same time these reforms were implemented. Although soon after these articles, such as that from the *New York Times*, resulting in several police departments hiring women in these roles, it was not until 1910 that a woman was officially hired as a policewoman. Previously, most women's participation in police activities was limited to serving as matrons; however, there

are always some exceptions to the rules. For example, in 1893, Marie Owens had been hired as a "patrolman" with the Chicago Police Department after her husband died— a job she kept for thirty years. In 1905, another woman, Lola Baldwin, was hired to provide protection and assistance for young women and children during the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition, and later hired permanently with the Portland Police Department; however, Portland police considered her more an "operative" rather than a police officer.

The first official woman police officer in the United States, Alice Stebbins Wells, was hired by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1910 after intense lobbying for the job, including a "petition urging the admission of women to the police force that was signed by one hundred notable Los Angeles residents and organizations" (Vila and Morris 87). In spite of her achievement in obtaining the badge, Wells was given no uniform or baton, and other than patrolling her beat (such as "penny arcades, moving picture shows, skating rinks, dance halls, and other places of amusement, including the parks on Sunday," to uncover "places and people with immoral tendencies") her role was reminiscent of the duties of matrons, such as "aiding lost children, assist[ing] juvenile and female crime victims and lawbreakers, and counsel[ing] families with problem children" (Vila and Morris 88). As the *Los Angeles Times* reported, Wells' efforts were to be spent in preventing immorality in places where young people congregate ("First Woman 'Policeman'" 9). Wells' achievement led to other departments following suit. As Vila and Morris note, "By 1915, when the National Association of Policewomen was formed and Wells named its first president, police departments in twenty-five cities employed women police. By 1925, 145 police departments nationwide had hired female police officers" (88). In spite of such advances for women, Wells herself was presented a "plain badge" and the statement that the chief felt sorry that he did not have a badge edged with lace

ruffles for his future squad of “Amazons” that would surely join the force. Wells’ motives for joining the force stemmed from her study of social evils that should have been corrected at home, but were ignored, such as idleness, pleasure-seeking, dressing for attention, “easy familiarity…from the chance acquaintance” (qtd. in B. Smith 297) and the failure to be taught to have a “loving co-operation and interest in the family duties which constitute one of the very best safeguards any girl can have” (B. Smith 297). Wells also believed in the inherent authority of the police department and its potential in solving social ills by working in harmony with other social agencies. As Wells states,

> There is no doubt in my mind that with time the appointment of women police officers will work out much good along these fundamental lines, but in the meantime the innovation is proving its own justification day by day in the greater freedom and confidence with which girls and women appeal to the department for advice and protection, in the handling of special cases where a woman’s sympathy may be more effective than a man’s power. (qtd. in B. Smith 298)

In many cases women hired as police officers were referred to as “municipal mothers” and given jobs much like Wells— working with juvenile and female victims and prisoners, handling missing persons cases, “preventing lewd and immoral acts in public places, helping families in crisis, and sheltering youths from violent or morally offensive movies” (Vila and Morris 77). And as Wells’ statements and duties of other police women make clear, the moral authority these women had in the community that they served was often much stronger, and at least perceived as more effective, than the average male officer patrolling his beat.

In England, the situation was similar; during the late Victorian period, women were never part of the official police force. However, women, often the wives of police officers, were occasionally called upon to do work considered inappropriate for male officers, such as “guarding female prisoners, conducting searches of female suspects, and taking statements of children, female offenders, and victims of sex offenses” (Shpayer-Makov 82-83). Not only did

women fulfill these functions, but they also provided services usually reserved for detectives, such as "obtaining information and incriminating evidence, particularly in cases where their gender gave them an advantage over (male) detectives" (Shpayer-Makov 83). Yet, hostility from many sources remained to the idea of recruiting women as official members of the police force, a prevailing hostility that lasted until the early twentieth century. The outbreak of World War I, as Clive Emsley reveals,

> gave the opportunity for two separate groups to organise women police patrols: The Women Police Volunteers, who became the Women Police Service in February 1915, were organised by former militant suffragettes and the morality campaigner, Margaret Damer-Dawson; the Voluntary Women Patrols were organized by members of the National Union of Women Workers. Some of the Voluntary Women Patrols were incorporated into police forces as women police in 1918 (120),

in spite of continued opposition from several watch committees and standing joint committees.

One problem existing in establishing the new police as well as the incorporation of women in to the ranks of officers and eventually as detectives was the issue of authority. From the beginning, we can see that those who wished for a more centrally controlled and more respected form of preventing, policing, and detecting crime were challenged at nearly every step in the road. From the rate-payers who refused to pay increased fees for more police/constables, to the belief that the police would be used as spies against the citizens, the journey to creating one of the most common models of policing was difficult. And yet, it was accomplished in a relatively short amount of time, considering the bumps along the way— finding and keeping solid workers, rooting out corruption within the ranks of officers, and scandals and criticisms of the police during public failures to either prevent or detect the crimes committed, such as with the Jack the Ripper murders or the Constance Kent murder case. However, for women who entered the police force as a career, the difficulty of establishing their authority included the legal non-status of women as well as the social and economic status of the women who devoted their

lives to paving the way for other women to pursue law-enforcement as a legitimate career for a woman.

Chapter 2

"I have not hesitated to violate some of the conventionalities": Authority and the Creation of the Detective Genre

As an emerging and developing genre over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, detective fiction has had to establish its own authority. And yet, because the genre was evolving and continues to evolve and adapt to literary tastes of the times, the genre remains fluid, open to influences from many genres, just as it began. As of 1841 (the commonly agreed upon date of the first detective story), there were no finalized "rules" of detective fiction, and despite the rules the Detection Club created in the 1930s, there still are no finite rules. As a consequence, many writers at the start of this new genre were influenced by other genres then in practice, such as the Gothic novel, the Sensation novel, and true crime narratives. Poe himself was influenced into writing and attempting to solve "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" based on a real crime committed in New York, written simultaneously with the newspaper articles. However, as new information came to light, or was invented by the journalists, Poe questioned his theory that he could solve the crime through the published accounts and cleverly edited the story to fit the "facts" of the case, even providing footnotes that referenced the concrete and recognizable players and scenes of the actual crime, which according to Daniel Stashower, "appeared to bolster the credibility of the enterprise, and allowed Poe to maintain the illusion that his deductions had been correct from the beginning" (318). It is this combination of genres, such as Poe's Gothic tendencies, true crime narratives, and journalism, which leads to the creation of what has become the detective fiction we have today.

While detective fiction seems to be an unlikely source of social criticism, many scholars

have noticed the conspicuous number of feminist detective stories beginning in the 1970s. However, the beginnings of the genre tend to be ignored in terms of social commentary. For example, many novels and stories from other traditions like Gothic and Sensation fiction often feature female protagonists that show forward-looking feminist behavior. Novels such as *Jane Eyre* feature a woman who investigates the mysteries of her employer's home, past, and intentions before choosing her path in life, ultimately deciding to leave instead of becoming his mistress. For example at one point, Jane even declares herself to be a "free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you" (Brontë 252)— a radical notion, considering that women were considered non-entities under the law.

As Haia Shpayer-Makov notes, "Few occupations can claim so pervasive a presence in imaginative writing as detection" (226). Alongside the newspaper accounts and press reports of investigations and court cases, "detective figures emerged in ever-growing numbers in novels, serial runs, and short stories during the Victorian and Edwardian period" (Shpayer-Makov 226). Novels that feature detective figures long predate the fiction that features an official or paid private detective, the Gothic novel for example. Some of the earliest Gothic novels, such as the novels by Ann Radcliffe, feature a female protagonist who must unravel the tangled plot that entraps her in order to live happily with the man of her choosing, usually a nobleman in disguise or robbed of his rightful place in the world. Like the Gothic novel, the detective novel has both its conservative and liberal moments. Radcliffe's novels provide the conservative balance to the revolutionary ideas presented in works by such authors as Matthew Lewis, or Charles Robert Maturin, whose *Melmoth the Wanderer* conveys the claustrophobia of multi-layered narratives and the potential "disruption and the violence inherent in humanity" (Lanone 72). Maturin's novel and its mysterious, possibly satanic, hero "held a morbid fascination" for many authors,

including Sir Walter Scott, Honoré de Balzac, and Oscar Wilde, who took the name Sebastian Melmoth after his release from prison. In many ways detective novels are a natural extension or evolution from the mysteries of the Gothic. For example, the Sensation novels of the 1840-1860s generally focus on some form of crime, and although at times an official detective will be involved, the successful detective is usually a member of the family or interested party, not the official representative of the law.[1]

Wilkie Collins's novels *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* both feature amateur detectives, attempting to uncover the truth in cases of stolen identity, false imprisonment, and theft. In *The Moonstone*, the amateur, Franklin Blake, even competes with a famous detective, Sergeant Cuff. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel, *Lady Audley's Secret* also features an amateur detective; however, in this case, the investigation leads to a potential murder committed by Lady Audley. Yet, Robert Audley, the detective figure in this novel, does not call in the police. He follows the investigation himself, and serves as judge and jury when Lady Audley is found out for attempted murder and fraud. However, as the real police and detective force grows in influence and in public favor, the detective becomes more prominent and more successful at pursuing and solving crime in the real world and in fictional representations.

The history of crime fiction is as long and as varied as the history of the police. In the beginning, crime narrative tended to take the side of the criminal rather than the side of the law, due to the harsh penalties imposed on rather minor crimes. These types of narratives describing the life of the criminal and the circumstances that led to his life of crime, tended to turn these men into mythic folk heroes, like Dick Turpin or Jonathan Wild. These narratives presented the

[1] In many respects, the detective genre grew out of Gothic fiction's obsessions with the past, transgression, narrative form (many Gothic novels work backward to reconstruct a rational narrative), and the exposure of what has been hidden, unspoken, or deliberately forgotten in the lives of individuals and of cultures and society.

criminal in a much more sympathetic light for the public to identify with rather than fear: "Notorious criminals such as Jack Sheppard, Jonathan Wild, and the famous highwayman Dick Turpin struck a special chord with the best literary talents of the period, who awarded celebrity status to those who had trod errant paths" (Shpayer-Makov 227). At the same time, these literary talents used reality, imagination, or a mixture of both to exert "a distinctive fascination, surfacing in all manner of literary formats and projecting an image of society as filled with lawbreakers, deviants, and corrupt servants of the legal system," putting the criminal in a "position of cultural centrality" (Shpayer-Makov 227).

While these literary productions made heroes of criminals, the public's taste for the gory details of crime stories and the trials and executions of criminals also grew. This taste for crime literature crossed the class spectrum and influenced the sale of pamphlets, broadsides, and other publications, usually used to serve as a moral lesson for readers to avoid making the same mistakes as the criminal and to avoid living a life of crime in the first place. However, the mixture of fact and fiction made the criminal the center of the narrative, and placed emphasis on the adventures and melodrama of the "hero's" life, rather than the efforts of the law to apprehend the criminal, a type of narrative commonly referred to as Newgate calendars of monthly executions and later Newgate novels (named for London's Newgate Prison). Prominently featuring both real and fictional criminals, the Newgate novels' critics felt that these novelists "romanticized and glamorized [sic] crime and low life, and invited sympathy with criminals rather than with the victims of crime by making their criminal subjects the hunted objects of a chase, by focusing on their motivation or psychology, and by representing them as the victims of circumstances or society" (Pykett 20). Other forms, such as stage adaptations and street ballads, furthered these themes, and "implicitly or explicitly exculpated individuals of moral

responsibility," particularly in cases when the public felt the punishment too harsh, such as in cases of poaching (O'Brien 20). And although the stated purpose of these narratives was to prevent readers from following the subjects' path to the gallows, in 1869, the journalist James Greenwood claimed that at least fifty percent of the young thieves imprisoned at the mid-century had admitted "that it was the shining example furnished by such gallows heroes as 'Dick Turpin' and 'Blueskin' [Jack Sheppard's accomplice] that first beguiled them from the path of rectitude, and that a large proportion of their ill-gotten gains was expended in the purchase of such delectable biographies" (Greenwood 112). Harmful, yet defiant, criminals gained admiration for their daring and adventurousness. In contrast, those who tracked and caught the criminal figured much less in the literature until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the focus was less on the conditions that created the criminal and more on his chase and capture. In these early narratives, "thief takers were shown to symbolize the corruption of society and not the power behind the law. Outlaws like Jonathan Wild were at once criminals and legal agents" (Shpayer-Makov 228). In these narratives, the criminal seems to be the authority— it is his or her life, his supposed confession, his last words in print. However, since the majority of these narratives were mostly fictionalized accounts, the authors seem to claim and retain the authority of the stories and the genre.

As the focus began to shift from the criminal to the detective, or as "the detective assigned to a case attained parity with the criminal as a literary character, and in time replaced him as a dominant figure in aesthetic discourse" (Shpayer-Makov 228), the shift also occurs in the public perception of actual police detectives. As the perception of corrupt law enforcers faded, with help from emerging literary productions and newspaper accounts, and the new constables established by Robert Peel began to prove themselves useful and honest, authority to

control the narrative began to shift from the criminal element to the detective, whether a public and official enforcer of the law, or a private detective.

As part of, and somehow separate from, the emerging literary production, pseudo-memoirs of police detectives began to appear as a way of explaining some of the behavior and modes of thinking that go into being a detective at a formative time. The format positions the detective as the central figure in a series of stories detailing a crime and its solution, which is described in the first person by the detective himself. This strategy allows the official detective a much more central role in the plot, a status which was not usually the case in other types of literary portrayals of the period. Like many early versions of detective tales, the authors of these texts chose to write under pseudonyms or to remain anonymous, "allowing them the liberty to let their imagination run free of the dictates of social and literary conventions and create imaginary police-detective protagonists" (Spayer-Makov 233). This freedom to create characters and plots without interference from social conventions allowed authors to tackle subjects that would not normally make their appearance without some form of moralizing attached to it, such as murder, theft, even prostitution and poverty. The freedom to create without being bound to any one form of literary production allows for the possibility of adapted, borrowed, and even new forms of literature to emerge and to become distinct genres of their own. For example, the novel, while sharing at its most basic level characteristics, such as prose narration of a considerable length, offers authors a chance to narrate their stories in many different formats, such as the epistolary form, which has now become its own sub-genre of the novel. Another example would be the fictional autobiography, such as Charlotte Brontë's novels *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*.

These pseudo-memoirs often begin with a description of the detective's background, and provide brief references to his home life and family throughout the rest of his exploits. In

addition, authors of this particular genre were keen on attempting to confirm the authenticity of the stories as penned by a "real" detective, providing "authentic events and personalities in the stories (including mention of the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police by name and other true facts about the force)" (Shpayer-Makov 233). These fake memoirs often ran as serials or as single stories in journals, and some saw publication in book form. Despite the lightweight nature of the texts, these stories gained popularity for several reasons. One, was the formation of the detective unit at Scotland Yard in 1842 and the interest it generated in the press surely influenced literary production. Not only were the developments of new policing techniques gaining influence, but police "detectives were also gaining prominence in courtroom testimonies as distinctive representatives of the forces of law and order, as, in effect, they increasingly took over prosecutions [from private citizens]…, and their function became less controversial in respectable opinion" (Shpayer-Makov 233-234).

These pseudo-memoirs in a sense bridge the gap between the fictionalized accounts of criminal life and the emergence of detective fiction as a distinct genre. Not only did the changes in policing practices changing the ways authors used material, but literary practices themselves made way for these new genres to appear. For example, in the 1830s, serials aimed at working-class consumers and the publication of novels in serial form increased in number and production. During the same period, publication of autobiographical accounts, both real and fictional, of ordinary people and professionals increased as well. Practical trends in publishing, such as avoiding costs like the stamp duty imposed on newspapers allowed publications such as the *Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette* to form their own blend of material, a composition made entirely of "fiction and fabricated police reports" (James 40). Combined with the Victorian taste and preference for historical novels and "texts that claimed historical

authenticity," such as those developed by Sir Walter Scott, these trends in publishing allowed for new genres to emerge and to take hold in readers' imaginations.[2] As Shpayer-Makov states, these writers, "unfettered by factual constraints [took] advantage of the growing acceptance of police detection" to write "dramatic tales of crime and detection, which they presented as a sequence of episodes, a style highly suitable to serial publication" (234). Although these tales were "unfettered by factual constraints" as Shpayer-Makov notes, the authors of these stories insisted on the accuracy of their details because these texts were meant to be read as self-revelations by "well-known" and effective professional crime-fighters, a fusion that seemed to work, despite the authors' lack of experience in and information on detection. One such author, William Russell, and his series of stories published as "Recollections of a Police Officer" (1849) were deemed appropriate reading for police detectives and subsequent editions were repeatedly advertised in the *Police Guardian* throughout 1877. Russell's work inspired others to follow the strategy as well, and Russell continued the winning formula for several different detective "memoirs," complimenting the police, influencing readers, and molding a favorable view of the profession.

Shpayer-Makov notes that "surprisingly, some of the pseudo-memoirs featured women detectives, possibly expanding the number of female readers" (236). Yet, why should this be surprising? Although the fact of an actual female detective in Scotland Yard is anachronistic, the number of books featuring female leads as strong, independent women had increased, especially

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[2] Historical novels as developed by Sir Walter Scott differed drastically from the versions of "history" in eighteenth century fiction. As Everett Zimmerman notes, "Eighteenth Century fiction insistently claims a relationship to history. Such markedly differing novelists as Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne call their fictions histories and adopt a narrative stance that, they urge, has affinities with the role of the historian" (11). Their histories, as opposed to later historical novels, focus mainly on private forms of history, such as those of the individual or family, rather than the history of a nation. Scott's historical novels also feature a particular view of history as "a process in which the past acts as a necessary precondition for the present" (Shaw

after the Sensation novel exploded into to the marketplace.[3] One such pseudo-memoir is the *Revelations of a Lady Detective* which features Mrs. Paschal, a "well-born and well educated" woman, who has been left badly off by the death of her husband, turning to police work to make ends meet. Instead of finding a temporary solution to her money troubles, Mrs. Paschal claims to have found a calling, one she has talent for, given her background as an amateur actress (only in productions in her home and at school) and her ability to think clearly.

Like many of the pseudo-memoirs published during this time, the lead detective is almost always "charismatic and adroit. [And] [a]lthough they may make minor mistakes, and perpetrators of crime might evade justice, the narrator-protagonists almost always excel at their job" (Shpayer-Makov 237). Mrs. Paschal describes her work as one which requires qualities such as "nerve and strength, cunning and confidence, resources unlimited" (3). In many cases, the detective is humane and sensitive, even while securing convictions, and is willing to extend aid and even apply for clemency for transgressors, or help victims start a new life. Much like the early goals of the police force, detectives in these stories were playing a role in reforming society, and not only individual members of the police were commendable, but the organization as a whole.

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, these stories, or at least some of them, went through several reprints, remaining popular until near the end of the century. However, like several genres, such as the Gothic, or Sensation novels, the pseudo-memoir lost vitality, and

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[3] Mrs. Paschal, among many other female characters introduced during this time, especially in Sensation novels, fits the description of what was called "The New Woman," a label that contradicted itself in many ways due to the varied characters presented. As Ronald Thomas and Chris Willis note, these detectives are early versions of the New Woman who became popular characters in fiction and reality, as well as contradictory characters who on one side was aggressive, sexually promiscuous, and dismissive of social rules and mores, and on the other, the perfect image of domesticity.

while texts continued to be written in this style, the majority of narratives that revolved around a detective began to take other forms and styles.

Several factors point to the attractiveness of the detective figure, beyond the universal and enduring appeal, such as the "intricate matrix of contemporary factors…[caused by] an emerging industrial, urban, and commercial society," as well as "contemporary scientific thinking, combined with the legacies of the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and empiricism and that of the Romantic movement's on the imagination, feelings, and spontaneity" to explain the simultaneous rise of the modern police (Shpayer-Makov 239). At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, many of the criminals and rogues prompted sympathy from the general public and from readers. Because punishments often did not fit the crime, and petty offenders could find themselves transported to colonies or to Australia, or even find themselves on the way to the gallows, criminals could be and were often depicted as victims of circumstances or the brutality of the law and its authority. However, as modifications were made to the criminal justice system, such as reducing the number of capital offences, which left practically treason and murder as the only crimes to incur such punishment after the 1860s, the image of the law and those who enforced it seemed less cruel. With the lessened numbers of executions and public humiliations of criminals, the attitude toward criminals in literature also changed. More often, the criminal, while still treated with some sympathy, was represented as someone who deserved what he got, taking into account some measure of free will in his actions. Because the authorities and law enforcers came to be seen as moral police and social reformers, criminals eventually came to be seen as dangerous to bourgeois society, and thus less the romantic hero, and detectives came to take their place at the center of their own narratives.

However, there were even exceptions to this rule; for example, Eugène François Vidocq

exemplifies the transition from the outlaw hero to a detective hero. Vidocq's experience as a thief who had served several prison sentences allowed him to better apprehend criminals, which likened him to Jonathan Wild, and he was even accused of the same behavior, continuing to collaborate with the underworld "even when employed by the forces of law and order, thereby combining the identities of a criminal, an informer, and a police and private agent, which surely made his persona all the more alluring" (Shpayer-Makov 230). However, memoirs like Vidocq's, while popular for a time, fell away to allow more "upright" and moral agents to take the center stage, with a few exceptions. For example, Inspector Javert from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, features the moral uprightness to pursue the letter of the law, yet displays the self-defined characteristics of a spy, as well as a blood-hound obstinacy to pursue criminals and keep them in their rightful place. Although in the case of Javert, this obstinacy is a negative trait, in other detectives, particularly English detectives, the determination to pursue criminals is a positive trait. It is perhaps the lack of empathy that separates the case of Javert from his English counterparts. For while Javert is a good detective who knows he is on the right track from the beginning, his refusal to see the good that Jean Valjean has done for himself and for the community, and his lack of empathy for a man who had made a mistake in an attempt to feed his family and who had paid a heavy price for that mistake would definitely have separated him from detectives only a short channel crossing away. For example, Sherlock Holmes often allows criminals to escape official punishment if he feels that they have learned their lesson by being caught and punished by unofficial means (either by promising to remain on the straight and narrow or by threat of further official punishment or by a sound beating with one of Holmes' canes). However, the main difference between Javert and English detectives is the ability to empathize with the criminal, to see that crime is often a case of circumstances and choices, and

that good people often make bad decisions.

Despite the popularity of these narratives and the criminal heroes, during the 1840s and throughout the rest of the century, the growing demand for more adequate and efficient means to prevent and detect crime and disorder, authors incorporated more and more figures who take this challenge upon themselves. As Shpayer-Makov describes,

> In particular, these figures were shown to respond to greater intolerance to property crimes, the sense of insecurity in the anonymous city, and pressures to augment surveillance over the population. They also echoed the prevalent notions that, if harsh punishment was now no longer considered the principal deterrence to crime, and every offender had to be caught, then the men responsible for it should be adept at the mission, whether employed in a private capacity or officially. (240)

These detective figures also signified that crime had changed; the criminal, if not caught in the act, not confessing to the crime, or incriminated by key witnesses, was more difficult to catch and could not be caught without the specialized knowledge of the detective. In addition, attitudes toward undercover policing and detection began to change, which allowed the literature that features such detectives to thrive with the reading public.

As society reinforced the idea of respectability as the "dominant social norm, and obedience to the law central to it, the criminal was perceived as an outsider to society— and therefore not frequently a main character in the plot— while the person charged with imposing the law was seen as necessary and even a benefactor" (Shpayer-Makov 240). And yet, even as attitudes were changing, some authors such as Wilkie Collins continued to push aside official detectives, as useful and famous as they could be, and opt instead for the amateur or familial detective in their novels and stories. For example in *The Moonstone*, Sergeant Cuff, although admittedly one of the most successful detectives in fiction, "renowned and capable" in resolving mysteries (Collins 26), is unsuccessful at unraveling the case, and yet, the amateur detectives, a group composed of doctors, lawyers, and servants, find the evidence and solve the case.

In addition, one of Collins's early short stories, "The Diary of Anne Rodway," is also one of the first stories for a woman to take on the role of an amateur detective when the police refuse to listen to her evidence. Although Anne is successful in tracking the killer of her friend, she does not get the credit. Instead, she hands over her evidence to her fiancé, who takes it to the police to make the arrest and to obtain a conviction. However, soon Wilkie Collins's amateur detectives began to appear alongside representatives of the official police and those of professional private detectives in the book stalls and circulating libraries. And while amateur detectives remain popular throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the official detective, both in fact and in fiction, gained significant ground in the respect and esteem of the public; "the police were consensually accepted as a force for good and as a legitimate public service, even if they failed in their tasks" (Shpayer-Makov 240).

In the fiction, however, the genre began to change as well, moving, as Michel Foucault noticed, "from the exposition of the facts or the confession, to the slow process of discovery; from the execution to the investigation; from the physical confrontation to the intellectual struggle between criminal and investigator" (69). Like their real-life counterparts, these fictional detectives promise to make sense out of scattered clues and trivial bits of information to construct a coherent narrative that defeats the enemies of law and order and to ensure the triumph of good over evil. Not only do the fictional characters attempt to create order in their own world, but the narrative form itself also attempts to use this fictional security to extend into the real world, to construct reality filled with the clever, authoritative detectives and officers of the law protecting and serving the people.

Particularly helpful in the creation of authority within and for the genre was the Victorians' insistence on "contemporary actuality," dealing with issues and topics from their

everyday lives, "to be as close as possible to common reality," by referring to people, places, institutions, dates, and even actual crimes familiar to readers (Shpayer-Makov 241; Davis 222-223). It is perhaps this insistence on factual information relevant to readers in combination with the detective's search for "fact, truth, and precision in the observation of reality" that allows the genre to create and retain its own authority to present life from a unique, but familiar perspective— that of the truth-seeker. Not only could the audience enjoy a good story, they also received some truths of the human experience that they may not have been personally privy to, such as the personal stories of thieves and murderers and the detectives that sought them, in both fictional and factual worlds which blended realities within one genre to create a specific kind of authority.

Furthermore, the line between fiction and reality was further complicated "by the pseudo-memoirs and by the prevalent practice of publishing fictional tales as serial runs in periodicals, where they were laid out side by side with non-fiction content. The oscillation between the two satisfied the desire for flights of fancy as well as authenticity" (Shpayer-Makov 242). At times, even before Doyle's Holmes stories appeared, readers responded to fiction characters as real, live people. Émile Gaboriau's detective Lecoq was even so respected by readers that "English detectives were advised to study the methods described by his creator…on the occasion of an unsolved 'memorable murder'" ("Detectives" 558). Not only did these fiction and actual accounts capture the interest of the general public, but other writers soon recognized the authority of the burgeoning genre, using both the factual memoirs of detectives and the fictional accounts as sources for their own contributions to the genre.

While the diversity among detective literature near the end of the nineteenth century means that the fictional image of the detective was never uniform or immutable, the genre's

ability to adapt and to incorporate new types of detectives, new forms of crime or motive, and new technologies allow the genre to stay relevant in an ever-changing market. Also, this ability allows the genre to retain authority over certain images, patterns, and themes, even while joining with other genres to create new forms of literature.

In fact, as the genre developed alongside the police force, alternatives to the police began to appear more often. Although amateur detectives had become a part of the genre even before an official detective force existed, professional private detectives became more prevalent as the discussion grew over “who was most qualified to engage in crime investigation, and in what framework it should be carried out,” whether by straightforward investigation or by “manipulation, trickery, disguise, spying, and intimacy with criminal elements” (Shpayer-Makov 245). Because the official detective may have had access to these methods, the public tended to discourage their use (as connected too closely with the French manner of policing), at least until the public‘s opinion turned in favor of some methods of spying— but only for the public good during turbulent times, such as the threats from Fenian bombers and anarchists in the mid-nineteenth century. However, in the fiction, because the private detective was generally believed to hold to a less strict code of conduct than those of the official police force, these methods were actually seen as necessary to the business of detection, even as part of the private detective’s personal code of morals. Often, as Shpayer-Makov notes, “the detective genre may have heroized the agent of surveillance in his struggle against villainy, but frequently this agent was not an official public servant” (246).

Not only was the private detective heroized, but he or she often outwits and outmatches the official representative of the law. During the middle years of the nineteenth century, the private detective gained ground in the genre with more and more complimentary treatment. And

especially when a private detective works alongside the official police, he or she is more likely to be presented as more rational, skillful, and effective than the official police, such as Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin and his analytical faculties. Poe's stories often give some credit to the police for perseverance and a certain ability for the work, yet "they often overlooked evidence, made wrong assumptions, and erred in their findings" (Shpayer-Makov 246). Because of this enhanced ability, Dupin's attitude/disdain toward the official police begins yet another prevalent trope of the genre— for the private detective, the distrust of the abilities of the official police and, for the official police, the distrust of the private detective's motives and methods.

The evolution of the detective genre that leads toward less official detectives in fiction also stems from the narratives imported from across the Atlantic. American dime novels almost exclusively feature detectives from the private and even amateur sector, and the appearance and popularity of Sherlock Holmes "fortified this trend" and "sharpened the juxtaposition of public and private investigation to the advantage of the latter" (Shpayer-Makov 247-248). Not only were most early fictional private detectives presented as eccentric geniuses and gentlemen, but due to the "revelation of widespread corruption in the central office of Scotland Yard in the late 1870s and the generally negative press coverage because of perceived ineffectiveness," writers distanced themselves from presenting an official police protagonist to captivate their audience.

Authors of nineteenth-century mysteries spent considerable time and energy attempting to enthrall their audience with clever crimes, criminals, and detectives. Yet for the audience to become enthralled, they must believe that what they read has some form of authority to hold them, to rivet them to their seats, and to keep them coming back for more. Because the mystery and detective genres were (and still are) in flux, authors could use any tool available to enact this fascination, to mentally hold their readers in place, even to the point of believing the actual

existence of a fictional character, such as Sherlock Holmes, whose fans wore black armbands and mourning regalia and created obituaries for the detective after "The Final Problem" was published.

And in spite of the mutability inherent in this genre, just listing mysteries and detective fiction as genres implies shared characteristics among the works produced. As Richard Sennett states, "The bond of authority is built on images of strength and weakness; it is the emotional expression of power… [and] One result of the ambiguity of emotional bonds is that they are seldom stable" (4), resulting in the possibility of movement, of change, adaptation, evolution of form. I would even contend that authority is also built on images of similarity. Although Gustave Le Bon's work *The Crowd* studies the psychology of crowds, his ideas of collective versus individual ideas and behaviors applies to genre as well:

> The most striking peculiarity presented by a psychological crowd is the following: Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like of unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation. There are certain ideas and feelings which do not come into being, or do not transform themselves into acts except in the case of individuals forming a crowd. The psychological crowd is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly… In the aggregate which constitutes a crowd there is in no sort a summing up of or an average struck between its elements. What really takes place is a combination followed by the creation of new characteristics, just in chemistry certain elements, when brought into contact— bases and acids, for example— combine to form a new body possessing properties quite different from the bodies that have served to form it. (5-6)

Like chemistry creates new bodies out of existing elements and properties, existing genres combining with emerging social, political, and literary elements can create new forms of literature, new genres, and new bodies of work, and yet these new forms also retain some of the same characteristics with those that combined to create it, much like parents and children.

As Sennett begins his study on authority, "The need for authority is basic. Children need authorities to guide and reassure them. Adults fulfill an essential part of themselves in being authorities; it is one way of expressing care for others. There is a persistent fear that we will be deprived of this experience… [T]here is another fear about authority as well, a fear of authority when it exists. We have come to fear the influence of authority as a threat to our liberties, in the family and in society at large" (15) and in literature as well. Authority of established genres threaten the development of newer genres, as in the case of poetry and novels, and vice versa, new forms threaten the authority of the older, more established forms. In the midst of this fear is the idea of seduction, of seducing and of being seduced by those who hold power, and yet, "the need for authority…remains. Desires for guidance, security, and stability do not disappear when they are unsatisfied" (Sennett 16). However, like a parent-child relationship, when genres adapt to include new methods, elements, or storylines to generate a new and developing form, there is a sense of rebellion against that established authority, a sense that those that have come before are "wrong" somehow. In creating authority in a genre there must be some sense of cohesion that would identify the works belonging to the genre; yet at the beginning, there is no cohesion, other than the idea of being different from what has come before; as Sennett relates, "One of the deepest marks the French Revolution made on modern thinking was to convince us that we must destroy the legitimacy of rulers in order to change their power. Destroy faith in them, then we can destroy their regimes…By negating the legitimacy of the ruler, we begin to set ourselves free" (41-42). By challenging and competing with the legitimacy of "serious" literature during the nineteenth century, the detective genre challenges the power of the prevailing literature, while still retaining the right to use elements of that literature to create something new, setting themselves free to control and establish a new authority.

Furthermore, both sides of the new and the former genres regard the other as illegitimate sources of power and authority. The former genres, such as the Gothic, itself seen as illegitimate literature during the height of its contemporary popularity, see new genres creating their own authority by reaching the popular imagination, by touching upon the readers' own fears and ambitions, their own desire for authority. As Sennett summarizes Max Weber's theories on authority, "Authority [is] … a belief in legitimacy, measured by voluntary compliance" (22). The same exists for literature, a belief in the legitimacy of a genre or author is voluntary, and an answer to a "real need in man's social nature… [to know] that one is governed [beyond] the basis of mere material or intellectual force, but on the basis of moral principle" (Mosca 71). As several writers focused on the history of crime and detection have recounted, detectives and police officers eventually became moral as well as social and legal police. The same goes for the genre of detective fiction; by presenting moral problems and disruptions of the moral code as well as their solutions and corrections, detective fiction presents readers with a version of authority that they may have resisted in the past, but because it is introduced in popular, and therefore "non-serious" literature, readers are influenced in subtle ways to accept the authority of both the actual detective and fictional accounts of crime, allowing the author and the reader to live vicariously through both the detective and the criminal, "purg[ing] the civilized man of fear and guilt… releas[ing] … the animal instincts of the chase and the kill" (Barzun 144), reaching the depths of depravity and the triumph of the just, and ultimately and ideally choosing to side with the legal and moral authority of the detective and the narrative.

Chapter 3

Justice, Equality, Authority: Women's Rights Changes in the Nineteenth Century

The years leading up to the appearance of the first fictional female detectives saw massive and rapid changes in society, industry, law, culture, and economics take place in England and in the United States. Suffrage, reforming marriage and divorce laws, women's rights, and abolition of slavery became focal points in the push for progress on both sides of the Atlantic, and many of these issues converged into one issue under universal suffrage until eventually breaking into separate concerns near the mid-century.

Women's political involvement at the turn of the nineteenth century was prevented through social and legal status. Technically, under the control of the nearest living male relative or husband, women were prevented from taking part in political matters; by law, women did not benefit from the rights of citizenship, because they were not technically citizens. National and state constitutions rarely made mention of women, nor did they allow women to vote or hold office. The usual avenues of revolution or of instituting change were not available to women who might have sought to change their situations. Furthermore, even the small number of rights that women did enjoy virtually disappeared when they married, essentially entering into a state of "civil death," unable to enter into contracts, create wills, take part in legal proceedings, or control any wages she might earn. By the 1820s and 1830s, most states had extended the right to vote to all white men, no matter how much property they owned. As Ellen Dannin explains, "Coverture was justified as fulfilling the punishment of Adam and Eve— that men should rule over their wives. By depriving women of the capacity to manage their property by the simple act of marriage, coverture deprived women of the status, livelihood, self-protection, and self-respect

linked to property-holding" (4). And since many of the United States' laws were carried over mainly from English common law during the colonization of the Americas, the definitions and roles of men and women in marriage and in society remained the same.

In England, as in the United States, debates over woman's rights first took the shape of the woman's rights in marriage and divorce and many argued that coverture was "merely a 'legal fiction' used to identify the household rather than the individual as the basic social unit" (Ablow). Both in Parliament and in the press the argument dealt with how to define what coverture actually meant. As Rachel Ablow states, "coverture was often conflated or confused with several other popular notions of what it means for two people to come together: the Christian notion of husband and wife constituting 'one flesh'; the Platonic notion of soul-mates constituting two halves of a single being; and domestic ideologists' claims regarding the union produced by husbands' and wives' sympathetic bond" (Ablow). While most people used the Genesis 2: 22-24 from the Bible to define "one flesh," others used Classical philosophers and writers, such as Aristophanes, to find the definition. As James Grantham Turner notes, the Biblical notion of married love and the Classical description of humans as "Janus headed and double bodied androgynes… who were sliced in two as a punishment for their hubristic attempt to storm Olympus, and condemned to perpetual erotic yearning for their severed halves" to define a marriage containing a single being fused during the Renaissance (Turner 70). Up to the nineteenth century, the meaning of "one flesh" still carried a sexual and religious connotation.

However, by the nineteenth century, the idea of "one flesh" had been almost entirely secularized and desexualized and conjoined with the ideas of coverture and marital sympathy, or female influence within the marriage and within the mind of the husband. Many people, both men and women, who sought to achieve property rights and legal recognition for married women

in England used the belief that marital "sympathy requires a degree of similarity and understanding that can only arise in a context of relative legal equality. Those who sought to retain coverture, by contrast, argued that sympathy requires the interdependence and identity of material interests guaranteed by married women's lack of civil rights" (Ablow). Like the debate over the meaning of "all men are created equal" in the United States, the definitions of sympathy and of "one flesh" proved a cornerstone in the foundation of the women's rights movement in England. As John Stuart Mills argued, coverture should be abolished because of the imbalance of power in the marriage relationship: "Even with true affection, authority on the one side and subordination on the other prevent perfect confidence" ("Mill on the *Subjection of Women*"). Even earlier than Mill's argument, Cornelia Frances Cornwallis argued "the provisions of our common law, so far from being founded on the refined idea of an affection so strong that two existences might by its influence merge into one— as some sentimental chapters in modern law treatises assume,— are precisely those which belong to the relation of master and bondswoman" ("The Property of Married Women" 191). And in an even more strongly worded argument, Frances Powers Cobbe compared English marriage to the relations of the "Tarantula Spider":

> As most people are aware, when one of these delightful creatures is placed under a glass with a companion of his own species a little smaller than himself, he forthwith gobbles him up; making him thus, in a very literal manner, 'bone of his bone' (supposing tarantulas to have any bones) 'and flesh of his flesh.' The operation being completed, the victorious spider visibly acquires double bulk, and thenceforth may be understood to 'represent the family' in the most perfect manner conceivable. (12-13)

Coverture in these cases, does not generate anything like the psychic and affective harmony of sympathy; it simply erases the existence of one half of the married couple.

And yet, those who supported coverture insisted that sympathy develops between the married parties due to the identity of interests and the absence of competition that resulted from coverture. Furthermore, Margaret Oliphant argues in her review of Mill's *Subjection of Women*,

> it is a mere trick of words to say that the woman loses her existence, and is absorbed in her husband. Were it so in reality— and were it indeed true, "that the poor rivulet loseth her name, is carried and recarried with her new associate, beareth no sway, possesseth nothing" — then would the question of female inferiority be fairly proved and settled once for all. Mighty indeed must be the Titanic current of that soul which could receive one whole human being, full of thoughts, affections, and emotions, into its tide, and yet remain uncoloured and unchanged. There is not such monster of a man, and no such nonentity of a woman, in ordinary life. Which of us does not carry our wife's thoughts in our brain, and our wife's likings in our heart, with the most innocent unconsciousness that they are not our own original property? (381)

Yet, many activists persisted in the quest to obtain rights for women to have more of a legal and political existence, rather than only the moral and spiritual existence they were supposed to have, and in 1870 Parliament passed the Married Women's Property Act, to "protect the most vulnerable women from exploitation and abuse" (Shanley 77). The act was particularly significant for working women, who were able to retain control over their wages for the first time.

While the Married Women's Property Act was not unprecedented, (the United States beat the British to legal change for married women's property rights beginning in 1839), England made more legal strides in other avenues for women that led to the erosion of the privileges that coverture gave to men. Even before the American Revolution, the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution

> produced a torrent of works written by women on political subjects ranging from the state of the monarchy, succession, and republican government to the prospect of foreign war. By the early eighteenth century some British women had grown dissatisfied with their inferior legal status and had begun to protest publicly against the system's inequalities. (Zagarri 20)

Many took the same approach that later American women would adopt— petitioning the government. In 1735, one group of women who petitioned Parliament condemned the "Hardship of English Laws in Relation to Wives," which they claimed "put us in a worse Condition than Slavery itself" (*Hardship* 1-2). These women claimed for themselves their privilege as "Free-

born Subjects of *England*" and sought "redress of their grievances, requesting more equitable treatment in terms of property rights, widows' portions, and physical safety at the hands of their spouses" (Zagarri 20). Others produced published tracts to assert the equality of woman with man, such as the *Vindication of the Natural Right of the Fair-Sex to a Perfect Equality of Power, Dignity, and Esteem, with Men*, by "Sophia, A Person of Quality" (1740), which not only maintains that women were the intellectual equal of man, but that women were just as fit and able to govern and hold public office:

> I think it evidently appears, that there is no science, office, or dignity, which Women have not an equal right to share with Men: Since there can be no superiority but that of brutal strength shewn in the latter, to entitle them to engross all power and prerogative to themselves; nor any incapacity proved in the former to disqualify them of their right, but what is owing to the unjust oppression of the Men, and might be easily removed. (*Woman Not inferior to Man* 55)

Several tracts following this also claimed women's fitness for holding office and serving the state; many emphasized the nature of duty and women's "Obligations to civil Society" (*Female Rights Vindicated* 46). And many tracts that supported and/or debated women's rights appeared in the British colonies in North America, appearing in the libraries of several of the founding families of the United States; the Custis family, Martha Washington's birth family owned the original English edition of *Female Grievances Debated*.

In the next century, The Custody of Infants Act (1839) made it possible for women and mothers to gain custody of children under the age of seven. Prior to this act, all legitimate children were considered the property of the father. And in 1882, only twelve years after the first Married Women's Property Act, a new version of the act was introduced that acknowledged women as legally independent and responsible for their own debts. Not only this, but like the establishment of the police, the Married Women's Property Act was "part of an attempt to reform the morals of the poor by using the law to establish a moral standard," and an attempt to

endow a woman's earning with "the sanction of the law [so that] they would have a certain amount of sacredness even in the eyes" of lower classes of men (Griffin 69; Hansard qtd. In Griffin 69). Yet, the 1857 act was not sufficient to protect all married women's property; for the most part, the act applied to wealthy upper class women. However, the 1882 act "extended the rules of equity to all married women's property, and was therefore a triumph for the argument that the protection offered to the rich should be offered to the poor" (Griffin 81), although the extension of women's rights that were equal to men's did not occur until 1935.

The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act (1857) established a new court for hearing divorce cases, and took away the ecclesiastical courts' jurisdiction over divorce proceedings, which made divorce possible without having to pass an Act of Parliament. In both England and the United States, being married, at least until the middle of the nineteenth century, "meant subjecting oneself to a known and coercive public relationship. By the 1840s there was a growing industry of legal reformers proposing revisions, modifications, and transformations of the received rules of marriage" (Hartog 96). While coverture was in practice, there were specific ways a married woman could assert her individuality while still married. The practice of "separate maintenance" agreements allowed married women to live legally as a single woman, with whatever property she owned protected in trust for her use.

In the famous 1793 case of Lord and Lady Lanesborough, Lady Lanesborough, through a separate maintenance agreement, lived separately from her husband in England, contracted debts, and in order to prevent her creditors from collecting their due, attempted to use coverture in her favor. However, according to Chief Justice Lord Mansfield's review of the case, separate maintenance agreements "recreated the wife as a single woman, a feme-sole…[and these] agreements reflected a successful alteration of societal norms" (Hartog 99). Furthermore, while

divorces were slightly, emphasis on slightly, easier to obtain with the passage of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act (1857), there were extremely specific reasons for divorce in both the United States and in Britain, such as incest, bigamy, attempt on the life of one partner by the other, provable adultery, abandonment for three years, or extreme cruelty, and were often difficult to prove.

A man, according to England's 1857 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act, could obtain a divorce by alleging adultery and was allowed to sue for damages. A woman, on the other hand, could only obtain a divorce if she proves adultery in addition to cruelty, desertion, or bigamy and incest. The New York state divorce laws even obtained a reputation for its rigidity and inflexibility in enforcing marriage laws, and although there were small changes to divorce laws in New York, the statutes stayed basically the same for 150 years (Hartog 117). According to Shepherd Braithwaite Kitchin, by a "cumbrous and expensive procedure and multiplication of actions, women and all but the wealthiest persons were practically debarred from obtaining a remedy, only four cases of divorce in favour of women having ever been granted by Act of Parliament" (182).

Suffrage for all American citizens and the abolition of slavery were perhaps the most visible issues that reformers (both male and female, black and white) faced during the early years of the nation. Yet, these seemingly simple issues had no simple solutions. The issues concerning voting rights emerged from debates over the interpretation of the Declaration of Independence and the claim that "all men are created equal" and have "been endowed by the Creator with certain and inalienable Rights" to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (US 1776). As Judith Wellman states, "When Americans signed the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the shooting war was over, but the political revolution was by no means complete" (136). In fact,

many revolutions were occurring simultaneously, culturally, industrially, socially, leading to public and private debates and discussions regarding the most important topics of the day, such as voting rights and abolition of slavery, as well as the nature of citizenship.

Women actively engaged in these discussions, at first at private functions, such as tea parties and dinners, and further into the nineteenth century, in public forums. For example, Frances Seward, the wife of New York Governor William Henry Seward, took the opportunities presented during her parlor entertainments and tea times to lobby for causes that she believed in and supported, such as abolition of slavery (the Sewards often sheltered and protected fugitive slaves from capture in their home) and the Married Women's Property Act, which would allow women to retain "the property that their parents had accumulated for them, secured to them before marriage," as Martha Wright recalled ("Letter to Lucretia Coffin Mott, 11 March 1841").

Furthermore, women's rights to hold property was directly tied to the issues of voting rights, for if a woman was not an individual citizen in the eyes of the law, then how could she hold property of her own or exercise the right to vote. If the Declaration of Independence is correct in stating that "all men are created equal," then how can the people justify slavery and the denial of voting and political rights to men and women of all races if they are citizens of the United States? If all men are equal, then all have the right to participate equally in politics and political change by way of the voting booth. However, if women (and slaves) are not citizens then they have no right to even petition the government in search of changes to the laws of the nation. As Wellman explains, if the Declaration of Independence were indeed correct in claiming the "certain and inalienable rights" of its citizens, then these rights "must belong to everyone, rich and poor; red, black, and white; young and old; female as well as male" (136). And according to many women who advocated women's rights, such as Sarah Grimke, "[m]en

and women were created equal; they are both moral and accountable beings, and whatever is right for a man to do, is right for a woman" (Grimke "Province" 16).

The beginnings of women asserting their right to campaign for their own legal and political rights were nurtured within certain communities, such as the Quakers, and the issue of abolition led to women's agitation for the privileges promised by the documents that established the rights and freedoms of the United States. In the early 1830s, anti-slavery societies began to form in order to engage in "moral suasion," appealing to Northern and Southern white Americans' consciences. These societies used three main tactics according to Wellman: "mass mailings throughout the Southern states, grassroots organizations of antislavery societies in Northern states, and a petition movement to sway congressional opinion" (45).

However, when "incensed citizens [in the South] burned this literature in huge bonfires" and "moral suasion" proved slow (Wellman 45), the American Anti-Slavery Society organized a team of lecturers to convert Northerners to their cause and to create anti-slavery societies wherever they could. Yet, because of the view that women should not speak in public to mixed audiences (men, women, different races), or even in public at all, many women engaged with this political issue at first with petitioning campaigns, which as Wellman explains, "educated and empowered thousands of ordinary people. It was relatively inexpensive and took pressure off national organizations to raise money for agents and publications… Most significant, petitioning was amazingly effective. Simply by signing and sending petitions to Congress, neighborhood activists made abolition the topic of national debate" (47). So much so that by 1838, "abolitionists in hundreds of communities across the North had sent enough petitions to Congress to fill a room twenty feet wide by thirty feet long, floor to ceiling" (Wellman 47). And according to Daniel Carpenter and Colin D. Moore, petitions canvassed and circulated only by

women had at least "50% more signatories than did petitions on the same topics, passed through the same localities at the same time, but canvassed by men" (480). The process of petitioning and circulating petitions allowed women to educate themselves and others in political matters but also to socially empower the participants, most of whom had never entertained the idea of participating in politics, by creating stronger networks of believers.

For several years, despite a series of "gag" rules from Congress on the discussion of slavery due to the very real fear that the debate over slavery could lead to the dissolution of the Union, the antislavery movement continued and gained momentum as the rights of free white citizens aligned with the rights of enslaved African Americans. Congress's refusal to accept petitions "turned abolitionists into heroes. Now they fought not only for freedom of enslaved people but also for the right of petition, guaranteed in the Constitution, for free people" (Wellman 47). As this issue slowly affected the rights of more than just the enslaved and became essentially a moral issue, not only one stemming from the recent revolution against England, but also one in which religious and ethical issues became equally important, women also became increasingly active. For example, Frances Wright, a Scottish born woman, had worked in the late 1820s with the Working Men's Party in New York City, "speaking out against slavery, women's oppression, and class divisions" (Wellman 47).

In 1832 through 1833, Maria W. Stewart became the not only the only woman, but also the first African American woman to speak to a mixed audience of men and woman about education for free blacks. Massachusetts boasted of an exceptionally active group of women abolitionists, and Philadelphia women organized the biracial Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. And in 1836, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the Quaker daughters of a well-known slave holder, from South Carolina, "struck the abolitionist movement like lightning, igniting the

bonfire of woman's rights from the kindling of egalitarian ideas they cherished as Americans and as abolitionists" (Wellman 47). Many female-led antislavery societies developed and flourished separately from male-led abolitionist societies, and although when delegates met in December 1833 to form the American Anti-Slavery Society, women were not officially listed among the more than sixty delegates. However, there was at least one woman, Lucretia Mott, who spoke at the first meeting, and after several years of reflection, there were delegates who regretted not accepting women who wished to join as delegates (Wellman 48).

Mott had already been a Quaker minister for nine years at this time, and had a reputation as a public speaker; according to reports, Mott was "small in stature but powerful in spirit, and intellect and very effective in public speaking" (Wellman 48). She was characterized by those who heard her speak, as "a regular ultra Barn burning kind of a woman," and by herself, as "a radical of radicals and a heretic among heretics" (qtd. in Wellman 48). Mott's beliefs as a Quaker laid the foundation for her respect for all people, and they particularly formed the basis for her commitment to women's rights. Mott recalled that "Being a native of the island of Nantucket, where women were thought something of, and had some connection with the business arrangements of life, as well as with their domestic home, I grew up so thoroughly imbued with women's rights that it was the most important question of my life from a very early day" (*Proceedings of the First Anniversary of the American Equal Rights Association*). Mott's speech, along with three other women activists at the first meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society urged women "not to wait for prominent men to approve of their course but to follow their own sense of right and wrong" (Wellman 48): "If our principles are right why should we be cowards?" (qtd. in Wellman 48).

Mott was not the only Quaker woman who felt compelled to join the cause of abolition,

Angelina and Sarah Grimké joined the movement not only as supporters but as committed speakers and activists, even to the point of disownment from the Society of Friends; as Angelina states, "for I do consider the restrictions placed upon our members as so very anti christian [sic] that I would rather be disownd [sic] than to be any longer bound by them" ("Angelina Grimké to Jane Smith,18 September [1836]"). In 1836, both Sarah and Angelina began speaking to groups of women in New York City in private parlors, but soon needed to move to larger locations, and eventually meetings began to include men and African American women as well. By June 1839, the Grimké sisters were speaking to audiences of over one thousand people. In spite of public and private criticism from prominent conservative men and women, the Grimkés, along with many other women who chose to speak out in favor of their beliefs, held fast to their belief that their path was the right one; Angelina Grimké responded to such criticism in letters published in anti-slavery newspapers between June and December 1837: "The investigation of the rights of the slave has led me to a better understanding of my own…I have found the Anti-Slavery cause to be the high school of morals in our land— the school in which *human* rights are more fully investigated, and better understood and taught than any other" (Angelina Grimké "Letter XII").

The Grimkés' belief that women were just as qualified as men to speak and influence public opinion influenced even more women speakers in support of not only abolition of slavery, but for women's rights as well, or in Angelina Grimké's definition, *human* rights. As Grimké states in her *Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States*, women should "be not satisfied by merely setting your names to a constitution— this is a very little thing…woman ought to be in this field: it is *her duty, her privilege* to labor in it, 'as woman never yet has labored'" and that women have "*human rights* and human responsibilities" and that "*all moral beings have essentially the same rights and the same duties,* whether they be male or female" (59; 19).

Furthermore, Grimké tackles the issue of citizenship for women: "Are we aliens because we are women? Are we bereft of citizenship because we are the *mothers, wives,* and *daughters* of a mighty people? Have women no country— no interest staked in public weal— no liabilities in common-peril— no partnership in a nation's guilt and shame?" (*Appeal* 19).

The inclusion of women in the Grimké's plan of action allowed women to bridge the gap between moral suasion (a less overtly political plan) and political action. Petitioning the government challenged women as well as men to take both a personal and public stand on the issues; as Wellman notes, "As a moral campaign, abolition attracted large numbers of women. To sign a petition, however, was a political act. It was, declared women at the third national convention of anti-slavery women in 1839, 'our only means of direct political action'" (52). As women's involvement grew, so did the opposition to women's activity outside the domestic sphere. As one writer stated in support of women's activity in abolitionism, "Undoubtedly, the duties of domestic life appropriately belongs to our sex, but have we not other object to claim our affections…Rest assured, dear sisters, that he who would chain you exclusively to the daily round of household duties, is at least in some degree actuated by the dark spirit of slavery, and that this feeling is a relic of barbarism, have its origin in countries where woman is considered emphatically the *property* of another" ("Address of Farmington Female Anti-Slavery Society").

For those women welcomed into societies and meetings led by men, particularly those of William Lloyd Garrison, who wholeheartedly declared his intent to "redeem women as well as men from a servile to an equal condition— we shall go for the RIGHTS OF WOMAN to their utmost extent" ("William Lloyd Garrison to Mary Benson, 22 September 1838"), Lucretia Mott summed up their experience: "*Women* were there by right, not by sufferance, and stood on equal ground" ("Lucretia C. Mott to J. Miller McKim, 29 December 1839"). Elizabeth Cady Stanton

joined the debate on women's public activism and speaking by following an 1848 letter to the editor of *The Seneca County Courier*, which argued that "the Bible is the great Charter of human rights" and that there is "neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bound nor free, but all are one in Jesus Christ" ("E.C. Stanton and Elizabeth McClintock to the Editors"), with another letter, one to George Cooper, Editor of the *National Reformer,* that states: "If God has assigned a sphere to man and one to woman, we claim the right to judge ourselves of his design in reference to *us*…We think a man has quite enough in this life to find out his own individual calling, without being taxed to decide where ever woman belongs…There is no such thing as a sphere for a sex" ("14 September, 1848").

Many of these sentiments materialized out of the changing economic and industrial landscape. As many small towns, previously rooted in agricultural and home production quickly moved towards industrialization, particularly in communities with access to water power, the older view of the world that valued order and harmony among neighbors shattered into the promotion of competition among neighbors and friends and clearly divided "the home (as a place for family life, for consuming the world's goods, for women and children) and the workplace (a place away from the home, dominated by men, whose purpose was to make money)" (Wellman 73). And yet, many women and children, in order to maintain a comfortable level of existence, chose to work outside of the sphere that men prescribed for them.

Industrialization affected men, women, and communities in different ways. Often causing difficulties in creating a new world from the fragments of the old, particularly in the debate over who would and should represent the family in the world. Not only this, but as industrialization grew in these communities, so did the factories' reliance on slave-produced materials, which also increased tensions among industrialists and agriculturalists; the old world

and the new; and supporters of slavery and abolitionists. In the emerging capitalist economy, reform movements remained active, fueled notably by religious movements and merging religious and political aims to reach a larger population. As in the abolition movement, women were important in sustaining and maintaining religious ideals in order to recreate “an orderly, Christian base in the chaotic and often cruel conditions of an emerging industrial village” and to “use love, self-sacrifice, and concern for the whole community” to challenge “the individualistic, competitive model promoted by the emerging capitalist economy” (Wellman 81). As this movement to combine the secular and public world with Christian ideals grew, so did the alliance between the concepts of Christian and Citizen; as the *Seneca Falls Democrat* observed, this merger is “eminently worthy of the fostering care and encouraging approval of every patriot and sincere lover of his country…It is in these [Sunday] schools…that the youth of our country imbibe their earliest and most enduring sense of the obligations and responsibilities which are soon to devolve upon them as the freemen of this free republic” (“Celebration”).

A passion for reforms of many kinds, such as abolition and temperance from alcohol, affected everyone. In interrelated areas of religion and reform, individuals acted upon their “moral convictions by challenging established institutions” and “existing gender roles, basing their challenges on the Bible and on the meaning of the Declaration of Independence” (Wellman 87). Questions of moral and political authority led to debates on how people should make decisions, whether based on morals or consciences, or based on deference to institutions of family, government, or church, and should society be based on egalitarian principles or should power be distributed on the basis of a hierarchy? In the midst of these debates over equality and authority, equality between men and women seemed the next logical progression in the discussions.

Another logical progression in the campaign for women's rights and involvement in society and politics came from women of the Quaker faith. Quakers involved in advocating reforms made up the largest number of attendees at the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention, which met "to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of Woman" (qtd. in Wellman 92). Because the Quakers had already established a small but effective network of reformers, the convention led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton led to a wider audience than even Stanton might have expected. It is during the late 1840s that Elizabeth C. Stanton began to assert herself in the discussion of women's rights, by writing both public and private letters in support of women's activism, and by organizing the first women's rights convention.

Stanton's involvement with several Quaker abolitionists allowed her to tap into a ready-made network of reformers willing to join her campaign. Quaker reformers were linked by their awareness of "that of God in every person" ("Nathaniel Potter to Amy Post, 7 October 1843"). Quaker men and women, when following spiritual leadings to "mind the light" within, and to "let their lives speak" inside and outside the home ("Nathaniel Potter to Amy Post, 7 October 1843"), "defined their own families in egalitarian terms, incorporating parent and siblings as well as spouses and children. They also committed themselves to reform movements in the larger world, especially support for Native Americans, African Americans, and women" (Wellman 92). Many Quaker families also stressed education for the girls and women in their households; for example, Elizabeth M'Clintock, part of a prominent Quaker family, opened a school for girls in 1839 above Thomas M'Clintock's drug store in Waterloo, New York, in which she and Ruth Southwick taught chemistry, philosophy, botany, geography, grammar, astronomy, reading, writing, and arithmetic (Wellman 94).

And yet, even these reformers often faced disastrous upheaval during their meetings over

their commitment to practical philanthropy and the crossroads of new evangelical ideas of the "Orthodox Friends" and their own ideas of equality; as some Quaker reformers differed in their approach to "minding their light," many of them were forced to withdraw from existing Quaker meetings, withdrawals which "infused energy into reform movements in the larger world, especially abolitionism and woman's rights" (Wellman 92). One such woman, who although not forced out due to differing opinions on reform, was Martha Coffin Wright, who married an army captain against her meeting's wishes. In reply to the letter requesting her to withdraw or condemn her marriage, Wright declares, "I do not feel willing to condemn the act of which you speak, but can truly say that I have much regretted the existence of a rule admitting of but one alternative" ("M.C. Pelham [Wright] to 'Dear Friends' 4 April 1825").

Wright's freethinking apparently lasted throughout her life, influencing her behavior in public and in private; her neighbors called her a "very dangerous woman," never afraid of what others may say nor afraid to say exactly what she thought, nor "deviating a hand's breadth from what she thought was right" (Osborne, "My Mother, Martha Coffin"). As Quakers, even those who were asked to withdraw from meetings, maintained the links provided by birth families and marriages to assert the value of women at home and in public, to create "a web of interlocking ties and a multiplicity of socially valued roles" for both men and women (Wellman 97). Furthermore, as people outside the Quaker faith began to separate men and women and the public and private spheres, the Quakers "continued to blur the boundaries between home and the world. Their homes were not refuges from the world but the basis for creating communities," a definition of family that reinforced respect for women as valuable to the community and its decisions (Wellman 97). Even the boundaries of what constituted family had porous edges; frequently households took responsibility for extended family members, and even unrelated

people, such as servants, boarders, laborers, children in need of care, and even African Americans staying in their homes.[4]

Many of these Quaker families and networks used their homes as centers of reforms, encouraging discussion of current issues, literature, and the duties of a community and individuals. Not only this but these communities served as examples for current and future reformers, even if it came in the form of marriage advice; Lucretia Mott's favorite advice reflected the equality of status and decision-making power of both husband and wife: "In the marriage relationship the independence of the husband and wife is equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal" (qtd. in Bacon, 112).

Despite their commitment to equality, many Quakers interpreted and defined the term in multiple ways. As Wellman notes, Quakerism was "not a monolith" and there could be many different sets of beliefs in even a small area. Many times, the boundaries of Quakerism had to be pushed and tested (and even broken) in order to achieve the ideal of equality beyond the traditions that formed these ideals. These differing viewpoints often led to divisions among the Society of Friends, and yet, these differing factions allowed Quaker reformers to become some of the most energetic and influential leaders of the nineteenth century reform movement. As Nancy Hewitt argues, the splits among groups of Quakers may have been "a historical moment when the disruption and decline of male authority was accompanied by the nurturance and expansion of woman's power" (108). Furthermore, reforms such as abolition, Indian affairs, and

[4] As Rosemarie Zaggari argues, the ideology that introduced separate spheres for men and women may have been "a reaction *against* women's more extensive involvement in politics, a convenient way to explain and justify excluding women from part politics and electoral activities" (135) after their intense involvement in choosing sides between the Federalists and Democratic Republicans in the early years of the nation. As Zaggari notes, women were intense in their loyalty to either party, displaying the insignia and mottos of their party on their bonnets and dresses. For more on women's involvement in party politics, see Zagarri's study *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*. Philadelphia:

woman's rights, led many Quaker women further out of the tradition that had created these ideals, and led many to choose their egalitarian vision over membership in the Society of Friends. However, newspapers and journals also took notice of the Quaker women's abilities and strong qualifications for work in the reform movement. For example, one article in the 1831 edition of *The Friend; or, Advocate of Truth* noticed that Quaker women have "intelligence, sound sense, considerateness, discretion…that is not found in any other class of women, as a class" and credited these qualities to the extensive share that women played during and within Quaker meetings (153).

Quaker women who advocated reforms for women's rights often spoke publicly and wrote articles, but just as often their interest led them to read and incorporate literature and essays into their philosophies, such as William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which Martha Wright often used to shock her conservative visitors. Yet the Bible became one of the sources most used to support anti-slavery and women's rights; Martha Wright noted an incident when a male medical student confronted the doctor's wife, who thought

> 'that women were capable of managing matters much better than men were willing to admit.' The young man brought a Bible and inquired 'if that book didn't say that Man should be the head of the family.' 'Yes,' replied Mrs. Dr. Smith, 'and doesn't that same book say that woman is a *crown* to her husband?' 'David thought,' Wright says, 'that if he was the head and she the crown to the head, she was certainly 'top of the heap.' ("Martha Wright to Lucretia Coffin Mott, 1 January 1846")

With noticeable speed, the Quakers moved from local abolitionism and women's rights movements to the national stage, when Thomas M'Clintock sent a letter written by James C. Jackson to *The Liberator* and Garrison published it; although the letter dealt with anti-slavery, the rights of women were at its heart: "The great point in the cause of human rights, to be settled

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now is, whether woman is henceforth to be regarded as the equal coadjutor of man, in *man and woman's redemption*; and the antislavery cause will not progress one whit till we settle this point…Who shall rally if woman does not?" (Jackson "to two women of this vicinity, 18 August 1839"). Many women, those already involved with reforms, and those who heard the call, answered.

In 1842, out of the American Anti-Slavery Society, came the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, the organization which became "the crucible that heated the fires not only for radical abolitionism but also for the woman's rights movement. From the very beginning, women were major leaders. Nine of the original officers were women. In November 1842, five Quaker women— Amy Post and Sarah A. Burtis from Rochester; Abbey Kelley from Lynn, Massachusetts; Phoebe Hathaway from Farmington; and Mary Ann M'Clintock from Waterloo— organized the first abolitionist event after the [American Anti-Slavery Society] convention, an antislavery fair" which raised three hundred dollars, nearly $3500 today (Wellman 114). These fairs asked for donations from neighboring farms, held sewing circles to create quilts and clothes, and even featured music, speeches, and a "feast of reason and flow of soul" (*Seneca Observer* 3 October 1843). These fairs not only raised money for anti-slavery materials, but they also kept women in contact with each other, not only locally, but nationally and internationally as well. Because these fairs were so successful in raising money and creating publicity for the cause, people took notice not only of the abolitionist cause, but women's rights as well. In an 1845 letter to Amy Post, J.B. Sanderson reported on the American Anti-Slavery Society's annual meeting, acknowledging the shared concern of abolition and women's rights:

> a few years ago men in this city hissed at the mere idea of Women's speaking in public in promiscuous assemblies; now men come to antislavery conventions, attracted by the announcement that women are to take part in the deliberations and they are often more desirous of hearing women, than men— The world is becoming

> habituated to it…Woman is rising up, becoming free…*Man* cannot be *free*, while the developer of his heart, soul, moral character, or the maker of man, in the highest sense, *Woman* is enslaved to conventionalism. ("Sanderson to Amy Post, 8 May 1845")

Even Frederick Douglass's *North Star* bore the masthead, "Right is of no Sex— Truth is of no Color— God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren" (Douglass 84).

However, leading up to the 1848 Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, the rapid economic growth in Seneca Falls and surrounding areas had increased the number of people from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, and had set up the skeleton frame of a village, with a loosely draped political framework, "And on that framework they [political leaders, in general, male political leaders] worked hard to pin common cultural values, those ways of thinking and behaving that would allow them to continue to live and work together on common economic and political tasks" (Wellman 122). Gender also became a common way to assert these values; for example, in theory, all women were mothers, whether in the past, present, or future, or at least ought to be. Mothers were the caretakers of family and community, resourceful with the household duties and moral instructors untainted by outside temptations, while men struggled to survive physically, financially, and morally outside the home. Yet, when women like Abbey Kelley, a staunch abolitionist and speaker with a reputation for fiery lectures, came to town to speak, value-oriented institutions such as churches, political parties, and voluntary societies, changed from sources of stability into battlegrounds, both controlling and facilitating cultural conflict.

Increasingly throughout the 1840s, women's issues coincided with other political issues, such as citizenship and legal equality. In general, all adult white males, regardless of wealth or place of birth were granted legal and political equality. Yet, at the same time, property qualifications for free African Americans remained in effect, and all slaves and women (along

with infants, children, idiots, and felons) were excluded from citizenship and therefore legal and political rights. The argument seems logical, somewhat. Since a married woman has no legal existence, she cannot own property. Since a woman cannot own property, she cannot pay taxes. Since she does not pay taxes, a woman cannot make independent political decisions. However, if women were somehow able to own and control their own property, outside the realm of coverture, the objections to these situations disappear. As Wellman notes, "To allow women to own property was to remove the last logical obstacle to a woman's right to vote. The movement for a married woman's property act, then, became a dress rehearsal for woman's suffrage" (137).

The American Revolution had in some ways allowed a proto-feminist challenge to existing women's roles to emerge. Some were in private, such as in Abigail Adams's 1776 letter to her husband, in which she suggests that women might incite their own "Rebellion" if political leaders did not "remember the Ladies" ("Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776"). A year earlier Thomas Paine had explained women's situation: women "are constrained in their desires in the disposal of their goods, robbed of freedom and will by the laws, the slaves of opinion" (qtd. in Kerber 30-31), further linking the later abolition movement with women's rights. Near the end of the eighteenth century, Judith Sargent Murray's 1790 essay "On the Equality of the Sexes" argued that the existing inequalities between men and women were not natural, but a consequence of education, a similar argument to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which went through several American editions, and was a frequent source for women from which to draw arguments, or with which to shock conservative neighbors.

However, in practice, most Americans had drawn up a compromise position for women, one which Linda Kerber has called republican motherhood. Kerber's theory argues that women

played both public and private roles, one by carrying on traditional roles within the home, and the other by becoming the moral preceptors of the household, sacrificing their own personal interests for the good of their children, and becoming models of civic virtue to influence sons, daughters, as future citizens. Although women were counted as citizens, counted for the basis of distribution of representatives for the new Congress, women were never considered as part of the active political scene by those framing the new government. At least a few Americans did notice this exclusion; Charles Brockden Brown's *Alcuin*, a fictional dialogue written in the 1790s, presents a conversation between a young man and Mrs. Carter. In this conversation the young man asks Mrs. Carter if she were a federalist. Mrs. Carter's answer, laden with irony, anticipates later arguments for women's rights:

> What have I, as a woman, to do with politics? Even the government of our country, which is said to be the freest in the world, passes over women as if they were not. We are excluded from all political rights without the least ceremony. Lawmakers thought as little of comprehending us in their code of liberty, as if we were pigs, or sheep…how should it be otherwise? While I am conscious of being an intelligent and moral being; while I see myself denied, in so many cases, the exercise of my own discretion; incapable of separate property; subject, in all periods of my life, to the will of another, on whose bounty I am made to depend for food, raiment, and shelter: when I see myself, in my relation to society, regarded merely as a beast, or an insect; passed over, in the distribution of public duties as absolutely nothing…No, I am no federalist…I am a woman. As such, I cannot celebrate the equity of that scheme of government which classes me with dogs and swine. (Brown 64-65).

As Mrs. Carter recognizes, voting is a central attribute of full citizenship. The Constitution left voting rights and requirements up to the states, so for women who wished to challenge their exclusion from the formal political process, the state was the first stage of debate and contest.

During the Revolution, many state governments failed to deal with the issue, and after, many states adopted their colonial constitutions nearly intact, which granted the right to vote only to propertied males. New Jersey was an odd exception; the 1776 constitution gave voting rights to "all inhabitants of this Colony, of full age, who are worth fifty pounds Proclamation

money, clear estate" and who had lived in the same county for twelve months prior to the election, which included women, African Americans, and European Americans (Stone). And yet, only thirty years after the state Constitution was ratified, the legislature used the issue of widespread voting fraud in one local election to exclude women from voting; however, at the same time, the legislature also practically eliminated the property qualifications for adult white males. As many of the new states began to create new constitutions for themselves, the debate over who exactly had the right to vote became an even larger issue.

In 1821, in New York, issues of expanding white male suffrage and restrictions on black male suffrage absorbed days of debate, many speakers repeating republican ideals, but taking different forms, based on race. As Wellman notes, "Tension between liberty and property dominated the discussion of white suffrage. Equality emerged as the main theme in the discussion of black suffrage" (139). Nearly every argument at this state constitutional convention signaled the major themes that emerge a generation later in the struggle for women's suffrage. As noted previously, these debates were rooted in the conflicts over "the basic functions of government and about the meaning of the Declaration of Independence itself. Decisions to exclude any citizen from voting were based, as proponents and opponents alike quickly pointed out, on expediency rather than on natural rights, on fear, prejudice, or social factors rather than on logical applications of ideals of liberty and equality" (Wellman 139). In spite of impassioned arguments on both sides of the debate, the state constitutional amendment that excluded women, children, and Native Americans (nine-tenths of the population) passed overwhelmingly, 72-32. As for the whole of the constitution only eight of the seventy-two voted against it. Because the amendment that excluded the vast majority of the population had passed, this became a precedent for limiting African American suffrage. Even as early as 1836,

Abraham Lincoln running as Whig candidate for the Illinois state legislature, stated his position on voting rights in the *Sangamo Journal*: “I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burthens…admitting all whites to the right of suffrage, who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females)” (“Abraham Lincoln to Editor of the *Journal,* 13 June, 1836”).

Advocates of women’s political rights came from several different backgrounds; some motivated by pure republican logic and idealism. But others came from two main camps: abolitionism and legal reform movements. Not surprisingly, abolitionists were particularly sensitive to the parallels between the powerlessness of slaves and that of women, black or white. Even supporters from across the ocean noticed the inconsistencies in the principles put forth in the Declaration of Independence and the political nonexistence of American women: “One of the fundamental principles announced in the Declaration of Independence is that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. How can the political condition of women be reconciled with this?” (Martineau 134).

However, those who supported legal reform to effect change campaigned for women’s rights indirectly, unlike abolitionists. Focusing on the right of married women to own property seemed a reasonable goal to begin with, although for the most part, this goal was often used to protect family assets from business losses and reckless, wasteful sons-in-law. In New York, the issue of a married woman’s property act was debated for twelve years. Most realized that if this door were opened, allowing women to own and control their own property and money, then other rights for women would soon follow. And for those who held the republican vision of the world, property rights and political rights were inseparable from each other. Wealthy women’s property was somewhat protected through the use of equity courts, legal trusts, and prenuptial

agreements. By the 1830s, however, when state legislatures began removing elements connected to English common law from their statutes, these protections began to dissipate. One reformer, Ernestine Potoski Rose attempted to secure signatures in support of a married woman's property bill proposed by New York State Assemblyman Thomas Herttell "with a great deal of trouble," and found that "Women at that time had not learned to know that she had any rights except those that man in his generosity allowed her" ("Rose to Susan B. Anthony, 9 January, 1877").

Rose continued to support and to generate petitions, while Herttell revised and rewrote his proposal, and eventually reintroduced the bill in 1837. Herttell clarified his position and his bill in the January 18, 1838, edition of Washington D.C.'s *Evening Star:* "Its primary principle is to preserve to *married women* the title, possession, and control of their estate, both real and personal *after* as *before* marriage; — and that no part of it shall inure to their husbands, solely by virtue of their *marriage*" and protect the property of married women from "injury and waste by means of the improvident, prodigal, intemperate, and dissolute habits and practices of their husbands," to "save it from loss through the husband's misfortunes and crimes," and make both husband and wife "exclusively answerable for his or her own misconduct" (qtd. in Herttell *Remarks 5-6*). Furthermore, Herttell cited the Declaration of Independence as one source of his argument, much like many others searching for gender equality at the time: "That 'all men are born free and with equal rights' is an admitted maxim in the moral and political creed of all advocates and friends of free government. That this truth is meant to apply exclusively to the *male* sex, will not be urged by any who have a due regard for their reputation for common sense" (Herttell 15-17). Not only this, but Hertell argues that the Constitution was intended to secure equal rights for all citizens "and hence to preserve the rights of property *equally to all—...female,* equally with *male citizens*, and the *married* equally with the *un*married, of *one sex* equally with

the *other*" (20; author's emphasis). Stopping just short of advocating women's right to vote, Herttell argued that women could not be beneficial "republican mothers" when they are "deprived of their rights, despoiled of their property, slandered in their character, neglected in their education, and thus degraded in their condition" by the remains of the common law (*Remarks* 79-80). Although this bill did not pass, and Herttell left office in 1840, others continued the reforms and arguments that Herttell had begun in the legislature. Finally, a comprehensive bill emerged in 1846 that "gave married women the right to own property, to will it to whomever they chose, and to sue and be sued in matters relating to their separate estate. [Also] In response to a petition from Thomas Herttell, the bill also declared that habitual drunkenness was a legitimate cause for divorce" (Wellman 147). None of these bills became law; however, the extensive debates that took place in the legislature, newspapers, and "around many fashionable dinner-tables, and at many humble firesides," converted many women to the cause (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage 51-52). As Stanton remembered, "the press and the pulpit became suddenly vigilant in marking out woman's sphere, while woman herself seemed equally vigilant in her efforts to step outside the prescribed limits" (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage 52). The debates continued as the nature of citizenship, voting rights, and property rights became hot button issues; "for those who believed that voters should have some personal obligation to the government, the idea that married women could own property opened up a Pandora's Box full of possibilities. If women paid taxes, what could, logically, keep them from voting?" (Wellman 152). At least twelve years of serious debate about women's property rights culminated in April 1848, when the New York state legislature finally took real action on a bill brought by Judge John Fine, who had experienced extensive troubles attempting to keep separate the property that his wife had brought into their marriage, and George Geddes, who feared leaving his young

daughter without financial protection. As Geddes recalled, "even [the bill's] friends had doubts…We meant to strike a hard blow, and if possible shake the old system of laws to their foundations, and leave it to other times and wiser councils to perfect a new system" (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage 64-67). The bill finally passed the Senate on March 29, 1848, by a vote of 23-1. And yet, because the immediate impact was not as dramatic and because other states lacked this type of legislation, Elizabeth Cady Stanton made women's property rights one of the main topics at the Seneca Falls Convention. However, this result set the stage for further action by women themselves; Stanton noted that the Married Woman's Property Act "encouraged action on the part of women, [since] if the men who make the laws were ready for some onward step, surely the women themselves should express interest in legislation" (Stanton and Blatch 149).

While women were becoming more and more active in gaining their own rights, they did not forget what initially drew them to activism. Abolition continued to remain an issue at the forefront of many women's rights campaigners. While Elizabeth Cady Stanton was sidelined by personal and familial problems during the passage of the Married Woman's Property Act, she found that its passage energized her into further involvement with women's rights and the abolition movement. Although several women's meetings were held to discuss abolition, Stanton was not told of them; as she recalled,

> Nothing would have pleased me more than to have been present at a womans [sic] business meeting, where I might have seen the faces & heard the voices of Abbey Kelly [sic] & Lydia M. Child. How could I know of the existence of such meetings [when] no one told me. [sic] Had I known of them why should I have been disinclined to go? Because Henry might not have wished me to do? Its primary principle is to preserve to *married women* the title, possession, and control of their estate, both real and personal *after* as *before* marriage; — and that no part of it shall inure to their husbands, solely by virtue of their *marriage*" You do not know the extent to which I carry my rights. I do in truth think & act for myself knowing that I alone am responsible for the sayings & doings of E.C.S." ("Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neal, November 26 [1841]").

Indeed, Stanton would maintain this position for the rest of her life, allowing her husband to control neither her thoughts nor her actions.

As Stanton skillfully navigated her way through the difficulties within the abolitionist movement, she never wavered in her commitment to woman's rights and took it upon herself to promote these rights everywhere. In a letter to Lucretia Mott, Stanton explained her commitment: "The more I think on the present condition of woman, the more am I oppressed with the reality of her degradation. The laws of our country, how unjust are they! our customs, how vicious! What God has made sinful, both in man and woman, custom has made sinful in woman alone" (qtd. in Hallowell 228). Stanton obtained and circulated copies of Sarah Grimké's out-of-print *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* and subscribed to the *Liberator* in her own name, as the "only woman's rights food" she had for herself and her disciples ("Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, 26 November [1841]"). Even during her first meeting with Frederick Douglass, Stanton proceeded with a private lecture on woman's rights. As Douglass remembered, she "did me the honor to sit by my side, and by that logic of which she is master, successfully endeavored to convince me of the wisdom & truth of the then new gospel of woman's rights" (Douglass *On Women's Rights* 163). Stanton's involvement with women's rights grew alongside her belief in abolition grew, and often her speeches against slavery could be used to support her views on women's rights; in a speech entitled "Fear" from 1846/1847, Stanton argued that

> our whole system of education combines with external nature to make us still more the slaves of fear…nursery rhymes, ghost stories, & a gloomy theology, of a powerful devil, & a great God who loves not wicked children is poured upon the innocent mind until the most thoughtful & sensitive come to live in constant dread of some undefined terrors here & a fearful looking for of judgment to come hereafter. Everywhere is the childs [sic] fears played upon, at home, at school, in the sanctuary. Parent, Teacher, Priest, all join in this first work!…Is there one man or woman in this house that does not plead guilty to

> this charge? And still more, violence is regarded as a religious duty & defended as a law of *Heaven*. (Stanton "Fear" 8-10)

Furthermore, because of this emphasis on fear, institutions such as slavery crush man everywhere: "Behold the most christian [sic] nation in the globe with its slavery, its standing army, used now chiefly to keep four millions of Africans in bondage, its church pledged to both" (Stanton "Fear" 12-13). Stanton's solution, along with Mott, Theodore Parker, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, was to use human reason to combat fear:

> Man is a being of reason. It is chance, accident, mystery, the unknown, the unfathomable that appalls the soul. The healthy normal condition of mind & body is repose. A sound mind in a sound body is the birthright of man…All that remains for us to do then is to bring ourselves into harmony with these fixed immutable laws that govern the great universe of matter [and] mind believing that "all seeming evil is universal good / all discord, harmony not understood." (Stanton "Fear" 13-15, 18).

Although, Stanton's speech deals mainly with slavery, fear also plays a part in woman's rights and the wresting of authority, or at the very least, sharing authority from those who would oppress women. In particular, later in the nineteenth century women attempted to move more into professional work like those of men, such as physicians, lawyers, or business owners, bankers, or detectives, other than the jobs available to them, such as factory workers, or servants, or even governesses. Institutional authority's position that women should not enter a public and widespread workforce emerged from arguments that previously had prevented women from even speaking publicly against slavery and for their own personal rights, such as the right to own their own property, and eventually the right to vote.

As many abolition groups and political parties that had formed around Quaker ideals in the 1840s split and dissolved along political and religious lines, existing talk of revolution became part of household discussions. As Americans confronted the new and dramatic economic and social change, they had to redefine old values to meet the demands raised by a

new world. On July 4, 1848, American cities and towns kept the tradition of reciting the Declaration of Independence, passionately addressing the towns' citizens with the familiar phrases. And as the world watched an actual revolution occurring in France, the Declaration became at once a connection to America's past and an opening to the future. As Wellman argues, "It [The Declaration of Independence] helped bridge the chasm from a world in which individuals fit themselves into institutions— of family, church, and government— to a world in which institutions were likely to change to meet the needs of individuals" (184). In Seneca Falls, the word *revolution* was used fairly lightly, even in advertisements for dry goods, clothing, drugs, medicines, books, lamps, and many other items. However, the same day that many of these advertisements appeared in the *Seneca County Courier*, a notice for the first Woman's Rights Convention appeared that spoke of revolution in a cultural sense to take place eight days later (July 19 and 20) at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls.

As Stanton recalled, it "was the greatest movement for human liberty recorded on the pages of history— a demand for freedom to one-half the entire race" (Stanton, Anthony, and Gage 68) and proclaimed a new Declaration of Independence, in which "all men *and women* are created equal" (*Report of the International Council of Women* 32, author's emphasis). The earnest planning of the woman's rights convention began in early July 1848, at a tea-party hosted by Jane Hunt, a Quaker woman, who on that day surrounded herself with "several members of different families of Friends, earnest, thoughtful women," such as Lucretia Mott, Martha Wright, Mary Ann M'Clintock, as well as her two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann. Stanton, after her struggles as essentially a single mother (her husband was away working on political speeches and party work), was likely ready for some stimulating conversation, if only to speak of the difficulties of managing household duties and children alone.

Yet, because Lucretia Mott and Stanton had a history of working together in the abolition movement, talk steered toward woman's portion in life, and especially Stanton's discontent with the roles of "wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide" to her family (Stanton *Eighty Years* 147). As Stanton poured out her frustration with her personal situation, she enumerated the unbalanced conditions that existed for women; Stanton noted,

> the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measure should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. My experience at the World's Anti-slavery Convention, all I had read of the legal status of women, and the oppression I saw everywhere, together swept across my soul, intensified now by many personal experiences. It seemed as if all the elements had conspired to impel me to some onward step. (*Eighty Years* 147-148)

As these women noticed, the problems were not with their individual experiences, though these added fuel to their fire. The problem was one that they shared with every woman; a "problem of cultural values, which assumed that every woman, no matter what her talents, would be defined by her sex. It was also a problem of social structure, since it was social institutions— family, work, community, the law— that kept women and me so neatly apart, so boxed into assigned spaces. And ultimately, it was a political problem, because without a different distribution of power, there could be no change" (Wellman 190). As Stanton read the Declaration of Sentiments on the second day of the convention, the meaning of the familiar words of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence changed with the addition of only two small words— and women. Yet, as most knew, such a declaration that Stanton read, much like the declaration made seventy-two years prior, would lead to revolution. However, instead of a bloody fight against a king, this was a revolution of women against patriarchal control and institutions, such as the law, the family, religion, work, education, and of course, politics and voting.

The first major category of grievances, and one of the more shocking additions to the Declaration of Sentiments, was the article discussing the exclusion of women from the “electoral franchise,” a statement that compelled Stanton’s husband Henry to abandon the convention in favor of his own political work:

> The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world.
>
> He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
>
> He had compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice. (“Declaration of Sentiments” 8)

The second category fell under legal discrimination, specifically of married women, but including the whole of women. Stanton’s past experiences in her father’s law office had given her ample opportunity to witness just such legal extermination of women’s rights and existence. As she continued to read, Stanton, charged men with the ridiculous notion of a married woman being “civilly dead.” Moreover, without property rights, or the right to retain any wages she earns by her own industriousness, women and their money were subject to the whims of their husbands. Morally, women were “irresponsible beings,” who could “commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband,” who also must be recognized as her master, with the “power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement” (“Declaration of Sentiments” 8). In cases of divorce, the law presupposed the “supremacy of man,” gave “all power into his hands,” and was “wholly regardless of the happiness of women” in determining child custody. However, single women did not escape notice in the declaration; single women who happened to own their own property found themselves taxed “to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it,” which in terms of the original declaration, could be translated to the phrase, “no taxation without

representation" ("Declaration of Sentiments" 8-9).

Once the legal and political indictments had been made, Stanton turned to the rights of women in occupation, education, and the church; as Stanton recounts, man has "monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but scanty remuneration" and has closed to woman "all avenues to wealth and distinction," such as law, theology, and medicine, by denying women a university education ("Declaration of Sentiments" 9). Furthermore, after the Civil War, as Harriet Beecher Stowe explained, having lost husbands, fathers, and brothers in the war, "women had been left with the responsibility of supporting their families, yet often they lack the wherewithal to earn a living…the problem was not that vocations were closed to women but that women did not have the education to fill them" (Easton-Flake 37). And by education, Stowe meant "that which fits a woman for practical and profitable employment in life, and not mere common-school learning" which leads to suitable jobs, such as the "domestic vocation" (Stowe 49, 54). Although Stowe tended to be more conservative and value woman's traditional duties than the greater number of suffragists, she based her plan for the advancement of women on "the doctrine of *vocations*" ("What Will You Do with Her" 37). According to Stowe's argument, a woman should be free to enter any field for "which, by her natural organization and talent, she is peculiarly adapted," as well as to receive "equal pay with man for work which she does equally well" (Stowe 34).[5] And although Stowe placed the "domestic vocation" at the top of her list for women's work, she, along with many suffragists and anti-suffragists, asserted that "some exceptional women were meant for something other than the profession of domesticity" (Easton-Flake 39). Even the anti-suffrage

[5] This argument made in 1865, seems particularly appropriate for my argument that the reforms and ideas debated during the early and mid-1800s allowed for the anomalous and anachronistic appearance of women in the roles of detectives. Many women in the fictional accounts display particular talents for the job, as well as complain about the pay, which is much

journal *True Woman* offers sketches and articles about "true women" who are not married with children, but are pursuing their careers and chosen vocations, revealing that not all anti-suffragists saw marriage and raising children as the only acceptable role for women.

Not only did Stanton charge that man has prevented women from distinguishing themselves by their wits and abilities in public employments, but she charged men with conceiving the entire framework of systematic oppression by creating a double standard of morality, a "false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man" ("Declaration of Sentiments" 9). Furthermore, the effect of this discrimination and destruction "of her confidence in her own powers" and has lessened woman's self-respect, in order to make her "willing to lead a dependent and abject life" ("Declaration of Sentiments" 9). If the Declaration of Independence were correct in saying that "all men and women are truly equal, and entitled to those inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, then human institutions were clearly out of tune with the right order of Nature and God. Human institutions, not natural law, must be changed" (Wellman 200). In light of these issues and the "entire disenfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,— in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights," the convention's "Declaration of Sentiments" insisted that women "have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States" ("Declaration of Sentiments" 9).

At the time, those who organized the convention anticipated "no small amount of misconception, mis-representation, and ridicule," they agreed to use "every instrumentality

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lower than what her male counterparts receive for the same work.

within our power" to attain their goal, which included all the techniques and methods that they had learned working in the abolition and temperance movements: employing agents, publishing tracts, petitioning state and national legislatures, attempting to receive support from the "pulpit and the press," and even organizing more conventions ("Declaration of Sentiments" 10). Once Stanton finished reading the resolutions, several people responded with comments on what had been read, as well as current bills for women's rights in the legislature, such as the Married Women's Property Act just passed in the New York Legislature. Both men and women added their thoughts to the discussion, and even Frederick Douglass added his support.

Once the resolutions were adopted and agreed upon, the organizers opened the document for signatures. Sixty-eight of those who signed the document were women: "Firmly relying upon the triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration" ("Declaration of Sentiments" 10). The men who had agreed signed a separate list as a "deft compromise between those (including Stanton) who wanted women to make their own demands and those who believed that men also should have a voice" (Wellman 201). Although the one hundred signers only represent what is believed to be one-third of the attendees of the convention, and in spite of some slight controversy over the demand for elective franchise, not one person spoke out in disagreement over the main argument that all men and women were created equal.

After the Seneca Falls and the Rochester Conventions, and the publication of the "Declaration of Sentiments," many people, both men and women, who had either heard about the conventions or read the declaration in newspapers felt a new sense of energy and excitement for the potential changes to come. More conventions were organized, suffrage and equal rights unions formed, petitions to state and national legislatures continued, and speeches in support of

women's rights were given in the years that followed the first woman's rights conventions. As Wellman records, "some of the best-known advocates of woman's rights, including Lucy Stone and her sister-in-law Antoinette Brown Blackwell, reached a new peak of activism in the 1850s" (226), and while most woman's rights speakers where European American, "African American women, including Sojourner Truth and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, also began to fight for woman's rights as well as for African American rights" (Wellman 226).[6] However, as the United States turned attention to the impending war over, among many issues, slavery, women's rights took a back seat in order for those who supported equal rights for all to organize petitions and speeches in support of the war effort. In the early 1860s, woman's rights conventions were suspended as the Civil War continued; yet those who supported woman's rights were hardly idle. In New York City, Elizabeth C. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony organized the Women's National Loyal League, which "collected more than four hundred thousand signatures to support the Civil War as a war to abolish slavery" which, as historian Faye Dudden claims, gave them "an advanced education in legislative maneuver and partisan politics" (Wellman 226; Dudden 56). After the Civil War, this new knowledge was put to use working to gain freedom, citizenship, and political rights for those who had been enslaved as well as for women, even forming the American Equal Rights Association in 1866. However, as Congress began passing the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, the coalition that had been working peacefully together split over the insertion of the word "male" into the Constitution. Even Frederick Douglass, who had been a staunch supporter of woman's rights, in a sense defected in

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[6] For discussions of African American women and woman's rights, see Roslyn Terborg-Penn's study *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP, 1998. Also see Ann D. Gordon and Bettye Collier-Thomas, eds. collection of essays *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997, and Nell Irvin Painter's article, "Voices of Suffrage: Sojourner Truth, Frances Watkins Harper, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage," in Jean H. Baker, ed. *Votes for Women: The Struggle for*

favor of African American suffrage as a more urgent cause; Douglass wrote:

> The right of woman to vote is as sacred in my judgment as that of a man, and I am quite willing at any time to hold up both hands in favor of this right… [But] I am now devoting myself to a cause [if] not more sacred, certainly more urgent, because it is one of life and death to the long enslaved people of this country, and this is: negro suffrage. While the negro is mobbed, beaten, shot, stabbed, hanged, burnt and is the target of all that is malignant in the North and all that is murderous in the South, his claims may be preferred by me without exposing in any wise myself to the imputation of narrowness or meanness towards the cause of woman. (qtd. in McFeely 269).

Stanton was understandably upset with Douglass's statements, since her commitment was unconditionally to universal suffrage; in a letter to Wendell Phillips, she argued, "Do you believe the African race is composed entirely of males?" (qtd. in Griffith 118).

As the last thirty years of the nineteenth century wore on, Stanton's more progressive and liberal approaches to suffrage and woman's rights led to increasing tension within the movement.[7] Yet, the importance of memorializing the Seneca Falls convention remained important. On the fiftieth anniversary of the convention at Seneca Falls, a "religious service" highlighted a sermon by Anna Howard Shaw and two hymns by John G. Whittier. Matilda Johnson Gage, Stanton and Anthony's co-author of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, prepared a

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Suffrage Revisited. New York: Oxford UP, 2002. 42-55.

[7] Not only did Stanton face resistance to her stance on women's voting rights from supporters within the movement, there were also several women who became vocal opponents of women's enfranchisement. For example, the Anti-Sixteenth Amendment Society was established in 1870 in opposition to Stanton's federal suffrage amendment (which would have been potentially number sixteen). The society presented their own proposal to the U.S. Senate, which focused on "reforming property, marriage, and divorce laws" and contained a remonstrance which laid out their objections to woman suffrage signed by five thousand women (Easton-Flake 32). For many women, the distinction lay in the difference between woman suffrage and woman's rights: "it is possible to be ardently desirous of woman's 'equality before the law,' of her higher education and broader culture, of ampler avenues for her labor, and juster recompense for her toil: in short, to believe ardently in her being and doing all that is in her to be and to do, and at the same time to be profoundly skeptical as to the power of the ballot to accomplish for her those results" (*True Woman* April 1871, 14). For more on women opposed to suffrage, see Thomas J. Jablonsky's *The Home, Heaven and Mother Party*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing, 1994 and Susan E. Marshall's *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

speech which was read in an abridged form in her absence. In this speech, Gage credits the "heroic souls" at the Seneca Falls convention with introducing the people to the "most unselfish reform ever launched upon the world. From that moment, justice took fresh significance; a new era of hope and progress dawned, the meaning of freedom broadened not in this country alone but to the world" (Gage 63). Even nearing death, Stanton's mission was to secure universal suffrage, writing letters to then President Theodore Roosevelt and his wife, urging them to support woman's suffrage, dictated the day before Stanton died.

After Stanton's death, and her own husband's passing, Harriet Stanton Blatch (Stanton's daughter) returned from England shocked at the condition of the organized suffrage movement, and was determined to infuse new energy by founding the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, bringing an influential group of reformers back to Seneca Falls for the sixtieth anniversary of the first convention. The *Seneca Falls Reveille* reported that the meeting "emphasized the hometown convention as the beginning of a movement that was now worldwide. Women worked for their rights not only in the United States, England, Germany, and France but also in Latin America, Turkey, India, China, and Japan. In Finland, New Zealand, and Australia, women even had the right to vote" (Wellman 230).

By the time Congress passed the 19th Amendment, only one signer of the 1848 "Declaration of Sentiments" remained in New York to take her place at the polling booth. Rhoda Palmer was 102 years and 5 months old when she cast her first vote in Geneva, New York, in November 1919. She had attended the convention in Seneca Falls when she was 32 years old, and 37 when she attended another in New York five years later. Less than a year after her first vote, on August 9, 1919, Palmer died, only two doors from the house where she had been born. The seventy-two year struggle for this part of woman's rights had included "480

campaigns directed toward state legislatures, 19 battles at the federal level, and a huge ratification campaign in 1919 and 1920. In February 1919, the Sixty-fifth Congress defeated the amendment by one vote, leaving proponents no choice but to introduce it again in the Sixty-sixth Congress in May 1919, where, with the election of new members, the woman's suffrage amendment finally passed on August 26" (Wellman 231).

After an intense battle for ratification in the state legislature, the key vote came from Tennessee, where the youngest member of the House, twenty-four-year-old Harry Burn took his mother's advice to "help Mrs. Catt put 'Rat' in Ratification" and voted to ratify the new amendment (qtd. in Wellman 231). And although, the last remaining signer of the original Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments did not vote due to illness in 1921, many other members of the movement did.

However, those suffragists who had campaigned so diligently for the right to vote had new issues to tackle, one of them still being equality between the sexes, which they felt had still not been addressed. In 1937, the National Woman's Party republished the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, emphasizing the fact that "all of these rights still remain to be won except the right to the franchise" (*How Long*). One hundred years after the first women's rights convention, the 1940s saw renewed activism for woman's rights; where the World's Centennial Congress in New York City focused its Declaration of Purpose "on efforts to spread democracy both at home and abroad" and the eighty-one-year-old chair of the Congress, Carrie Chapman Catt, pledged herself,

> to use our freedom to work for the progressive securing of freedom, social justice, and peace for all people. In progressing towards this goal, changes must be made in the social economic, and political life of this and other countries. The spirit of men and women must be transformed…We rededicate ourselves to the democratic way of life; we pledge ourselves anew to support, defend, and preserve the Constitution of the United States. (*Declaration of Purpose*)

The struggle continued throughout the rest of the Twentieth Century, with the hope that the Equal Rights Act would be passed in Congress. However, debates over the meaning of that one line in the Declaration of Independence, “all men are created equal,” continued to create difficulties, and the country remained divided over what exactly *equality* meant. And in spite of consistent majority support of the amendment, the ERA was defeated in 1982. The times may have changed, yet the issue of women’s rights in politics, the law, family, work, education, religion, morals and personal respect continues at the forefront of national and international struggles for equality. The questions that began the movement for equal rights remain: “What rights did all people have— whatever their sex, race, class, culture, age, physical ability, or sexual preference— as citizens of the United States and the world? What responsibilities did they have, as individuals and as members of families and communities?” (Wellman 240), all defied easy answers for women in the 1840s and continue to defy answers in the twenty-first century. Yet, because citizens, individuals, men, and women, continue to seek the answers, those of the present can honor the past, while moving toward progress for equality for all, and even amid the dramatic changes in the world, one anchor that defines Americans is the ideal that all people were created equal.

Chapter 4

Romance and Reason: The Multifarious Origins of the Detective Narrative

As Janet Lafler observes, the origins of detective fiction are "multifarious and unclean" (qtd. in Sussex 6), an interaction of "elements from pre-existing and disparate literary genres promiscuously intermingled" (Sussex 7)— a problematic statement for the at least outwardly conservative detective genre. Yet, it is true that different eras, different geographies, different genres, and different cultures were all working at nearly the same goal without a straightforward progression or even a name for what they were producing. Indeed many genres incongruously have combined to create the detective fiction we know today, including the Gothic novel, Sensation fiction, Romances, "true" crime narratives (such as the Newgate Calendar), and social reform narratives and didactic novels, as well as Enlightenment writings that stressed logic and reason over emotion. In fact many Gothic novels and Sensation stories feature a prototype of the female detective, a woman forced into a situation in which she must detect in order to survive. And as part of the development of detective fiction, Gothic tropes and imagery survive to influence many detective stories. Even Edgar Allan Poe's tales of ratiocination contain the Gothic images of the abandoned castle and fascination with night and horrific crimes. The world of the Gothic is one of "frightening flux, where appearance, motive, and character are ambiguous" (Voloshin 341), much like the world of the detective. Many times a detective must work backward to reconstruct the events leading to the crime, appearances are never as they seem, and the least likely suspect is often the culprit. The Gothic heroine often works in similar ways as the detective in order to free herself from some nefarious motives and complicated plots.

The origins of detective fiction most assuredly has at least part of its roots in the Gothic tradition; many of the elements from the Gothic make up the core of a large number of detective

stories. For example, one of the first to be identified as, among many descriptions, a detective story and a Gothic novel is William Godwin's *Things as They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*, first published in 1794. Godwin's complex novel about the grim social and personal consequences of discovering the existence and perpetrator of a crime offers the first example of what Julian Symonds calls "[t]he characteristic note of crime fiction" (33), as well as "one of the most testing and least comforting examples of the form" (Knight 13). The novel, while not necessarily focusing on the crime, does recount the private unveiling of a murder and the corruption of the upper-class, one member which uses all of his personal and political influence to pursue his discoverer, and detection is used to describe the title character's activity. Although Caleb Williams is "by no means a confident and settled detective" and "the law is itself suspect" (Knight 14), Godwin includes many elements of what will become part of the readily identifiable pattern of crime and detective fiction. These elements, and much of the novel, have their roots in the Gothic narratives that were popular and compelling for many reasons, both at their peak and in today's time.

Although the first official detective story is "popularly regarded to have been 'born'" in 1841 (Sussex "The Detective Maidservant" 57) with the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," there were several precursors that led to his tales of ratiocination, such as Godwin's novel, the anonymous novel *Richmond; Or, The Adventures of a Bow Street Runner* (1827), or even the German play "Der Kaliber" (1828) by Adolph Müllner, which focuses on forensic evidence to catch the killer. Significantly, as Lucy Sussex observes, there were also women writers who had published mystery stories and novels before Poe, and even writers whose female characters featured as detectives, sometimes as more successful than the official male detectives. Sussex's argument that "we need an alternate schema to the popular

notion that crime writing began with Poe, an immaculate genre conception" ("Frances Trollope as Crime Writer" 183) fits with the idea that the mystery and detective genres have promiscuously intermingled with those that came before and those that had yet to develop, or as Sussex describes the mixture, as "polygenetic" ("Frances Trollope as Crime Writer" 183).

As Richard Altick relates in *Victorian Studies in Scarlet*, "the hold murder has exercised over men's primitive emotions and imagination has been renewed from society to society and age to age…It was in, or just before, the early Victorian era that homicide first became institutionalized as a popular entertainment, a spectator sport" (9-10). One look at any Victorian newspaper from nearly any day reveals the prominence that crime, and murder in particular had taken in everyday lives. The pervasive nature of crime, coinciding with the advent of the more organized police departments and the detective, particularly in the Victorian era, was looking for an outlet, a literary form not only to inform the public, but to discuss the social implications and entertainment of crime and its participants, both criminals and victims. However, crime found not only *a* literary form, it found many. As Sussex observes, crime "initially found a literary home in theatrical melodrama: the Weare murder of 1824, for instance, was staged twice before the accused, John Thurtell, came to trial" ("Frances Trollope as Crime Writer" 183). Novels, magazines, and newspaper articles also presented their own challenges; novel writers could be censured by accusations of inciting crime, or even immorality for presenting the reconstruction of a crime that may have been exhibited in the newspaper reports. However, present them they did, and for many writers, crime offered a wealth of inspiration and information to create, for some, their fortunes, and for others, their platform to discuss the issues of the day.

As noted by many scholars and researchers, female police officers and detectives are anachronistic for the Victorian era. However, this detail did not prevent authors from offering

smart, capable female sleuths to the public. For the most part, the Victorian era ideally presented women as "domestic, separated from the Sensational matter of crime, there being no female lawyers or policewomen until the following century" ("Frances Trollope as Crime Writer" 184). And yet, as the woman's rights movement began to take shape, women emerged in the public's consideration as a force to be reckoned with. For example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton earned much of her knowledge and experience of the law and the legal issues women faced in her father's law offices, bantering and debating with his apprentices, and serving as a clerk for her father's cases. One explanation for the surprisingly large number of fictional female detectives during the nineteenth century is the prevalence of "Radcliffean, Female Gothic, with its focus on the female consciousness, frequently under trial" (Sussex "Frances Trollope as Crime Writer" 185). Sussex argues that Emily St. Aubert from Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is not one of the Gothic genre's many passive romance heroines, but a precursor to the female sleuths of the nineteenth century, as is the use of reason or rationality and the use of sustained suspense: "Her role is certainly comparable to that of the detective, being a rational elucidator of the mysteries of the castle, which includes searching for traces of crime" (Sussex "The Detective Maidservant" 57). Sussex continues, stating that Radcliffe establishes a narrative model, one in which the heroines accomplish their mission alone, or with the help of trusted female servants, as an emerging pattern of women conquering and explicating crime.

These Gothic elements survive not only into the nineteenth century, but into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well, throughout multiple genres and formats. However, since the Gothic serves as a source and model for much of the detective fiction that follows the Gothic genre's decline in popularity in the early nineteenth century, this study shall only look at a few examples that lead up to the appearance of the first official female detectives. Nearly from the

beginning of Radcliffe's reign as one of the foremost Gothic Romance authors, imitation Romances began to appear in England, and later exported to America. Only four years after the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Charles Brockden Brown published the novel *Wieland; or, The Transformation.* While this novel is not necessarily the easiest to see as a potential model for the detective fiction that appeared nearly fifty years later, the central female character, Clara Wieland, and many other female characters from Brown's *oeuvre* definitely form a model of rationality, strength, tenacity, and survival that was unconventional and radical for the era. Brown's arguments for woman's rights in the discussion over voting rights in *Alcuin* satirically make the point that women should be considered as intelligent enough to handle their own affairs and to decide who should represent them in life and in government.

In *Wieland*, published the same year as *Alcuin*, Brown's representation of Clara Wieland allows for the continuation of these ideas. The events of the novel are complicated and convoluted, and as many critics insist, inconsistent and excessive (Baym 70). Based on the actual case of James Yates of Tomhannock, New York, who in 1781 "murdered his Wife and four Children with an Ax… [and] all the living creatures he had about his house" (*Public Papers of George Clinton* 559), *Wieland* provides a female voice to the case. Clara Wieland, narrates the story of her brother's "divine messages" to murder his family, and the melodrama that surrounds her, her family, and her love interests after a ventriloquist named Carwin joins the seemingly rational, happy group of people. As Beverly R. Voloshin states,

> Brown focuses consistently on the intense Sensations of his characters, particularly those of his narrator, Clara Wieland. The action is always sliding over into the perceptions and feelings of Clara, its central consciousness, and is drenched in the psychological language of ideas, appearances, impressions, Sensations, effects, and associations derived from Locke and his followers. (344)

Detective fiction works similarly, recording the ideas, Sensations, feelings, and appearances of a

case— yet reframing them into a logical narrative rather than seeking only to elicit a response from the reader. Brown's aims were decidedly in the Gothic camp, in spite of his criticism of the Gothic in the preface to *Edgar Huntly*; his goal was to "delineate the workings of human nature in unnatural situations" (Voloshin 344) and therefore to "engage, and transport, and chain down the attention, and sway the passions of the spectator or reader" (qtd. in Pattee xxviii).

Brown focuses on raising doubts about the ability of the senses to accurately provide knowledge; as Voloshin recalls, "over and over again Clara must question the testimony of her senses, which she does more closely and frequently than even Ann Radcliffe's protagonists, but repeatedly she is ruthlessly denied satisfactory explanations" (344-345). And, as many mystery readers know, often there are no satisfactory explanations or solutions, questions and puzzles multiply, and doubts only increase the desire for the answers. Clara's belief that "certain evils could never befall a being in possession of a sound mind" cannot protect her from the evils that she faces; yet, because she questions her senses and surroundings for the true representation of the world, Clara is allowed some measure of relief at the end of the novel, but no satisfactory answers as to her brother's actions.

Unlike detective fiction that follows the Gothic, Brown's novel prevents the reestablishment of order and sense to the universe, in spite of the semblance of normality the characters achieve at the end. And yet, like detective fiction, theories and potential explanations appear and, as facts come to light, disappear or evolve. Brown's own admission for the purpose of the novel links his work with several genres of literature, but it also aligns neatly with detective fiction: "His purpose is neither selfish nor temporary, but aims at the illustration of some important branches of the moral constitution of man" ("Advertisement" 3). The mazy paths that the epigraph refers to and the issues regarding moral nature and crime further link

Brown's work with later detective fiction and the strong-willed women who people these fictions. And like many stories and novels that feature female detectives or investigators, *Wieland* and even Brown's later novel *Ormond* question the ability to judge appearances. Since "the overthrow of many traditional hierarchies and their attendant symbols of authority," what could individuals rely on to provide comfort from the appearances gathered by the senses that are not authorized by tradition, or hierarchy, or society, or the outward manifestations of people and the characters? Brown's novel questions where personal authority or morality comes from, if the social hierarchy and family ties have been severed, much like the detective fiction of the nineteenth century, which focuses on the roles women were allowed to play in the public and private spheres, and the roles which were seen as unladylike, undomestic, and unnatural, breaking apart the authority of male authority and the security of domestic situations.

In spite of the excesses and complicated plot, Brown's work reveals that "among the first novelists working in the United States, he was the most committed to probing and dramatizing the conflict between patriarchal practices and the challenges to them raised by early feminist critiques" (Lewis 168), such as his interest in female education and the consideration of women's lives not in relation to men (Fleischmann 120, 157-158), as well as the "struggles of women threatened by male violence and domination" (Lewis 169). Brown's reaction to the sentimental novels of the time, such as Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa,* argues for the more rational heroines of his own novels that would have been able to survive the accumulated afflictions that Clarissa faces throughout the course of the novel: "Clarissa's mind was not sufficiently embued with the importance of conforming our actions and feelings to the will" (Brown "Objections to Richardson's *Clarissa*" 321). As a student and follower of William Godwin's and Mary Wollstonecraft's work, Brown took risks in advocating and exploring potential roles for women

beyond the sentimental heroine. As Paul Lewis notes, some critics ignore the "extent to which Clara functions not only as the teller of the tale and not only as passive register of its Gothic perils but also as a model of female independence and strength" (172). From the beginning of the novel, Brown is careful to paint Clara as intelligent and independent. Even in the midst of a harsh condemnation of Clara, her confused and disappointed, if undeclared, lover Henry Pleyel recalls her excellence and virtue in terms that reminds Lewis of Mary Wollstonecraft:

> I have marked the transitions of your discourse, the felicities of your expression, your refined argumentation and glowing imagery…I have contemplated your principles, and been astonished at the solidity of their foundations, and the perfection of their structure…I have viewed you in relation to your servants, to your family, to your neighbors, and to the world. I have seen by what skillful arrangements you facilitate the performance of the most arduous and complicated duties; what daily accessions of strength your judicious discipline bestowed upon your memory; what correctness and abundance of knowledge was daily experienced by your unwearied application to books, and to writing. (Brown 112)

Brown follows Clara through a "maze of male-generated miseries," of which her brother's murderous quest to please God is the greatest, but far from only, threat; as Lewis states, "Indeed, the decision to subsume the most Sensational events of the tale to a larger investigation of the limits of even the strongest woman's power in a world of manipulative (Carwin), jealous (Pleyel), violent (Wieland), and misguided (Dr. Thomas Cambridge) men reveals the destruction and danger that patriarchal and societal authority, domination, observation, and control pose to women and independent life, action, and thought" (172). As Margaret Fuller notes, Brown's "inclination to place the central thinking mind of a novel in 'the body of a woman'…prove[s] that 'the term *feminine* is not a synonym for weak'" (Lewis 175, Fuller's emphasis), as the nineteenth-century reform movements illustrate.

The importance of a woman's self-reliance and social engagement that many critics see as the center theme of woman's fiction corresponds with Brown's insistence on creating

"rational, capable, and unconventional" women (Davidson "Matter and Manner" 77) and his "remarkable sensitivity to woman's issues" (Davidson *Revolution* 135). As my discussion of the woman's rights movement in both England and in the United States reveals, this was not a new theme for the educated and/or forward-thinking reformers of the nineteenth century. As Cathy N. Davidson notes, "the poles of this debate were defined by conservative views of a woman's place (that is, natural subservience)— drawn from such writers as Rousseau, Fordyce, and Gregory— and a radical position (based on notions of equality and equal rights) advanced most stunningly by Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and defended in the United States by Judith Sargent Murray" and many others (Lewis 177). These debates as noted by several scholars continued throughout the end of the eighteenth century and into the twenty-first century. This debate, encased in the struggle for social, legal, and political rights found its way into the fiction, pamphlets, essays, and sermons of the time. While Lewis's aim in his article is to reestablish Charles Brockden Brown as a feminist writer, the claims that Brown's ideas allowed not only the continuance of feminist and equal rights debates, but his "wildly energetic treatment of ideas— his eagerness to explore and fictionalize the most radical, unconventional views of gendered behavior" (Lewis 178) allowed for the unconventional heroines to follow not only in Sensation fiction, but also in female detective stories.

A continuation of the Gothic genre's popularity inevitably led to parody versions of the most famous authors and novels, such as Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. However, in spite of the intention to poke fun at the writers and readers of Gothic novels, Austen playfully adopts the attitude that novel reading and writing do have some intrinsic value, one that simultaneously links the public and private act of reading, and one that "colors the reader's imagination yet also joins the reader with her society" (Benedict n.p.), and one that should inevitably provide

meaning for the reader. Austen's parody provides examples of bad "reading" and bad "readers"; as Benedict notes, several characters practice the type of reading that only provides Sensations, or "portable, boastable beauties" to quote at opportune times, not the kind of reading that a good reader, or detective, should practice. Much like the detectives in later fiction, proper reading, or the ability to accurately "read" the situation and characters in order to proceed with the story, "concentrat[ing] over time and the judicious weighing of many sources and kinds of information," leads to proper endings, the mystery is solved, the tangled threads sorted, and society is righted (Benedict n.p.).

As Marina Cano López states, *Northanger Abbey* is itself a prototype of later detective fiction: "Catherine Morland may be regarded as a sleuth investigating the mystery of Mrs. Tilney's death, as she explores the abbey in search of clues of the General's criminal character. *Northanger Abbey*'s self-consciousness matches that of crime fiction— and postmodernism" (154). Because crime fiction often features two stories— one of the crime itself and another of the piecing together of clues and the investigation— *Northanger Abbey*, while not the murder mystery Catherine supposes, does offer the unassuming, non-heroic heroine the satisfaction in knowing that her intuition about General Tilney's domestic tyranny is correct: "Catherine, at any rate, heard enough to feel that in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty" (Austen 207). In fact, Austen's heroine is allowed far more influence than Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert in effecting some change; as Sussex observes, "Radcliffe's Emily is merely inquisitive. Her successors could subvert the male justice system— even if they conformed to female stereotypes by being more haphazard and intuitive than logical and deductive. Against the odds, these women are successful; they may be amateurs, but they are competent at detection" ("Frances

Trollope as Crime Writer" 187). As Stephanie Barron notes,

> Catherine embarks on her detective adventure a naïve and innocent child— she exists in that state of grace…Austen intends us to appreciate Catherine's simplicity as a detective's valuable tool, once she surrounds the girl with artifice and betrayal (Isabella Thorpe) not to mention a confusion of motives (General Tilney)…Austen shows us that Catherine is too sensible to be taken in; her inherent honesty "detects" what is false in others…Although she is a novice in detection, Catherine's innocence supplies her with an important shield: "If I could not be persuaded into doing what I thought wrong, I never will be tricked into it." ("Suspicious Characters" 62)

Yet, Sussex also observes, Catherine Morland is tricked into reading surface details as suspicious fact (General Tilney never frequents his wife's favorite walk and refuses to hang her portrait in his room) and she is eventually forced to see the error of her ways, scolded by the man she loves, the son of the man she suspects of criminal behavior, embarrassed to be found snooping, and humiliated for being insufficiently wealthy: "All Austen's novels punish the heroine in some way before marriage, and this didactic tradition is pervasive, repeated by thwarting the female detective" (Sussex "Frances Trollope" 187), even extending into twenty-first century crime fiction. However, this didacticism pokes fun at and punishes the type of novel readers that confuse romance with real life, those who fail to see that they are not in fact the heroine of a romance. In many proto-detective and beginning detective stories, female agency, activity, and strong-mindedness result in a savage punishment, following similar formulae:

> The detective begins with a male (husband, lover, or brother) vanishing (or being falsely accused), causing the heroine to investigate. As with Emily, the detection will be short-lived. Unlike her, the role of Nemesis, becoming an active and strong-minded women [sic] (a pejorative term in the nineteenth century) will be savagely punished. After some effective work, the heroine sleuth usually collapses with stress or brain fever, reverting to passive femininity and a happy marriage with the man she has saved. Thus, the transgressive and therefore fascinating depiction of the heroine-sleuth is rendered conventional and unexceptional. (Sussex "Frances Trollope" 187-188)

Indeed, many female detectives at the beginning of the genre faced this dilemma. How does one remain feminine in a role that often requires unladylike and dangerous actions, and still retain the

authority that a detective figure comes to embody? Many authors at the beginning chose to do exactly as Sussex describes, place the detective role in a subordinate position and replace it with a domestic role, marrying the female protagonist off once the mystery has been resolved, thus "resolving" the conflict of feminine authority and autonomy. And yet, because of Austen's parody, the lesson that Catherine Morland learns, that she is not the heroine of a romance novel, reveals the importance of a detective's ability to "read" the world and its characters. As Ellen R. Belton states, Catherine "must learn to distinguish between story-telling and life, between the pleasures of the imagination and the possibilities of the real world. She must learn, in short, to become a critical reader of her own experience" (43). Much like a more conventional detective, this critical reading is what leads to the truth, wading through what is story, lie, differing accounts, and reality, to recreate the true narrative. And as Catherine thinks near the end of the novel, she hardly exaggerated or sinned against the general in thinking him capable of murder; she is only disappointed that as she discovers the truth, he extends his cruelty towards her. From the beginning of her relationship with Henry Tilney, Catherine exposes herself to scrutiny and mockery: "As Henry Tilney tells his improvised [Gothic] story, Catherine has no idea what comes next and is completely uncritical. She is wholly absorbed by the text and conscious of her own reactions only as they occur from one moment to another…her misguided suspicions of General Tilney represent an attempt to understand surface details as signs of a hidden meaning" (Belton 44). As a result Catherine "takes the first tentative steps away from the role of mere recipient of experience and toward that of active investigator and interpreter," fulfilling the "mission assigned to all of Austen's heroines: she has learned to penetrate the deceptive social façade, though without disrupting it. She has become a reflector upon, as well as a participant in, her own mystery story" prefiguring the detective heroes and heroines that follow (Belton 44),

and in true Austen fashion, her heroine is rewarded for fulfilling this mission with marriage to the man she loves.

However, the question of female authority does not end with the convenient and typical ending of a Romance or Gothic novel. In fact, throughout the early and mid-1800s female authority was often mitigated by a marriage at the end of a story or novel, often without gaining anything but a marriage. For example, Wilkie Collins's first foray into the mystery genre, "The Diary of Anne Rodway," presents a woman determined to find the murderer of her female friend, yet once the leg work is done, she turns to her fiancé to finish the work. However, with the organization of Anti-Slavery Conventions and Women's Rights Conventions, women were debating their place in the world, and their strong feelings of activism in favor of human rights, authors were including this debate in the emerging mystery and detective genres.

Collins's 1856 short story, in the vein of his later works, uses mystery to discuss social issues, such as poverty and justice. "The Diary of Anne Rodway" begins with a description of Anne's financial and marital state; Anne's fiancé Robert has sent a letter telling her that he has not prospered and made his fortune as he had hoped in America and is returning home. Anne, meanwhile, has kept herself by her needle, and worries that she and Robert will never be able to marry:

> What I dread is Robert's despondency and the hard struggle he will have in this cruel city to get his bread— let alone making money enough to marry me. So little as poor people want to set up in housekeeping and be happy together, it seems hard that they can't get it when they are honest and hearty and willing to work…I suppose he [the clergyman] was right, but I think I should have understood him better if I had not been very hungry at the time, in consequence of my own station in life being nothing but Plain Needlewoman. (Collins 113)

When Anne's good friend Mary is brought home with a blow to the temple, which eventually kills her, Anne is the only person left to mourn her. The police and the doctor believe that Mary

"must have fallen down in a fit of some sort and struck her head against the pavement, and so have given her brain…a fatal shake" (Collins 121). Yet, Anne believes otherwise after finding a torn cravat clutched in Mary's hand: "A chill ran all over me as I looked at it, for that poor, stained, crumpled end of a cravat seemed to be saying to me, as though it had been in plain words — 'If she dies, she has come to her death by foul means, and I am the witness of it'" (Collins 121-122). At the inquest, the police say they could make no inquiries with such a "slight clue to guide them," yet, Anne knows that the cravat is significant.

While Anne's belief that the strip of fabric is a clue to who caused her friend's death, her only course of action is to lock it up. When she finds the other end of the cravat, it is by sheer luck; while purchasing candles at the first shop she comes to, her "eye was caught by a bundle of rags lying on the counter…From mere idle curiosity, I looked close at the rags, and saw among them something like an old cravat…I looked at the ends; one of them was torn off" (Collins 133). After this lucky discovery, Anne begins to display signs of detective skill, skillfully drawing out the name of the woman who collected the rags and her address. The man who owned the cravat turns out to be the husband of the rag collector. In a bold move, Anne confronts the man, but instead finds yet another suspect by offering a bribe for information, which in turn leads her to the man who actually did kill Mary. Yet, once Anne receives this information, her fiancé returns and she turns over the investigation, allowing Robert to carry on alone: "Robert says the creature— I won't call him a man— must be humoured and kept deceived about poor Mary's end, in order that we may discover and bring to justice the monster whose drunken blow was the death of her…I wanted to go with Robert to the Mews, but he said it was best that he should carry out the rest of the investigation alone, for my strength and resolution had been too hardly taxed already" (Collins 139). Collins's not-quite- detective story

ends happily for Anne and Robert; Mary's brother returns to England a wealthy man and finds Robert a job that leads to £150 per year, and the couple is married a little over a year after Mary's death.

As Joseph A. Kestner states, the appearance of Collins's story is of "great importance [in the tradition of female detective stories], for it is the most significant example of the amateur, unofficial female detective before the 1880s" (*Sherlock's Sisters* 14). Anne's insistence on continuing the investigation into her friend's death even after the coroner's inquest finds in favor of Accidental Death, "nothing should have induced me to consent to such a verdict as Accidental Death" (Collins 127), reveals the "marked difference between juries involving men only and the alternative if women were to serve" (Kestner 15). Mary's landlord reinforces this difference when he harasses Anne to pay for Mary's late rent, claiming "I'll teach you what the law is!" (Collins 128). Even further exemplifying the distance between what is and what should be is Anne's entry on the manslaughter, not murder, charges that Noah Truscott will face: "Why not on a charge of murder? Robert explained the law to me when I asked that question. I accepted the explanation, but it did not satisfy me. Mary Mallinson was killed by a blow from the hand of Noah Truscott. That is murder in the sight of God. Why not murder in the sight of the law also?" (Collins 142). Anne's opinion of the law falls even further when Truscott is convicted, but sentenced to transportation for life: "Since he was old and a drunkard, the law did not convict him of murder…Collin's brilliant narrative is stark in its presentation of the plight of women under the law: all male juries will even in a case of murder, give the male killer the benefit of the doubt. The entire legal system encourages the lesser charge of manslaughter rather than of murder" (Kestner 15). Anne Rodway, although an impoverished and oppressed seamstress, perceives the inconsistencies of the law, and in particular, the deviation of the law from the law

of God.

Collins's use of the social convention of journal-keeping allows Anne to tell her own story and because she can communicate her thoughts in writing, Anne establishes and communicates her identity as a determined and compassionate friend and investigator, even though her detection relies mostly on intuition and luck rather than any real detective skills. The diary allows Anne to control how the text appears and how she is presented to the reader, yet, in some way Anne's text is compromised by the presence of Robert, what he thinks and feels, and how he takes over the ending of Anne's, and Mary's, story.

Anne's investigation relies on her rationality, conviction, action, and boldness. During the investigation, she convinces the owner of the torn cravat that Mary had been "telling…a pack of lies" about him, effectively manipulating him into telling her exactly what happened, and effectively setting him up for a trial and conviction of his own for several outstanding charges. Yet, at times Anne's emotions get the best of her and in spite of her self-assuredness in confronting the men involved in Mary's death, Anne also has a tendency to deny the strength to write her own story when she is too emotional and upset. For example, after Mary's initial attack, Anne declares herself unable to write for three days. And yet, she does persevere after the initial shock of Mary's attack and death, following the clues she luckily finds and boldly collects. Even if Anne's idea of justice was not done, Mary's killer was found out and punished just as in many mystery and detective stories that followed, establishing a pattern that while the detective may find the truth, justice and the law may not always follow.

One novel that does not necessarily suggest itself to be a detective novel is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, yet Jane shows characteristics that later female detectives and their stories reveal, such as her treatment, and distrust, of male established authority, her intelligence and

curiosity, and her investigation of the mystery at Thornfield. Critics often read *Jane Eyre* as an entreaty for equality between men and women and for an independent femininity. As Jane recognizes throughout the novel, a woman needs to "exercise" her "faculties" as much as any man, and often more than men if she is to protect herself and to "make sense of the world around her and also to understand herself and construct an individual identity" (Jung 21); Jane even mentions the possibility of rebellion if women's needs are not met:

> It is vain to say that human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility. They must have action, and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally. But women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do. (Brontë 156)

Brontë's characterization of Jane as a woman and servant includes the stereotypical trait of curiosity, yet this inquisitiveness is also what allows Jane to exercise her own faculties and gives her the field in which to question the world and authority around her. Jane remarks that too often women "suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation" and that they, and patriarchal society, confine them to domestic tasks such as the "making [of] puddings and knitting [of] stockings" and "playing on the piano and embroidering bags" (Brontë 156). Published fifty-five years after Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Brontë echoes the rejection of the traditional female role model that "confine[s] her existence to household duties, seek[s] (relative) security in marriage, as well as without question confirm[s] everything that male authority utters" in favor of the concept of "active" womanhood (Jung 21).

Yet, because Jane is a woman and a servant, her frankness and outspokenness defines her as inherently different from many other women portrayed in the novel and automatically threatening to established order and authority. As Sandro Jung notes, Jane "gives her opinion

freely to her master and even advises him as a confidante rather than an employee" (21-22). Jane's "rebellious feminism" (Gilbert and Gubar 338) reveals itself not only through her frankness, but also her life-defining anger towards authority figures, based on her experiences as a child at Gateshead and Lowood. Jane's transgressions from societal expectations, such as her frankness, anger, and curiosity, are also part of what defines a female detective, a woman who not only at once has and has not the authority to transgress society's expectations of what defines a woman, but also to question the very authority that places these restrictions on women who wish to do more than make puddings and mend stockings, and to make Jane and other female detectives "dangerous to the order of society" that was based on "paternalistic infallibility" (Gilbert and Gubar 338; Jung 22). In fact, critics and reviewers immediately noticed the radical implications of Brontë's novel, censuring Jane for being ungrateful, proud, "anti-Christian," and for "look[ing]…upon all that has been done for her not only as her undoubted right, but as falling far short of it" (*Quarterly Review* 173-174). Jane's act of constructing her own selfhood and identity as an individual separate from that of a wife and servant was understood by public reviewers "in terms of (ethical and moral) crime," placing Jane not in a position to define her own authority, but as a criminal who thieves and takes authority upon him or herself, where in actuality he or she has none that society has not already given.

And yet, because Mr. Rochester insists on knowing all of Jane's secrets, "neither respecting her privacy nor considering the decorum [of master/servant relationships] or the propriety of his potentially offensive or insensitive questions regarding her past" (Jung 22), this breakdown of form and formality allows Jane to develop into a more focused and rational thinker; rather than focusing on the gossip of servants, Jane focuses more directly on Mr. Rochester and his own secrets, gathering clues and interpreting them as she investigates. Jane's

natural curiosity, itself an important element of her self-assertion, allows her to pursue the dismantling of the "secrets of inequality" (Jung 22) that pervade the Thornfield estate, and that inform and inspire her underlying anger and frustration. Ironically, it is Mr. Rochester's influence and encouragement of Jane's developing curiosity that leads to her detective work to discover Rochester's secrets. Furthermore, her detective work strengthens her intellect and rationality, which as a child tended toward superstition to explain her experiences, particularly after her encounter with "the ghost" in the Red Room at Gateshead, contributes to her desire for equality and allows her to move past the immaturity imposed upon her by society to become a thinking and feeling woman, rather than the Victorian ideal of an unthinking and unquestioning child.[8]

In an unrelenting double standard in which Jane would have been censured and condemned for allowing Rochester to seduce her, "Victorian critics…saw her 'unseduceable independence' as an apparent confirmation of her wish to escape societal norms and habits of patriarchal society" (Jung 22). Indeed, Jane does wish to escape some of society's norms, refusing to become Rochester's mistress or the missionary St. John Rivers' wife without love, in favor of independence. Yet, only when Rochester is fully single and dependent, does Jane agree to marry him. Jane's detective work empowers her and represents her independent mind and body for which Rochester comes to love her. As Jung notes, it is Brontë's construction of an independent and curious selfhood "that is able to question male notions of normatively, giving her heroine a pseudo-legal authority to identify not only Mr. Rochester's but her sex's crimes" that allow them to become dependent on the gender inequality that society places upon men and women as well (Jung 23).

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8 For more on this sort of ideal, see the relationship between David Copperfield and his childlike bride Dora in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield.*

Because Jane and Rochester's relationship is less formal and therefore transgressive in itself, Jane subverts the

> acquiescing notion of femininity that is represented by Mrs. Fairfax…questioning the role of women in Victorian society, rather than as a role model demonstrating the inadequacy of male dominated mouthpieces such as Mrs. Fairfax and Grace Poole [both of whom lie to Jane to keep Rochester's secrets]. Her 'crime' of selfhood is vindicated by her function as a detective through whose intervention the truth is revealed and happiness can be established at last. (Jung 23)

Indeed, Jane and Rochester can only be happy together once Rochester has been brought to a state of despondency and needfulness, and once Jane has gained nearly complete authority over Rochester's feelings and actions and her own power of self and social definition.

Jane's investigation of Thornfield begins with hearing strange laughter that Mrs. Fairfax attributes to Grace Poole, one of the housemaids and caretaker of Mrs. Rochester. Because the laughter occurs in part of the house that had previously been described as "so still a region" (Brontë 152), Jane immediately questions Mrs. Fairfax as to who could have laughed such a "curious…distinct, formal, mirthless" laugh in such an unlikely place (Brontë 152). Mrs. Fairfax's vague answers are unsatisfying for Jane's curiosity, and further explanation leaves out crucial details that inform Jane's opinion of Grace's supposed behavior and expressive laugh, which does not coincide with her appearance: "a woman of between thirty and forty; a set square-made figure, red-haired, and with a hard, plain face. Any apparition less romantic or less ghostly could scarcely be conceived" (Brontë 153). Jane's investigation into a second mystery, Mr. Rochester's frequent absences from his own estate, also meets the united front of Mrs. Fairfax and Grace Poole. Mrs. Fairfax's dodges and evasive answers raise Jane's suspicions again:

> I should have liked something clearer; but Mrs. Fairfax either could not, or would not, give me more explicit information on the origin and nature of Mr. Rochester's trials. She averred they were a mystery to herself and that what she knew was chiefly from

conjecture. It was evident, indeed, that she wished me to drop the subject. (Brontë 182)

Jane soon links the two mysteries together, but they are further complicated by the attempted burning of Mr. Rochester in his bed and the strange laughter at Jane's door. After hearing a vague, peculiar murmur upstairs, Jane hears someone touch her door, "as if fingers had swept the panels in groping a way along the dark gallery outside" (Brontë 212). The silence that follows calms her only to heighten her terror at hearing the "marrow freezing" laugh that she hears next: "This was a demoniac laugh— low, suppressed, and deep— uttered, as it seemed, at the very keyhole of my chamber door," an "unnatural sound" as if something "gurgled and moaned" (Brontë 212-213). The murmurs and laughter that Jane hears create the feeling of helplessness, playing on her imagination and superstitions, much like her experiences at Gateshead. Given her experiences with Mrs. Fairfax's first explanation of strange laughter, Jane concludes that Grace Poole must have produced the laughter at her door and must be "possessed with a devil" (Brontë 213). Her intention to relate the events of the night to Mrs. Fairfax and to continue investigating are suspended when she notices the fire coming from Mr. Rochester's room and puts out the flames.

Jane relates the night's events to him and feels that once she has concluded, she still has not "penetrated the secret that envelops Grace Poole and Mr. Rochester's willingness to shield her. Jane, as Sally Shuttleworth suggests, is caught in 'competitive exercises in interpretative penetration' that both she and Rochester use to comprehend each other" using physiognomy to interpret actions (Jung 25). According to Shuttleworth, Jane is fighting to interpret her world "on two fronts," trying to determine unsuccessfully "the internal struggle to regulate her own flow of energy, and the external social fight to wrest control of the power of social definition" (153). Because Charlotte Brontë is "attentive to emotional nuance and self-division" and retains

an “exaggerated contempt for the bodily surface” (Chase 52), these feelings carry over into Jane’s “desire for finer distinctions and deeper explanations” though the use of phrenology and physiognomy, based on Charlotte Brontë’s interest and “belief in its validity as a means of establishing objective and scientific truth, since phrenology and physiognomy offer a way out of the difficulty [of Jane’s ascertaining the truth regarding the mysteries of Mr. Rochester and Grace Poole], holding, as they do, that inner states manifest themselves on outer surfaces, that emotional truths do not merely lurk within, but *display* themselves in public form” (author’s emphasis, Jung 25).

Jane’s suspicions are aroused even further when Rochester speaks with Grace Poole and gives no explanation to Jane about the fire. Furthermore, the next day, Grace sits seemingly carefree in Rochester’s chamber sewing rings for new bed curtains, astonishing and confusing Jane after Mr. Rochester “confirms” that Grace had set the fire to kill him:

> There she sat, staid and taciturn-looking, as usual; in her brown stuff gown, her check apron, white handkerchief, and cap. She was intent on her work, in which her whole thoughts seemed absorbed. One her hard forehead, and in her commonplace features, was nothing either of the paleness or desperation one would have expected to see marking the countenance of a woman who had attempted murder…She looked up, while I still gazed at her: no start, no increase or failure of colour betrayed emotion, consciousness of guilt, or fear of detection. (Brontë 220)

Jane’s attempt to question Grace about her involvement in setting the fire presents a roadblock in her detection. Grace’s “brazen coolness” and impenetrability prevents Jane from getting the answers she seeks, but these qualities also put Jane on her guard about giving too much information to those she suspects. It is the disconcerting contrast in Mr. Rochester’s and Mrs. Fairfax’s descriptions of Grace as “close and quiet: anyone may repose confidence in her” (Brontë 285) and her apparent murderous tendencies that drive Jane’s investigation.

Jane’s detection comes to an end after Richard Mason, Mrs. Rochester’s brother, reveals

Mr. Rochester's "disgusting secret" at the latter's and Jane's marriage ceremony, also revealing the crime that Mr. Rochester was prepared to commit because of his love for Jane. Although Mrs. Fairfax and Grace could have intervened before the relationship developed to the point of attempted bigamy, they become willing accomplices in Mr. Rochester's crimes against women, representing the "traditional gender role of a passive female servant without voice" and the "traditional servant role entailing complete acquiescence to Mr. Rochester's wishes and the inability to question openly a crime that is endorsed by their complicit silence" (Jung 28). These women facilitate and perpetuate crimes against female authority, but ultimately are unsuccessful. Bertha Rochester eludes them multiple times and eventually escapes their grasp entirely to destroy herself and the estate. And Jane herself ultimately reverses this complicit silence by choosing to remove herself from the company of Mr. Rochester and his accomplices, and from St. John Rivers' attempts to mesmerize and control her until the opportunity to assume her own authority by announcing her observations appears.

At the moment of revelation, Jane loses the ability of a cool-headed and impartial detective, an ability that would have allowed her to calmly assess situations and revisit previous conclusions, rather than becoming a "mere observer…in shock, [and] traumatized" (Jung 28). In spite of her desire for the truth and further explanation, Jane blindly puts her trust in Mr. Rochester, explaining to herself that he must have his reasons for his actions. Jane's attempts to achieve the revelations made by Robert Mason and Mr. Rochester should have empowered her to be her master's moral superior. Yet, her work as a detective is ultimately a failure; although she can admit that she was correct in surmising the discrepancies in the laughter and Grace Poole's character, Jane has been too willing to trust and believe others' information and explanations. However, as Jung explains, "Ultimately, her failure in her detective work is responsible for her

happiness, since she would have left Mr. Rochester's service earlier had she known of his growing affection for her as well as the imprisonment of his wife" (28). Indeed, Jane's lack of experience in detective work, or even in reading people, prevents her from completing her self-imposed task of discovering Mr. Rochester's secrets before nearly falling victim to her future husband's crimes. Yet, Jane is capable of good detection. For example, during the gypsy scene, Jane observes that the gypsy is wearing Rochester's ring and she sees through St. John's plans for her readily enough. However, in spite of her observations and detections, and even intuition and supernatural insights, Jane's emotions often overcome her rational self and she nearly goes through with both marriages before someone, or something, stops her.

However, Jane's investigation into herself is more successful and culminates in her becoming a "whole woman" (Leavis 11), not abandoning half of herself, a feminine, radical, unconventional, free-thinking, loving, and active woman, elevated above man and more able to "understand the human psyche of those she encounters as well as enabled…to soothe and heal her husband's long suffering" (Jung 29). And while Jane does get a happy ending for herself, like most Gothic heroines, by acting as a detective, she also gains a higher understanding of herself as an individual who has her own thoughts and opinions, and as a person with authority over herself and in some ways over others.

Each of these examples of female proto-detectives have their own goals and their own difficulties in establishing their own authority, whether it is over their own conduct, their own thoughts, their independence, or their own ability and strength to conduct and finish an investigation and reveal the truth not only to themselves, but to others who should know the truth in order for justice to be done. While there are many more works and characters to consider as precursors to the female detectives of the 1860s and beyond, these particular examples reveal

that female authority and female detectives were at the forefront of many author's minds and works before the detective genre had officially begun. The Victorian era was obsessed with crime, not only because information spread faster with more newspapers and magazines and railways, but because the public was eager to read the gory details of crime. As Robert Thomas states, "nearly every Victorian novel has at its heart some crime that must be uncovered, some false identity that must be unmasked, some secret that must be revealed, or some clandestine plot that must be exposed" (169). Indeed, crime in fiction allows readers to vicariously experience the fear and horror of the initial crime and relief when the detective figure discovers and exposes the truth. Yet, often when these works were published, most appeared in magazines and journals, they appeared alongside accounts of real crimes that had occurred either locally or nationally, and sometimes even internationally, often leading the reading public to believe that some of the fictional accounts were true stories as well. It is this confusion over the "truth" of the work that allows authors and characters to advocate in fiction for social changes, such as more autonomy and authority for women in choice of career, for control of their own body and time, and for equality between the sexes.

Chapter 5

The Much Dreaded "Petticoated Police": Anomalous Authority in Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective* and W.S. Hayward's *Revelations of a Lady Detective*

Even as the movement for specific women's rights took a backseat during the American Civil War in order for women to participate in the war effort, women continued to push for the right to contribute to political activity and to partake in the benefits of full citizenship. And while women's rights conventions were suspended during the years of the war, not only were there women who chose to remain in the public eye, speaking to audiences and keeping the debates moving forward, there were also those who actively proved that women could do the same jobs as men. For example, Kate Warne became the first female detective to work with the celebrated Allan Pinkerton Detective Agency. Little is known about Warne, except what Pinkerton himself recorded in his journals, and the few records that Pinkerton may have had were destroyed in a fire in his Chicago offices. However, while female undercover operatives were common in François Eugene Vidocq's *Suretè* in Paris in 1811, none at that time had chosen to make it a career. Few records exist as to other police organizations that might have used similar tactics as Vidocq's force, but as several scholars have found, the British police sometimes made use of women, often the wives of the officers involved in the case, in undercover work. However, these women were not trained as members of the police force, or as detectives, and their involvement was often only a one time affair.

In contrast, Kate Warne had particular skills that made her an ideal operative, and Pinkerton himself trained her in the detection and undercover work. Pinkerton's background as Chicago's first detective and one of the most reliable and expert private detectives most likely

encouraged Warne to approach Pinkerton for a job. In 1856, in response to an advertisement for a new agent, Warne applied to Pinkerton, who assumed that she had come looking for clerical work. Yet, as Katherine Ramsland notes, "Once an aspiring actress and recently widowed, Kate Warne was ready for any assignment. As unseemly as it was in those days for a woman to be bold, she'd made up her mind" (70). Warne's argument was that women could "worm out secrets in many places to which it was impossible for male detectives to gain access" (qtd. in Ramsland 70). After a short debate with his brother, who thought hiring a woman to be a detective would be a mistake, Pinkerton offered her a position as an operative in training.

Pinkerton held the opinion that whether male or female, detectives with "considerable intellectual power and knowledge of human nature as will give him a quick insight into character" would be an effective operative (qtd. in Mackay 76). And Warne must have had the qualities Pinkerton valued, since in his memoirs he wrote that Warne had never given him cause for disappointment. As Ramsland states, Warne "was a natural for the job, able to play both a female from any walk of life as well as a young male…She could adopt a Southern drawl, a false name, and the hoop skirts of a lady of means to create whatever impression she might need. She could even exploit the way men viewed her as a fragile member of the weaker sex to deflect their attention from her methods and goals. She was quick to assess a situation, savvy about people, and had a flair for adventure" (70).

While women were not officially employed by the police (in Britain) until the 1880's (and not as detectives until the 1920's), female detectives were not so imaginary in the 1860's when Forrester's and Hayward's stories appeared. In the United States, Kate Warne was one of Allan Pinkerton's top agents before and during the Civil War. In fact, the only known photograph of Warne shows her wearing a Union military uniform rather than a gown and

petticoats, although she was capable of and willing to play both male and female characters. As Pinkerton recorded, Warne was a “commanding person, with clear cut expressive features” (Pinkerton, *Spy* 75),

> above the medium height, slender, graceful in her movements, and perfectly self-possessed in her manner… her features, although not what would be called handsome, were of a decidedly intellectual cast. Her eyes were very attractive, being dark blue, and filled with fire. She had a broad, honest face, which would cause one in distress instinctly [sic] to select her as a confidante, in whom to confide in time of sorrow, or from whom to seek consolation. She seemed possessed of the masculine attributes of firmness and decision, but to have brought all her faculties under complete control. (Pinkerton *Expressman* 94)

Warne was instrumental in Pinkerton’s investigations of financial crimes, such as the theft of forty thousand dollars by an Adams Express postal service office manager, Nathan Maroney. Warne’s part was to become the confidant of the suspect’s wife; during her assignment, Warne quickly learned from Mrs. Maroney that their “good fortune” came from forging bank notes. The trap set for finding the stolen money included Maroney’s arrest for conspiracy, letters describing Maroney’s wife’s alleged infidelity, an agent posing as a confidante prisoner, and an agent posing as a corrupt attorney.

During her employment, she also took on the role of spy for the Union, shadowing a woman suspected of collaborating with the Southern rebellion, and protecting President Lincoln from an assassination attempt by disguising him as her invalid brother. As Ramsland records,

> Kate Warne coordinated the operatives’ reports [on the plot] and devised a scheme to get Lincoln safely from Philadelphia to Washington. She reserved four sleeping berths close together in the last car of a night train, under the pretext that she and her relatives were escorting her invalid brother. She also made a disguise for Lincoln, wrapping him in a traveling shawl with an upturned collar, giving him a Scottish cap, and urging him to stoop as if burdened with illness. This would disguise his signature height. Carrying a worn bag, he boarded through a rear door left unlocked for his convenience, with no one the wiser about his presence on this train save a close friend, his wife, and the Pinkerton operatives. (71)

Not only was Warne a key part of Pinkerton’s agency for twelve years until her death in 1868,

but Pinkerton began a Female Detective Bureau within his company, led by Warne. More female agents were hired and trained by Warne, passing along her expertise. In 1876, only eight years after Warne's death, Pinkerton's son Robert and two other agents conspired to cease hiring female detectives. However, Pinkerton caught wind of the conspiracy and put an end to it, sending his son a blunt and vehement telegram, which insisted on maintaining his long-standing assessment of female agents: "It has been my principle to use females for the detection of crime where it has been useful and necessary. With regard to the employment of such females, I can trace it back to the time I first hired Kate Warne, up to the present time. And I intend to still use females whenever it can be done judiciously. I must do it or falsify my theory, practice, and truth" (qtd. in Mackay 227)

Despite Warne's example from the 1860's, female detectives apparently became useful only in domestic cases, and "certain delicate missions" ("Queer Feminine Occupations" 146), publicized in magazines and newspapers, and inevitably making their way into the fiction of the time. Although the article leaves it to the reader to imagine what these "delicate missions" entail, most likely they included investigating divorce cases and other minor domestic disturbances, like petty theft. Perhaps the advertising detective agencies wished to downplay the seriousness or danger of certain cases, for we know from Pinkerton's journals and published writings that Kate Warne often faced dangerous circumstances during the course of her investigations. In the fiction, however, private female detectives could face a range of missions, including protecting precious jewels, investigating thefts and fraud, tracking and trapping absconded criminals, and even solving murders. Warne's real life authority in her cases and as head of Pinkerton's female detective bureau reveals that fictional female detectives would have had some basis in reality for their actions, thus allowing for discussion of the differences

between the "fantasy" of fictional detective work and the real dangers faced by those who chose the career.

The fiction that officially begins the female detective genre appeared in 1864, with the publication of W.S. Hayward's *The Revelations of a Female Detective* and Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective*, published only four years before Kate Warne's death. Both Forrester's and Hayward's detectives work in close conjunction with official police departments, an entirely fictional device, since "there were no women actually attached to the Metropolitan Police in London until 1883, when two women were appointed to oversee female prisoners" (Slung 15). Official police status for women was not approved until 1918 (Marcus viii) and "the first public appearance of the uniformed women police patrols was in May 1919 at a memorial service in Westminster Abbey for Metropolitan Police officers who had fallen in the war" (Lock 94). However, both Hayward and Forrester come under fire for their representation of their detectives as "honorary men" with little to distinguish them as female other than a few references to petticoats and possible domestic ties (Klein 29). While Klein claims that these "authors' provocative decision to use female protagonists is qualified by treating them more as neuter than female" (29), I would argue that although these characters are not fully developed, there are some attributes, such as their potentially "dangerous" knowledge of sex and criminal elements and their successful ability to directly meet the eyes of male colleagues without flinching, that allow them to question authority. As experimental forms, and even characters, these collections were popular and went through several reprintings (with several name changes along the way and varied numbers of stories) (Bredesen ii). And as experimental forms, these authors could do nearly as they wished with the characters, making them seem conservative, even while providing them with subversive characteristics. But as yellowbacks, or railway fiction, these casebooks

were also less than “literary” royalty, and rarely archived (Bredesen ii).

As Ronald Thomas and Chris Willis note, these detectives are early versions of the New Woman who became popular characters in fiction and reality, as well as contradictory characters who on one side were aggressive, sexually promiscuous, and dismissive of social rules and mores, and on the other, the perfect image of domesticity. And while several works admit the distinct abilities and aptitudes women might have for detective work, such as infiltrating specific environments without raising suspicion or using gender specific knowledge to investigate crime, the actual use of these abilities and exploitation of this knowledge generally crosses the bounds of propriety and, in several ways, of authority. In one example from the 1890s by Lucy Farmer, the division between the actual detective on the case and Farmer’s ineffectual heroine is laid out when she, the victim, and the detective set out to question a potential accomplice; Eglington, the detective, playfully but accurately defines their cultural significance: “Propriety, Property, and Authority, all together: in other words, Miss Bushe, Sir Thomas, and myself” (Farmer 871). Farmer’s female detective, who also wields a tiny ineffective revolver, is young, attractive, and prone to fainting, and “merely [able] to hold the enemy at bay— which is what happens when Miss Bushe is accosted in the woods by one thief— until Property and Authority (that is, Sir Thomas and Eglington) arrive to rescue and protect her” (Young 16). However, Farmer’s young “detective” is not the challenge that other female sleuths present to society, culture, and authority. The challenge comes from the women whose self-sufficiency, cunning, and ability to step outside the bounds of gender, domesticity, class, and propriety pose the greatest threat to cultural authority during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Despite criticism of characterization and style, Hayward’s and Forrester’s portrayal of a woman detective in the mid-1800’s is still an interesting development in the genre as well as

culturally and socially. Yet, with the "official" start of this study set in the mid-1860s, most of the female detectives who were created appeared nearly twenty years after Forrester's and Hayward's collections. Several critics have explained early female detectives' popularity as a mere novelty, and "firmly escapist" (Craig and Cadogan 15), especially since they appeared so soon after Poe's immensely popular tales of ratiocination, and that the re-emergence of female detectives in the 1880s and 1890s were mostly in response to the popularity of Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes stories. Yet there must be something more than the novelty of female detective stories, since authors are still publishing them today with a variety of detective figures.

The character of the "New Woman" was not a late nineteenth century construct; the elements for the creation of this type of woman had been present since women began to ask, and then demand, more equal treatment under the law as citizens of their countries. As women began to question the authority of men who claimed that women were not citizens, and therefore not entitled to certain liberties and protections, issues of authority became increasingly important both in everyday life and in fiction. In spite of Katherine G. Klein's argument that Hayward's and Forrester's detectives are nothing but "honorary men," elements of the New Woman fit with both of these characters. The "New Woman" challenged educational, occupational, sexual, financial, social, and legal authority to obtain more egalitarian treatment and to be more self-supporting and independent. The perception of the New Woman exemplifies some of the competition between different authorities; according to Lyn Pykett,

> The New Woman was by turns: a mannish amazon [sic] and a Womanly woman; she was oversexed, undersexed, or same sex identified; she was anti-maternal, or a racial supermother; she was male-identified, or manhating and/or man-eating or self-appointed savior of benighted masculinity; she was anti-domestic or she sought to make domestic values prevail; she was radical, socialist or revolutionary, or she was reactionary and conservative; she was the agent of social and/or racial regeneration, or symptom, and agent of decline. ("Forward" Richardson and Willis xii).

However, although the New Woman was certainly one element that led to the creation of more factual and fictional detectives, the answer lies with more than one cause. The world in the 1860s was already rapidly changing. The United States was fighting the Civil War; Britain was quickly becoming the most industrialized and imperial nation in the world. Economic, social, and political issues all played a role in creating the fiction of the times, especially in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. And yet, even after the turn of the century, the world continued to change rapidly— World War I, voting rights, social reforms— and these topics continued to be major causes of debate, even in fiction, and with supporters and detractors from all sides, genders, and socio-economic classes.

For writers working within these changes, detective fiction seems one of the least likely genres to have tackled issues such as economic distress, property rights, or authority. However, many of these issues come to light through what seems to be fluff reading. As Winifred Hughes stresses, "Whatever their value as escapism, the higher forms of the Sensation novel…are also in the business of propaganda, of crusading for social or political reform" (34). Indeed, female protagonists of Sensation and mystery novels often portray characteristics that readers valued in male detectives: intelligence, self-assertion, resourcefulness, and even defiance of social and economic norms. But because these protagonists are women, the defiance of and competition between different types of authority becomes problematic.

Yet, authors persisted in creating characters with few real world examples to follow. So the question remains, why? I would argue that authority played a large part in the creation of these characters. While this is a rather broad theme, the fact remains that authority of all types come under question when a female character begins doing "man's" work— entering the workforce, earning money, owning property, dismissing domestic ties, and losing the attributes

that make her a woman (timidity, morality). Not only does the outside world, and sometimes the female detectives themselves, question the female detectives' official authority as members of a profession, but their authority to maintain a sense of self in the ever changing world they face often becomes increasingly difficult. For some of the female detectives, self-definition as a detective, or spy, as some characters refer to themselves, is problematic. Some question their femininity and even humanity at their choice to betray another person's confidence for a paycheck or for eschewing domestic ties in favor of a job or career, while others feel no shame in their work, seeing it as a necessary part of keeping order in a chaotic world, also problematic because a woman without shame means that she is capable of anything. As Arlene Young states, "the fictional Victorian lady detective incorporates often conflicting elements of nineteenth-century class and gender politics that illuminates some of the issues that governed how, when, and why nineteenth-century ladies, real or fictional, could enter the workforce, especially in relatively new fields of endeavor such as policing, and how…components defined expectations of respectability and femininity" (16).

W.S. Hayward's female detective, Mrs. Paschal, provides an example of these conflicting elements in gender and class portrayals, citing her upper middle-class upbringing and married life, as well as her desire to retain that lifestyle after the death of her husband. And yet, Mrs. Paschal also represents the tendency to portray women who support themselves as lower class, and therefore more immoral, persons. And yet again, Mrs. Paschal seems to enjoy that part of her work, using her desire to exhibit her acting ability to further her goals in a case. Hayward's and Forrester's experimental detectives appeared only thirty-five years after the formation of the Metropolitan Police in London, when detectives themselves were new to the reading public, let alone a female detective.

However, while some critics believe that by introducing gender into detective fiction/casebooks, Hayward and Forrester were only capitalizing on the reading public's interest in the new police and in the new fiction and genres that followed the creation of the detective force. I would argue, however, that the many women's rights movements and debates that had already made news in the United States and in England, influenced Hayward and Forrester to provide interesting characters not only for those interested in detective casebooks, but also for women who were debating their place in society and their abilities to pursue work that would put them in situations they had not been expected to deal with, such as working outside of the home, dealing with the criminal classes, and using their intellect for something other than running a household.

As several critics have noted, the Victorian public was intensely interested in crime and in reading about crime. And as Patrick Brantlinger states, there were critics in the nineteenth century debating over the moral and intellectual value of the reading material that the public was demanding. For example, as many critics during the height of the Gothic's popularity lamented, and sometimes celebrated, the characters and situations that appear in Gothic novels often had negative effects on their readers, such as instilling immoral and sexual ideas into young readers' minds, or worse, inciting radical ideas similar to the French Revolution, or at least they wanted the public to believe that was the case, often equating the word *monster* with the reading public or at the very least, a mob of barely literate, uneducated, yet ambitious middle-class monsters armed with just enough literacy to be dangerous (Brantlinger 49-69). As several authors suggested in both serious novels and their parodies, the "wrong" kind of reading material can affect readers. For critics of the Gothic, those of the public who read Gothic novels are more likely to have acted on the dangerous principles, such as revolution, that these novels contained.

I would argue that the same theory might apply to readers in the nineteenth century. If the public reads a story (whether factual or fictional) that glorifies and romanticizes crime and criminals, then they are more likely to emulate the characters they read about. For example, Dickens was often criticized for promoting and celebrating crime and criminals, and one historian of the "schools of the people" noted in 1871 that "the only sort of information which the [workhouse] young had to interest them, was a rehearsal of the exciting deed of the poacher and the smuggler, or the…adventures of abandoned females" (Bartley 274). Even William M. Thackeray included Dickens among the writers of criminal literature, such as the Newgate Calendars' lives of criminals and Newgate novels, which fictionalized and often celebrated the lives of criminals:

> Breathless to watch the crimes of Fagin, tenderly to deplore the errors of Nancy, to have for Bill Sikes a kind of pity and admiration, and an absolute love for the society of the Dodger [is the result of Dickens' great but misused power as a novelist]. All these heroes stepped from the novel on to the stage; and the whole London public, from peers to chimney-sweeps, were interested about a set of ruffians whose occupations are thievery, murder, and prostitution. (Thackeray *Catherine* 185)

While many critics were concerned about the influence that fictional criminals might have on the public, they should also have been aware of the influence the detective might have, particularly the female detective, which reveals that a woman could live and work outside the domestic sphere through the use of her intellect, talents, and abilities. Just as the critics of the Gothic feared revolution from the reading public, critics of female detective fiction should have feared the coming challenges to their established authorities.

While the beginning of the female detective genre might not seem to address many important issues, there are several issues that appear in both Hayward's and Forrester's stories, such as the definition of women's role in society and the moral ambiguity of policing, among others. The introductory story in Hayward's *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, "The Mysterious Countess," not only announces the protagonist, Mrs. Paschal, but also suggests several elements

where conflicting authorities meet, merge, and compete. For example, Haywood's choice of offices for his detectives, both male and female, in Whitehall on a "small street, the houses in which cover the site of the once splendid palaces of the Stuarts, where one king was born and another lost his head" (Hayward 1), further emphasizes and "reifies the suspect dimensions of detective work— danger, forbidden knowledge, questionable tactics, and, as a consequence, questionable status" (Young 19). The authority of the government and of the people meet in these offices, at times of one accord, and at others, at odds with each other.

Mrs. Paschal is herself a combination of competing authorities— at once submitting to her male employer with "prompt and passive obedience" and yet meeting the gaze, eye to eye, of her employer "unflinchingly," which he enjoys because it "betokened confidence in themselves" (Hayward 1-2). As Joseph A. Kestner argues, "It is vital for women to return the male gaze to establish their own subjectivity and to re-balance the power relations of surveillance which the gaze establishes" (*Sherlock's Sisters* 7-8). Mrs. Paschal's unflinching gaze allows her to regain some authority from her male employer, showing her strength in potentially dangerous circumstances, but also revealing and "unsentimentally acknowledging that the powers of observation are never innocent, even when practiced by female eyes" (Voskuil 426), especially for a female detective, who must always be on her guard, even in interactions with her employer. Lynn M. Voskuil's claim that observation is never innocent allows that women who observe not only transgress social boundaries, but also denaturalize gender roles to become "authoritative spectators" (426). The key here is authoritative— the power or ability to observe behavior and to use that ability in order to gain control over a person or situation. Mrs. Paschal's ability to reflect her employer's unflinching stare allows her to inspire his confidence in her ability to complete the tasks he gives her, even if she may feel slightly less than confident. Returning

gazes not only inspires his confidence in his employees' abilities, but in their fortitude; it "evidenced that they would not shrink in the hour of peril, when danger lurked in front and rear" (Hayward 2). And yet, Mrs. Paschal follows this statement with "I was well born and well educated, so that, like an accomplished actress, I could play my part in any drama in which I was instructed to take a part" (Hayward 2), seemingly undermining the authority and confidence she just demonstrated, by intimating that this confidence might only be a "part" she is playing, and does not actually feel.

This disruption caused by surveillance, or the gaze, also poses problems for the female investigator when the gaze is aimed at those who are unknowingly watched and for the detectives themselves, who often describe themselves as actresses, a profession which involves being watched. As Lynn M. Voskuil explains,

> recent studies of theatricality have underscored its potential to upset traditional gender categories; in particular, such studies have recognized women's capacities to elude naturalized sexual and gender roles in the theatre and to construct their own identities on stage…many Victorians believed in a theatricality that sometime revealed and sometimes obscured a timeless, innate self; in this view, an authentic core identity is separated from an external, performing, artificial self. (409-410)

Indeed, female detectives recognize and capitalize on this potential to forge new identities, playing at characters, even if the action is "real" and dangerous.

During the beginning years of these types of stories, most narrators stress the divide between the detective's authentic self and characters the detective is forced to play. However, one narrator in particular rarely allows the reader to glimpse the authentic self that actors should keep separate from their portrayals. From the beginning of Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective*, Mrs. G controls what readers see and know about herself, and even removes herself as much as possible from the action of the story:

In putting the following narratives on paper, I shall take great care to avoid

> mentioning myself as much as possible. I determine upon this rule not from any personal modesty, though I would remark in passing that your detective can be a modest man or woman, but simply to avoid the use of the great I, which to my thinking, disfigures so many books. (Forrester 2)

While this may be Forrester's way of avoiding writing in a "feminine" voice, it also fits with the ambiguous description of his stories' heroine, who describes herself in terms of "may be's". As she states in the second sentence of the collection, "It can matter little who I am" (Forrester 1). However, Mrs. G is only partly right. In some way Mrs. G is beginning her story as an actress already in disguise, relating her story in the same way she would relate the lines of a play, as both actress and playwright. It can matter little who Mrs. G "really" is because she can forge a new identity based on the case she is currently investigating. But it does matter who she is because it gives her authority to expose fraud, potential murder, and burglary— a matter of identity that both hides and identifies who and what the protagonist is. As stated before, the dubious nature of acting a part, when played out in "dramas of real life" (Hayward 2), raises the detective's work above the level of play acting. As Young notes, "playing a part becomes taking a part; she is an active agent not in mere 'mimetic representations'…[s]pying and misrepresentation have moved out of the realm of the sneaky and underhanded and into the realm of the heroic, where 'nerve and strength, cunning and confidence' are prerequisite" (21). Not only does playing a part become actually heroic, but it allows female detectives to establish their confidence in themselves to concentrate "all… [her] energies upon the proper fulfillment and execution of [her] duties" and to make the "little-known people called Female Detectives" into a "much dreaded" force (Haywood 2).

And yet, because these women are at a crossroads of competing authorities, the idea of a "petticoat police" seems contradictory, all at once domestic and authoritative, sympathetic and objective. As Arlene Young explains, "the term Mrs. Paschal uses— *petticoated* police—

encapsulates some of the troubling dimensions and denotes both the strengths and weaknesses of the female detective's position. To be part of the police force is to have…well, *force*, while to be petticoated is to have none; it is, rather, to be frivolous and culturally encumbered, both literally and figuratively" (19). Even Kate Warne used the compelling argument with Allan Pinkerton that as a woman she could go where men could not and persuade women to talk to her in times and places that would not allow a male detective to interview. It is precisely the goal of many of these stories told about and by fictional female detectives to expose and question the authority of these cultural encumbrances, one that Mrs. Paschal removes to better track and observe her target: "I, with as much rapidity as possible took off the small crinoline I wore, for I considered that it would very much impede my movements. When I had divested myself of the obnoxious garment, and thrown it on the floor, I lowered myself into the hole and went down the ladder" (Hayward 9-10). Mrs. Paschal's removal of her crinoline constitutes a transgression of cultural and gender norms which allows her to do her job in a more efficient way. Despite the fact that some brilliant detectives are, as some critics claim, punished into marriage and quit detecting at the end of their stories, even having their stories published, circulated, and read by a large audience creates some form of transgression that cannot be take back. There are interesting cultural, social, and political issues discussed and not necessarily dismissed just because the heroine marries and leaves the public sphere in favor of domestic duties. For as many female detectives who marry at the end of their tales, there are just as many who choose to remain single, focusing on their careers as detectives and public servants, defying the public image of what a woman should be and defending their chosen profession.

Despite the early examples constituting a "strong fantasy of female empowerment" (emphasis on the fantasy), "if such narratives did not correspond with actuality, they accorded

with cultural aspirations. Inherently, their nature is transgressive" (Kestner 17). In fact, these amateur, private, and official female detectives question the issue of authority at a time when debates raged over women's rights, such as owning property, acquiring higher education, obtaining a divorce, and even working in more public capacities, rather than the traditional occupations such as seamstresses, governesses, ladies' companions, or servants.

Part of this question of identity and authority is the difference between male and female knowledge. Traditionally, mysteries that feature male detectives are solved through his use of logic and reason. For authors portraying a female detective, in order to distinguish that there could be credible and capable women detectives usually formulated an ending unraveled by "women's" knowledge, such as that of dress or of running a household, and intuition. For example, in Anna Katherine Green's Amelia Butterworth series, Miss Butterworth, the model for the nosy spinster neighbor that Agatha Christie would later adopt, initially annoys and later surprises Green's established male detective with her observations. It is actually Miss Butterworth that identifies the murder weapon and the inconsistencies in the female victim's dress and shoes, which leads to the arrest of the culprit. In Miss Butterworth's second case, she is sent undercover to an old friend's home to investigate odd disappearances near the old, run-down house. For the most part, female detectives were denied the use of rational behavior and knowledge to solve their cases, and when they did use logic, these detectives were criticized for being "too masculine." Women, not educated in the same manner as their male colleagues, had to rely on the knowledge available to them— that of domestic situations, intuition, common sense, and of course, good luck. While this specialized knowledge of the inner workings of households lends a certain authority to early female detectives, it isn't until both logic and intuition were combined that female detectives were given more authority and status in the minds

of readers. However, female detectives who put their knowledge of the domestic sphere, which they are supposed to control, actually use a form of logic, using what they know about specific situations, people, manners, and society to make logical connections.

And yet, their male counterparts deride them for only having knowledge of the private sphere, when opportunity had not existed, without compromising virtue and social status to gain knowledge of the shady side of life outside the home, a problem similarly faced by male detectives and police officers during the development of the Metropolitan Police in London. To gain this authority, many female detectives take the chance that society will think less of them for asserting their will, pursuing a career, not only outside of the home, but also one that mixes with unsavory characters, a common complaint of even the male detectives at the beginning of England's organized police departments. However, this proves to be a necessary evil in the pursuit of justice, as well as authority, for without this knowledge of and from crime and criminals, where does the detective obtain clues to make his or her next move?

However, because of the reforms in favor of women's rights and changes to marriage and divorce laws, at least one critic has connected the rise of detective fiction to both the professionalization of the London Metropolitan Police and to the marriage and divorce laws, specifically the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act. As John Sutherland notes, the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act "mobilized a whole new army of amateur and unofficial detectives: namely the suspicious spouse and his or her agent" (244), who naturally were invested in keeping tabs on the opposing party or parties. However, even before this act went into effect, these agents were already at work, as seen in the Caroline Norton case; at times during her separation from her husband, Mr. Norton's hired agents would appear to "catch" and harass Mrs. Norton in any clandestine or illicit behavior whether Mr. Norton's suspicions were justified, or as Mrs. Norton

explains, meant to humiliate her among her friends and in society. And yet, because female detectives like Kate Warne did exist, and because the fiction of the 1860s did, at least for a time, choose to represent the possibility of a woman capable of working in a male dominated field, the cases for women like Warne and Norton who challenged the authority of the systems that defined what women could and could not do in public began to change.

While Norton claims she wanted no part in the "absurd" fight for women's equality (*English Laws* 3), her appeals for justice clearly do support at least some measure of belief in her ability as a writer to support herself and influence those in positions of power to take notice of her struggles and the struggles of so many other women. It is only when women like Norton choose to speak out against the injustices that had hitherto been ignored or even permitted that things change:

> If Mr. Norton, a magistrate and member of the aristocracy, had cheated at a game of cards played by a few idlers in one of the clubs of London, all England would have been in a ferment. Accusers would have risen; friends would have hung their heads; and for the sake of some dandy's purse, the invocation to justice would have been made in such a stern universal shout, as would have sent an echo all through Europe…But in the English laws which wreck a woman's whole destiny; in the law which permits the most indecent and atrocious libel against her, without a chance of legal defence [sic],–in the law which countenances and upholds far worse than cheating at cards, and renders null and void a contract signed by a magistrate, because that contract was made *with his wife,* –in the law which gives a woman's earnings even by literary copyright, to her husband,–in the whole framework, in short, of those laws by which her existence is merged in the existence of another, *(let what will be the circumstances of her case;)* and by which Justice in fact divests herself of all control and responsibility in the matter–England sees nothing worthy of remark. (Norton 22-23)

Because Norton held her tongue for so many years out of respect for her friend (and falsely alleged lover), her courage in speaking out after his death and when he could no longer defend himself in her husband's second allegation of infidelity becomes that much stronger in not only her own defense, but in defense of others.

Norton's work further connects to the rise of detectives because of her clear and distinct

manner of observing the patterns, gathering her evidence, and presenting her case. It is here, in plain sight of others, that Norton, like many detectives, and in particular female detectives, begin their work with the ability to observe from an unnoticed but discernable position. As Kate Warne first pitched herself as a detective to Allan Pinkerton, she could go places, speak to people, and receive information that his male detectives could never think of going. Female detectives like Warne, and in the fiction, Mrs. Paschal could go undercover as someone from nearly any walk of life. In Hayward's first story, Mrs. Paschal is assigned to play the part of a lady's maid, to observe a countess and figure out how she is maintaining her lifestyle with no apparent source of income. Caroline Norton's case and the ads for female agents for "certain delicate missions" reveal the prominence of the professional market for keeping and uncovering domestic secrets. As Dagni Bredesen states, divorce cases were often the main fare for these detectives and "[n]ot surprisingly…the professional detectives' work in crime fiction of the 1860s often concerns the uncovering of domestic secrets, which, in turn, warrant domestic correction as well as legal discipline" ("Conformist Subversion" 20).

Hayward's collection includes ten stories in which Mrs. Paschal reveals how she has dealt with a variety of "crimes and misdemeanors ranging from thefts of gold, jewels, mail, and identity to political conspiracy, murder, and fraud. In solving these mysteries, Mrs. Paschal curbs the excesses of a too-merry widow, and wayward sons and brothers at the behest of either government officials or family members" (Bredesen "Conformist" 20). As several critics have noted, the detective genre is seen as an inherently conservative genre, meant to recreate and restore order after the chaos of a crime and the investigation. And in that vein, Mrs. Paschal presents herself as a conservative middle class woman, with conservative politics and policies, and yet she has moments in which she lets this disguise slip, and the authorities that she

supposedly serves come into question. For example, Mrs. Paschal solidifies her outsider status as, using her own terminology, a "renegade" (Hayward 73), not only by pretending to convert to Catholicism for a case, but by virtue of her existence as a widow and a detective, Mrs. Paschal is a renegade

> to gender norms insofar as she feels no compunction to serve as a living memorial to a dead husband and responds to no pressure to come under the covering of matrimony. Instead, she happily embraces…'an unsuitable job for a woman'…We have in *The Revelations of a Lady Detective* a protagonist who, as a woman, is cast as a professional anomaly…a pioneer, one who seems to break the very rules of Victorian femininity that she rigorously, if not uniformly, enforces on others. (Bredesen "Conformist" 21)

Unlike Andrew Forrester's "G," who deliberately downplays her own social and marital status, Mrs. Paschal is less vague about her personal history, giving readers just enough information to know her husband died leaving her financially in need, and personally free to take up a career. In case after case, Mrs. Paschal's widowhood affords her a certain personal independence, authority, and freedom and movement that aids in her investigations and in deciphering clues.

As a widow, Mrs. Paschal works within Victorian society's "historically entrenched notions concerning widowhood, [which] allowed, however grudgingly, an agency to widows that was discouraged in other women…Compared to the legal nonexistence of a Victorian wife or the social limitations of a spinster daughter, a widow's capacity to act on her own initiative and mange property…explains, in part, societal unease with widowhood" (Bredesen "Conformist" 22). Mrs. Paschal has a certain level of autonomy, and yet rarely invokes the authority that a widow might have in certain situations, perhaps choosing to retain some anonymity. It does, however, give her a pretext for her chosen profession, explicitly taking on cases that promise payment, rather than the "intellectual challenge" that motivates detectives like Poe's Dupin or Sherlock Holmes, and Paschal competes aggressively with her male counterparts for these

monetary rewards.

Although Mrs. Paschal repeatedly reminds her readers about these excuses for joining the police force, the social and geographic mobility must have been attractive to a woman, who from the beginning of her revelations is in a constant state of flux and movement. The very first story begins with Mrs. Paschal on the move, heading to the office to meet her employer, and throughout the stories, she travels across London and the country with the "competency of an experienced traveler" (Bredesen "Conformist" 22). Indeed, Mrs. Paschal seems fascinated with the speed of modern travel: "There is to me always something very exhilarating in the quickly rushing motion of a railway carriage. It is typical of progress, and raises my spirits in proportion to the speed in which we career along...What can equal such magical traveling?" (Hayward 16-17). Bredesen notes the fitting nature of beginning Mrs. Paschal's career in a format designed for contemporary travelers ("Conformist" 22), yet her delight in speed and progress or travel could also reflect her delight in the progress that had been made that would allow her to actually pursue a career for which she seems suited in many ways and particularly enjoys.

Furthermore, Mrs. Paschal's lack of kinship ties, no husband, no children, and presumably no other family members to hamper her movements, allows her to escape the expected sentimental marriage plots of other fictional widows. Instead, Mrs. Paschal uses her availability for remarriage as a mask, a role to play the same way she does as a convent novice or postal clerk in other cases. In the case "Mistaken Identity," Mrs. Paschal convincingly passes as a French informant's "chère amie" and "mort de ma vie," bringing "all [her] histrionic talent into requisition. He was my lover, and I pretended to be by no means shy" (Hayward 120-121). They are so convincing in the company of the thieves they are after, that an associate of his remarks that "Pegon's got hold of a widow," which he quickly denies, stating that he never buys

"ze goods in ze matrimonial market which are of ze segond-hand" (Hayward 121).

This comment and disparagement that seems to come with it means nothing to Mrs. Paschal. She derives no meaning or identity from her relationship to her male relatives, but from her professional success. And, as Bredesen notes, Mrs. Paschal "punctures the ideals of feminine domesticity. Home is where she waits for her next assignment" ("Conformist" 23), where without work, she feels herself "becoming rusty and inert, not to say obese and stupid" (Hayward 19). Far from being the "Angel in the House," Mrs. Paschal's unique position in the establishments she infiltrates and investigates allows her the position of avenging angel, a sort of "Nemesis" to re-establish justice and equilibrium, a position Mrs. Paschal thoroughly enjoys:

> I envied this successful actress all the beautiful things she appeared to have in her possession…but a moment afterwards, I congratulated myself that I was not, like her an object of suspicion and mistrust to the police, and that a female detective, like Nemesis, was not already upon my track. I vowed that all her splendour should be short-lived, and that…there should soon be nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Hayward 5)

It is clear "from the variety of Mrs. Paschal's undercover maneuvers that there is no sanctuary— not government bureaucracies, not religious orders, not the home— that this woman cannot and will not infiltrate, and her success is clearly related to her gender. As a woman adopting subservient roles, she can seem inconspicuous and unthreatening" (Young 22). Indeed, Mrs. G echoes Warne's sentiments that "the woman detective has far greater opportunities than a man of intimate watching, and of keeping her eyes upon matters near which a man could not conveniently play the eavesdropper" (Forrester 2).

Hayward's female detective occupies a unique vantage point in which to observe and critique; yet, because of her anomalous existence and behavior, Mrs. Paschal enforces Victorian rules and mores that she herself may not observe, such as her curious rapport with the criminals she pursues, and often cutting deals with those she has caught; however, because of the

“equivocal status between the respectable and the illicit that widows— sexually experienced yet socially acceptable…inhabit” (Bredesen 24), Mrs. Paschal is in the unique position to identify criminal behavior based on social behavior. In “The Mysterious Countess,” Mrs. Paschal links the Countess’s disregard for proper mourning conventions, mourning for less than half the requisite time, “cast[ing] off her widow’s weeds…and launch[ing] into all the gaiety and dissipation that the Babylon of the moderns could supply her with” (Hayward 4), with more criminal behavior, and all the proof that Mrs. Paschal needs to convince her of the countess’s criminality. Throughout the revelations, Mrs. Paschal’s inconsistent legal priorities, such as not indicting a woman for fraud and attempted bigamy, indicate that her priorities may lie more with correcting her clients’ domestic “crimes” or mistakes rather than always pursuing the proper legal consequences of her clients’ actions, further distancing her from the authority that she allegedly serves and further establishing her own personal and individual, if anomalous, authority. Mrs. G, while seeming to conform to most social rules, remains a mystery even to her friends: “My friends suppose I am a dressmaker, who goes out by the day or week— my enemies, what I have, are in a great measure convinced that my life is very questionable one” (Forrester 1). Indeed, her enemies may be correct, if Mrs. Paschal’s career can be any indication of what the “petticoated police” would be doing.

As Mrs. Paschal’s and Miss Gladden’s cases and the examples provided by Sensation fiction reveal, surveillance by the most invisible but “privileged spies” (Braddon 154), the servants of a household set up one of the more visible social anxieties of the Victorian era. Yet, as Brian W. McCuskey explains, these “kitchen police” often negated the need for outside interference by internal surveillance and secret keeping. However, at times outside intervention in the form of undercover or even blatant detective work became necessary for the policing of

not only illegal, but immoral behavior. Since the beginning of the police force, officers were seen as not only representatives of the law but of the moral code of the country, policing drunkenness, gambling, and the like. Why would a female detective be different? As the supposed moral agents of the household, women were even better suited to uphold the moral aspects of the law, yet women's knowledge of criminal elements was condemned. As widows, however, Mrs. Paschal and Miss Gladden/ Mrs. G/ G both have sexual and illicit knowledge, making them slightly less respectable, but Mrs. Paschal in particular has a past, having worked as a barmaid in a saloon in her younger days (Hayward 132), giving her potentially more knowledge than a respectable widow of her station should know. Yet in a professional capacity and in the fiction of the 1860s, detectives often had to associate with certain people and do things that, even as moral agents of the law, would not be seen as respectable. Yet, given G's and Mrs. Paschal's nominal deference to the authorities that supposedly control their behavior, and their seemingly nominal deference to some aspects of the law they are supposed to uphold, it would seem that Mrs. Paschal and Miss Gladden are more like the criminals they pursue than the police organization to which they belong. However, their pasts give them an advantage that, like the young women detectives who follow in their footsteps, they can use to force their adversaries to underestimate the detectives on the case. Mrs. Paschal's past life as a wife, and current life as a widow, informs her decisions, but it also allows her opportunities to insinuate herself into the household of criminals. Not only this, but her past as a barmaid gives her an intimate knowledge of how people act in a public house, which gives her an advantage when going undercover in a completely different situation. Just like Kate Warne could use her background as an aspiring actress, and her willingness to take on any part, Mrs. Paschal seems likely to do the same, taking on knowledge that "respectable" women should not have in order to fulfill her purpose as her

adversaries' "Nemesis."

Chapter 6

"I know a woman who did…and this is her story": Female Detectives, Odd Women, and Authority, 1880-1900

After a disappearance of over twenty years, no fewer than twenty female detectives reappeared on book sellers' shelves between the year 1880 and 1901 and have yet to vanish from them since.[9] Although the detectives of the 1860s had no models from which to draw inspiration, the female detectives who appeared in this later generation did draw from the burgeoning genre that flourished in the years leading up to the end of the nineteenth century. With the success of Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories, Sensation novels, and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novels and short stories, many other writers decided to join the detective story trend. And while female detectives were still anomalies as official police representatives, this fact did not stop writers from featuring even more women in leading roles as detectives than in previous generations. For the most part, these female detectives did not work for the police but for private detective agencies, performing the "certain delicate missions" advertised for in magazines, but often taking on much more dangerous missions like tracking murderers. Not only did more authors create even more fictional detectives, both male and female, advances were being made in science and forensics. For example, in 1894, the first actual conviction based on the identification of typewriters occurred and in the same year, "Scotland Yard established the anthropomorphic measurement system of Alphonse Bertillon [to create distinct and detailed descriptions of criminals]. Francis Galton in 1895 published *Fingerprint Directories*, the first statement in print of digital classification; two years later, a

[9] According Michele Slung, adding the term "lady" in front of whatever activity was needed was "a journalistic cliché of the times, for a quick glance through Victorian periodicals turns up any number of articles on lady fencers, lady photographers, lady farmers, lady guides, lady

criminal was convicted in India based on fingerprint analysis" (Kestner 27).

While the female detectives of the 1860s were older, presumably respectable women, the female detectives of the 1880s tended to be much younger and physically attractive women, though not always. Authors branched out to produce variations and different models of a female detective. At times she was a young, wealthy, amateur detective, at others not a detective at all, but a shrewd gypsy problem solver. And yet, no matter their station in life, all of these examples faced similar issues as women and as detectives. The authority they attempt to assert as representatives of their employers and for themselves at times leaves them vulnerable to not only physical violence, but doubt from those they attempt to impress and from themselves. Many of the detectives whose story is told in their own voice express, at times, crippling self-doubt as to whether they can continue their own chosen path. However, for the most part, most never let on to the outside world that they feel this way. And in general, most never let this doubt slow them down on their quest for justice when they feel it is justified.

As Joseph A Kestner remarks, "Intelligence, self-assertion, daring and defiance marked a range of female protagonists in English fiction before the creation of Sherlock Holmes. These traits, by the way, distinguish Holmes' adversary Irene Adler in the first Holmes short story…the fact that Holmes is not 'superhuman' but is rather defeated by Irene Adler gave the opening to create the female detectives who became his 'sisters' in the detectival tradition" (3). The traits that distinguished female protagonists before the 1880s also gave rise to at least part of the New Woman characteristics that became a full character during this time. What began with the demand for justice and protection in Caroline Norton's writings, and the movements for more women's rights, such as suffrage, and the abolition of slavery, eventually connected with the modern-ness of the "New Woman" figure, a "figure committed to change and to the values of a

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miners, lady graduates, and even lady balloonists" ("Introduction" xix).

projected future" (Ledger 5). Not only did these movements contribute to the development of the female detectives who appeared at the end of the 1880s, but legislation and certain events in higher education provided significant progress for women. For example, Girton College, Cambridge opened in 1869 and Newnham College, Cambridge opened in 1871. A few years later in 1878, Lady Margaret Hall opened and in 1879 Somerville became colleges for women at Oxford. The Married Women's Property Act of 1870 (in England) granted women equitable property rights and permission to retain earnings after marriage and a

> married woman could make out life insurance policies on her own account. By 1877, the year of the Bradlaugh-Besant trial for disseminating information about birth control, the middle classes were definitely employing birth control for limitation of family size…By 1878, as well, women were admitted to all degrees at the University of London.
>
> The 1882 Married Women's Property Act gave married women the right to independent ownership of property, that is, the same property rights as unmarried women…Such legislative intervention in the marital relationship began to rectify the imbalance of power within marriage…[And a] particular victory for women was the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. (Kestner 16)[10]

As progress was being made throughout the country in legal and educational changes, socially,

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[10] The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869 were legal statutes intended to protect the members of the British Armed Forces from sexually transmitted diseases often contracted through contact with prostitutes. Proposals to keep the men healthy ranged from inspection by physicians, allowing enlisted men to marry, permitting homosexuality, licensing and inspecting brothels, and providing enlisted men access to condoms. However, all of these suggestions were abandoned; the last three violated Victorian morality, and the first supposedly demoralized and humiliated the men. The Acts allowed police to arrest prostitutes in ports and army towns for mandatory examinations for venereal disease. However, the laws did not distinguish between prostitutes and other women of the lower classes and many innocent women claimed to have been falsely accused and examined. These Acts served as a unifying force for women from all levels of society, from Florence Nightingale, to Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Wolstenholme, who formed the Ladies' Association against the Contagious Diseases Acts. For more information on prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts, see William Acton's *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities (1870)*. Ed. Peter Fryer. New York: Fitzroy, 1968; Paul McHugh's *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980. Print.; Judith Walkowitz's *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women Class and the State.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980. Print.; Tom Winnifrith's *Fallen Women in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1994. Print.; and Megara Bell's "The Fallen Woman in Fiction and Legislation." *Victoria's Past*. 28 September 1999. Web. 3 May 2015.

the perception of women as capable, independent, self-assertive authorities still had a long way to go. However, producing literature, even in cheap railroad fiction, that featured these types of heroines, allowed authors, much like their detectives, to go undercover and covertly influence their audience in subtle ways.

One way that these detectives undermine traditional authorities is through the gaze and surveillance. As seen in Hayward's and Forrester's examples, surveillance and the gaze provides detectives and in particular female detectives with a certain level of authority and power. As Laura Mulvey argues in her landmark essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," the male gaze first takes pleasure in "looking at another person as an erotic object" (16) containing a strong element of voyeurism, and second in narcissism, serving "ego and libido…identification processes" (Mulvey 18), producing a controlling "hierarchy of gendered power, with the male empowered in the subject position and the woman lacking power in the object position, that is the man looks, the woman is the object of that male look" (Kestner 17). However, women as detectives wrest that control, that objectifying power away from the conventional head of gendered hierarchy by employing the gaze and surveillance, not only in their work, but in their personal life, establishing control and authority over themselves as independent women and presented through narratological strategy. The text that is narrated by the protagonist herself prevents others from mediating her subjectivity. Yet, those that are narrated by an associate or outside observer interpret the protagonists' stories, voices, and access to language.

The earliest examples of female detectives, Mrs. Paschal and Mrs. G, "inherently challenge the supremacy of the male gaze, for it is the female who possesses the hierarchal power of the gaze when it is the female detective exercising surveillance in the pursuit of her detection" (Kestner 17-18). Further examination of the complexity of this issue of the gaze

brings up Fergus Hume's "detective" novel *Madame Midas* from 1888. While Hume's novel is not necessarily a detective story in the sense that Madame Midas works for any police or private agency, she does in fact investigate certain "crimes" against herself and the people she cares about, and surveillance and the gaze is immediately important in the context of her investigations. However, Hume plays with the conventional gendered notions of power within the gaze as Madame Midas meets Gaston Vandeloup for the first time. At first Madame Midas, her real name Mrs. Villiers, "doubtfully eye[d] the slender figure of the young man" (Hume 30). And yet, she hires the young man as a clerk in her gold mining business in spite of her doubts:

> This young man pleased her. She was essentially a woman with social instincts, and the appearance of this young and polished stranger in the wilds of the Pactolus claim promised her a little excitement. It was true that every now and then, when she caught a glimpse from his scintillating eyes, she was conscious of a rather unpleasant Sensation, but this she put down to fancy, as the young man's manners were really charming. (Hume 32)

But Mrs. Villiers is ever watchful, at least over her business, and Vandeloup is aware of the power of her gaze:

> She was too clever a woman to let him manage things himself, or even know how much she trusted him; and Vandeloup knew that whatever he did those calm dark eyes were on him, and that the least slip or neglect on his part would bring Madame Midas to his side with her quiet voice and inflexible will to put him right again. (Hume 45)

And once Vandeloup meets Kitty Marchurst, the young woman he will ruin later in the novel, Madame Midas throws a "keen glance at her clerk" (Hume 49) by way of warning him against preying on her favorite. In fact, although Vandeloup succeeds in his plot against Kitty, he does not triumph over Madame Midas, and the murder victim of the novel is never fooled by Vandeloup's charm and smoothness, stating "his eyes ain't true, and his tongue's too smart" (Hume 34).

As the novel moves forward, it becomes clear that the focus of the novel rests upon the

contest of gazes between men and women; who will ultimately wrest control and power from the other? In this case, it is the women, or at least one woman who retains power from the beginning of the novel. Madame Midas has a history of being tricked and betrayed by a man and uses this as a basis for her cautiousness in business and her personal life (Hume 34), but denies her instincts in regards to Vandeloup and it costs her and her friends dearly. The moral of many female detective stories comes fairly early in Hume's novel: "Some animals of a fine organization have an instinct which warns them to avoid approaching danger. Woman is one of these finely- organized animals. ERGO— Let no woman go contrary to her instincts" (Hume 34). Hume's own background as a lawyer allowed him to recognize how antagonistic the law is to a woman, even if she leaves her husband. In Madame Midas's case, she leaves to protect herself from a profligate and violent husband. Yet, the betrayal she feels forces her to be on her guard with nearly everyone she meets, becoming a "cold suspicious woman who disbelieved in everyone and everything" (Hume 11).

Survival as a woman in this novel is based upon the ability to suspect and to surveil, as is survival as a detective. Kitty for one ignores the suspicious behavior that Vandeloup displays, and it leads to her ruin. Madame Midas's maid, Selina Sprotts does not ignore her suspicions, but they lead to her death. Only Madame Midas is capable of putting the two abilities together to survive. All of her experience, "all of her vigilance is required to combat male predators" (Kestner 48). Although there is a formal detective, Kilsap from Hume's first novel *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab,* that appears much later in the text, his role is diminished to the point that it highlights the women's own detective skills that help them survive in a world of predatory men (Kestner 48). And yet, Madame Midas often ignores what her gaze and her instinct tell her; when Kitty disappears, Madame suspects Vandeloup and exercises her detective skills:

> Mrs. Villiers felt uneasy; was it likely that Vandeloup could have any connection with Kitty's disappearance? Impossible! he had given her his word of honour, and yet— it was very strange. Mrs. Villiers was not, by any means, a timid woman, so she determined to ask Gaston right out, and get a decided answer from him, so as to set her mind at rest. (Hume 132)

Vandeloup lies, knowing full well where Kitty is. However, the story does not let men, such as those who attempt the robbery of Madame Midas's gold and the murder of Selina Sprotts go without punishment.

However, the gaze is not the only way in which Madame Midas acts as a detective; it is through her logical reasoning after the attack in which she mistakenly believes she has killed her husband which eventually leads to the punishment of the novel's villains. As Joseph A Kestner explains, Madame Midas is the victim of "one of the most violent episodes to involve a woman in Victorian fiction," a "vicious robbery" attempt on a three hundred ounce nugget of gold (49). Madame Midas's husband, Villiers; her loyal clerk, Gaston Vandeloup; and Vandaloup's "silent" associate, Pierre Lemaire all plot to steal the gold as Madame returns to her claim. The robbery itself is violent:

> Villiers dropped suddenly from the bank on to the trap, and caught her [Madame Midas] by the throat…Villiers never said a word, but tightened his grasp on her throat and shortened his stick to give her a blow on the head. Fortunately, Madame Midas saw his intention, and managed to wrench herself free, so the blow aimed at her only slightly touched her, otherwise it would have killed her…The unhappy woman recognized her husband, and uttered a cry. (Hume 92)

And as she escapes her husband's attack, she finds the strength to fight back:

> Maddened with anger and disgust, his wife snatched up the stick he had dropped, and struck him on the head as he took a step forward. With a stifled cry he staggered and fell over the embankment, still clutching the box in his arms…Madame Midas lay in a dead faint for some time, and when she came to herself she was still in the trap, and Rory was calmly trotting along the road home. (Hume 92)

Madame's reasoning follows extreme logic. Though she did hate her husband, and did not "care about becoming his murderess," she "was not afraid of punishment" (Hume 102) because she

knows that she was the one attacked. Her husband and the other two men were the aggressors, and she had acted out of self-defense. Vandeloup's reappearance after the robbery to tell Madame of her husband's return from the dead reads more like an interrogation than a welcome bringer of news. After Vandeloup establishes that Villiers is in fact alive, Villiers just as mysteriously vanishes again and Slivers, the evil mining agent, plots to cast blame on Madame Midas for Villiers's death and have her hanged for the crime (Hume 111).

Both Kitty Marchurst and Madame Midas experience crimes against them and the community believes both Kitty and Madame Midas to be murderers, one for the death of Selina Sprotts and the other for the death of her husband, Mr. Villiers; the intimidating environment of murder and fear resurrects the threatening male characters from Hume's previous novel to tell the story and experiences from the women's point of view. Both women are required to appear at inquests to give testimony, and as Kestner notes, these women,

> suffering under patriarchy, are compelled to investigate… [and] exercise the power of the female gaze to oppose the male gaze. Kitty perceives enough of the gold robbery to unsettle her seducer Vandeloup. Madame Midas must interrogate males such as Vandeloup, confront blackmailing men such as her husband Villiers and suspect the motives and violence of most of the male community. Her authority is such that even a callous killer like Vandeloup can be brought momentarily to heel by her. She has sufficient conviction about her powers of observation to discuss with the lawyer Duncan Calton the validity of the evidence in the murder trial. (55)

Not only does the setting of Australia's mining country provide a picturesque backdrop for intrigue and a mixture of characters, it also allows for an interesting trope as the need to mine for information becomes more important to the unraveling of the murderous plots and surveillance of men. And yet, none of the women come out of their experiences unscathed, for both Kitty and Madame Midas are both damaged if not destroyed by the men in their lives by the end of the novel. As Kestner notes, Kitty' and Madame Midas's fates yet again diverge. After the trials, Vandeloup follows Kitty to the Yarra River, where she plans to commit suicide. However,

Vandeloup's plan to murder her here backfires as he slips and falls into the stream and drowns, while Kitty simply vanishes. Stephen Knight sums up Hume's construction of Kitty's character:

> Mrs. Villiers' own innocence is gone by the start of the story, but her friend and protégée, Kitty Marchurst, is full of supple and natural responses. Hume probes her story with a sensitive and frank touch: she lights her lover's cigarette with a sensual delight, but confronts the problems that follow with firm determination, developing a theatrical career and then, at the end of the novel, adopting some dramatically independent ideas. ("Introduction" ii)

Living with a lover and taking roles on the stage shows daring, much like the New Woman figures emerging as major characters in the fiction of the 1880s and 1890s. While Kestner sees no hope for Kitty, I would argue that perhaps with the acting and detecting skills she has evinced already, Kitty Marchurst disappears in order to become one of the many female detectives that began their careers with mistakes they seek to rectify.

According to Kestner, "key conventions of …detective narratives— such as the observer/friend/narrator, the superiority or the unofficial agency of detection, the exposure of criminality in the middle classes and the urban environment of detection— all become confirmed in Doyle's landmark tale" *A Study in Scarlet* (32). Competition with Doyle as detective narrative composers was fierce. Two events that allowed for innovations in the genre, including making the detectives women, were the women workers at the Bryant and May match factory going on strike, which drew attention to the increasing power of women in the working and labor force, and the second, the Sensational killings of five women in the Whitechapel district of East London: "The incompetence of the police forces competing to solve the Ripper murders, the wild speculations about the killer and the terrorized reactions of women to the events were propitious for the creation of a female detective in the same year, 1888" (Kestner 33).

While *Madame Midas* features women who must detect to survive threats from not only men with specific plots against them, but men who notice and take opportunities to interfere and

harass women because of their own patriarchal and legal authority, *Mr. Bazalgette's Agent* published in 1888 by Leonard Merrick features a woman who must detect in order to survive on an economic level, not just a purely physical level. Merrick's female detective, Miriam Lea, is a former governess and actress in need of work. Yet again, the skills that acting provide allow female detectives to assume whatever character is needed to pursue their cases. Remember, even Kate Warne was an aspiring actress at one point in her life and put her skills to use as Pinkerton's top female agent.

Merrick's contributions to detective fiction are typically neglected, for *Mr. Bazalgette's Agent* demonstrates many of the demands that faced a detective story writer following in the footsteps of successful writers such as Fergus Hume and Arthur Conan Doyle. What makes Merrick's contribution different from those who have come before is his use of an autodiegetic narrator, recording her experiences as a detective and the development of her professional career. Like Holmes, she is unofficial and Scotland Yard has been unable to solve the case; however, unlike Holmes, Miss Lea does find work with the private agency of Alfred Bazalgette. The advertisement she responds to seems fairly normal, except for the potential suggestion that the agents might be used to entrap unsuspecting persons into compromising positions to facilitate divorces for their clients, just as there is a suggestion that the agents spy on lovers. One word that the narrator herself uses to describe the abilities that people want from her catches critics' attention in terms of the "taintedness" of the profession— "procure." The narrator uses this term in the second sentence of her narrative in a description of both the society she meets with and the talents she has: "the society usually met with, I imagine, in an establishment where a refined home and superior *cuisine* are advertised as procurable in a musical family at twenty-five shillings per week" (Merrick 5).

The lack of respectability, lying, spying, and tainted aspect of detective work has not changed since the first female detectives told their tales. Even they knew that their work, that they were despised for what they did. Yet, in many cases, as Mrs. G explains, there are male and female criminals; there must be male and female detectives to catch them. Female detectives are a necessity, and as long as there is crime, there will need to be someone to catch the criminals. While George Robb's article "Women and White Collar Crime" deals mainly with women as victims of crime, there were ample opportunities for women to become white collar criminals as well. For example in *Constance Dunlap, Woman Detective* (1913), Constance begins as a white collar criminal, forging checks to keep her husband's embezzlement secret, at least until they can get out of town.

The issues of "taintedness" continues as Miss Lea, who questions her sanity for considering the "preposterous" vocation (Merrick 11), applies for the position with not Mr. Bazalgette, but his offensive partner, Mr. Mendes. Miss Lea thinks of him as a

> negative sort of man…You took him for the most simple, ingenuous of creatures until you met his eyes, and then you started, they were so bright and cunning. It seemed as if all the wickedness of the human race must be known to the owner of those eyes, and there could be no mortal depravity so uncommonly vile as to surprise him. (Merrick 13)

In spite of her reaction, Miss Lea persists in her quest for employment, inquiring if the agency employs women. Mr. Mendes's response is, "it depends on the business" (Merrick 13), not exactly dispelling the atmosphere of disrepute. However, Miss Lea calls his bluff: "I should have thought…a *lady* would have been valuable from the first; I have understood that Scotland Yard will pay any amount for ladies and gentlemen, they are so difficult to secure, and still more difficult to keep" (Merrick 16), knowing that is indeed not true. Upon her second attempt, she meets Bazalgette himself, who sees her qualifications, fluency in three languages other than English, accomplishments that would have allowed her to become a governess to a musical

family, and the ability to travel, and engages her for a case. She is to track and report the location of a financial firm's managing clerk who had been forging bills in order to fund his gambling habit.

Miss Lea is outfitted with a cipher code with which to communicate; funds for a new wardrobe, travel money, and a photograph of her quarry, Jasper Vining. She is accompanied by another female agent, disguised as her maid. As the story progresses, Miss Lea and Emma Dunstan travel through Europe and Africa in pursuit of Vining, noting female customs in different countries and the arrogance of English travelers; however, throughout most of the book, her "prey" eludes her and she is forced to follow him to South Africa. It is here that Miss Lea and her "prey," going by the name James Vane, become closer. After a particularly powerful scene during which Lea performs a Chopin nocturne, Vane confesses, "I felt whilst you were at the piano, Mrs. Lea, that I was unutterable base…I've been a fool. There are some things one can't speak of without glossing over to a woman, more especially a woman whose opinion one values; but a short while back I, in an unexpected fashion, came into a lot of money" (Merrick 93-95), which he admits to losing by gambling. Lea realizes that she loves him and when he asks her to marry him, she consents, in spite of her doubts that he is the man she has been chasing to bring back to face charges of forgery and fraud: "He was supplicating for more than he divined; he was begging his escape of me, me who could save him" (Merrick 112). The agony Lea feels is real; she loves this man, and feels that he is the man she has been looking for the entire novel. Yet, just as Lea "betrays" her employer, a telegram announces that the real Jasper Vining had been arrested in New York, but she cannot bear to tell the man she believed was the criminal and was going to marry that she is a detective: "I am going to do what is right;— but it must be a letter! I am no heroine, I am flesh and blood…and to watch the disgust

upon his face would kill me" (Merrick 125). Yet, as readers, we do not know for sure if Lea ever confesses her role in the investigation to Vane; in essence, she remains silent and leaves off telling the story as he interrupts her confessional debate.

More than any other issue present in this novel, the moral quality of being a detective is questioned. As Miriam Lea pursues her investigation, moments like one she records in Hamburg reveal the questionable behavior that a woman must display in order to achieve the desired outcome in a criminal pursuit:

> The work is not so bad as I had feared; there is an excitement about it, and you live like a lady; the only objection is you feel such an imposter when a nice woman is friendly with you. I have decidedly thrown away any chances of advancement I might otherwise have had…Here I am in a profession (is it a profession, I wonder? — I daresay; it is called a profession to murder innocent men, why then should it not be one to detect the guilty!) Here I am on a mission which if they knew it would cause people to shrink away from me, and yet my offence is, that, after struggling to obtain a livelihood for the best part of a year in the greatest capital of modern civilization, I was absolutely forced to make myself an object of general abhorrence by the discreditable fact that circumstances were stronger than I! What a crime! Britannia rules the waves! She would be better occupied in finding food for the Britons! (Merrick 32-33)

Lea's economic circumstances are sharply criticized, not as a fault of her own, but as a fault of her country. Lea, a woman alone in London, having finished her acting career and having been dismissed as a governess for being an actress, reflects the economic situations of many women in the late nineteenth century, in need of support, but without the skill sets, or respectability that would allow them to support themselves. As the case progresses and she realizes that Vane does not suspect that he is under surveillance, Lea begins to see herself as only "one degree less vile" than the man who as a thief "has betrayed confidence…[and] broken the law" (Merrick 88). Far from embracing the power and authority that her profession gives her, unlike many other female detectives, Lea despises it. Even before she admits to herself that she loves Vane, her reactions to the profession intensify:

> Oh, why did I not starve with my self-respect before I became a spy! What is it to me he is a scoundrel, does his criminality lessen my degradation? Who was the author of the precept, There can be no friendship without respect? False every word of it! For if it is not friendship I have for this man what is it? why am I trembling at that horrid thought which crossed my mind? Why do I feel I would gladly take his guilt upon my shoulders, work for him, suffer for him, so that he, my friend, should be innocent and free? (Merrick 97)

And as Kestner notes, these doubts become Lea's "torments" once she acknowledges that she loves Vane:

> The notion crossed my mind that if he should,— should grow to like me before my errand had been completed, how much more vile he would hold me when the blow fell the thought was wonderful, it was so full of mixed emotions. To be hated by him would be torture, but— to be *loved* by him first! It seemed to me there would be joy enough in that to live upon in recollection through my future of suffering; besides I could always die! (Merrick 104)

It would be highly unlikely to see a passage like this in the texts written by Doyle or even of Fergus Hume. The conflict between the personal and the professional is never given the same consideration in Holmes's stories; his objectivity and detachment from the personal are part and parcel of his characterization. However, the conflict between the personal and professional becomes one of the hallmarks of the female detective in works that follow Merrick's intense narrative of detection.

While the detection of crime is fairly light in the novel, the narrative itself is bold, for "in her career of detection the result is to lead Miriam Lea to detect herself rather than the man she is tracking. His situation, finding out that the woman he loves is the detective tracking him for criminal activity, finally hits her with all its force: "Would not his punishment be greater if he were fond of the woman who had denounced him? If during those years of miserable atonement he should be deeming every sign of my affection false; be cursing that very utterance in one happy moment…as a trap to lead him to his ruin; greater? Yes, immeasurably more hard" (Merrick 104). She loathes herself and her existence (Merrick 110). Until she makes her

decision to rescue him, even if it implicates her in his guilt and makes her an accomplice: "I have no excuse to offer, I am committing an infamous action, and I am aware of it; I may even be amenable to the law; let them punish me, —they shall never have him! I have done with scruples and conscience, and I will shield him against them all; no information of mine—!" (Merrick 114-115). As their marriage approaches, the conflict becomes clearer— Lea describes Vane as "dearer than her honour" (Merrick 116) —and vindicates Merrick's decision to use the technique of the diary to tell Lea's story. As Kestner observes,

> With few other detectives— male or female— does a reader come into such close affiliation with the investigator. Very significantly, she rereads her diary, acknowledging that 'my very diary is gritty' (117), an admission that her soiled self has been disclosed. It is indisputable that this detection has become a problem of self knowledge: 'It is funny that renewing the acquaintance of one's old self, and yet it is melancholy' (117). (Kestner 38)

The diary allows readers to see directly into Lea's thoughts and torments as they happen, which stresses the present tense immediacy of these moments. It also allows the reader to engage with the narrator and her mind in the most intimate manner possible. Paradoxically, Lea's diary is a record of her activities and thoughts that she is supposed to keep secret and concealed, especially as she is undercover as a lady frequenting fashionable hotels that her prey is known to have patronized, or would patronize with the money he has forged. Concealment, not only in writing, but in facial expressions and in emotional distance becomes important. However, as the novel proves this detective has difficulty with at least two of these, and all three by the end of the story because of the moral complexities contained in the career choice.

What is interesting about Lea's decision to rescue her alleged criminal in spite of her professional duty is the assumption that she is a moral being to begin with. From the beginning, Miss Lea is living, most likely not by choice, in a "dreary boarding house" with dirty windows, with a view of "an equally dismal London street" (Merrick 5) because she "was a governess until

people discovered [she] had been an actress, and [she] was an actress till they discovered [she] could not act" (Merrick 6). She presumably does possess the skills of speaking French, German, and Italian, but as an actress, she has built a career on the ability to lie to the audience, although she does state that she was not a good actress. But how much can we really believe? She does presumably fool the people she comes into contact with during her travels, and she definitely fools James Vane.

While the storyline seems fairly conventional, a young woman of marrying age meets and falls for a young, attractive man, and agrees to marry him; ignoring the fact that she falls for an alleged criminal, Lea does present some conventional feminine traits. However, like many authors of female detective narratives, Merrick

> does not neglect to have her advance some proto-feminist insights about gender construction during the Victorian period. Miriam Lea alludes to an idea that over several generations a man's nature and disposition may alter. 'It has not taken three generations in this case, merely three months, perhaps because I am a woman' (44), Lea surmises. She then demonstrates that the diary format, involved as it is in presenting the undiluted self, is 'a monstrously egotistical production.' She follows this recognition with another: 'I wonder if I could have scribbled so much of any other kind of composition, — probably not' (44). For a narrator who wondered if she was procurable or marketable, this reflection adds another component to her transgressive behavior. The very record of the diary, which obviously is published, flags its own transgression. (Kestner 40)

As for the journey to South Africa, Lea begins with describing making the voyage as "Bravery!" but just as quickly realizes that "men write dictionaries" (Merrick 68-69) and would never ascribe what she is doing as brave, so she amends it to "endurance."

The nature of marriage, yet another issue over which critics tend to take female detective stories to task, and how it constructs a woman's identity also becomes a major issue toward the end of the novel. Once Lea accepts Vane's proposal, she realizes how strange the actual institution of marriage is itself:

Ours will be a curious marriage, as it has been a strange betrothal; we shall leave the

> hotel together and unaccompanied. What do we want of friends when each of us can bring sufficiency to the other? On the 21st, the anniversary of my birth, I commence a new existence dedicated to my husband, our hearts will hide their bitterness, but everything save two secrets that are pain we give and share. I do not dread the prospect: dread! Were my deserts as infinite as the bounty of Heaven it could vouchsafe no greater blessing than this which crowns a crime! (Merrick 118)

Breaking again with tradition, the narrator leaves for her marriage alone with just the bridegroom. But her next statement is what proves the narrator as completely startling and transgressive:

> I wish I had not said that; it sounds like a boast! It makes me tremble lest on the verge of fulfilment I should be reminded of it. What has Heaven to do with me— with us? To be its aid, would be a blasphemy; —I cannot see to write, I am crying. — Oh, how helpless is a woman deprived of the resource of prayer! (Merrick 118)

Miriam Lea is a woman; she is a detective; she "is sufficiently self-confident to resort to a diary; she is betrothed to a man she believes is guilty and— she does not believe in God" (Kestner 41). In the discussion of female detectives and authority, Miriam Lea in *Mr. Bazalgette's Agent* provides one of the most complex and multifaceted portrayals of womanhood, authority, detective work, morality, and language and silence.

Throughout the novel, Lea retains control both as a woman and as a detective over the situation with Vane as long as she believes him to be the "prey" she is hunting. As Kestner stresses,

> It is crucial in *Mr. Bazalgette's Agent* that Miriam Lea confronts issues and makes decisions before she learns that Vane is not Vining, that he is 'the wrong man' (122) (42). Lea's decisions to marry this man, assuming he is a criminal, do take place before she knows for sure that the real criminal has been caught. In many ways Vining is "the wrong man;" for example, one construction of his surname [Vane] is that he is a forecasting device of the future. Rather than the 'vining' expected of a wife, he will be a positive force in her future, permitting her to 'weather' the 'whether' of her existence. A 'vine' is what she does not have to become. To do so would constitute a betrayal of the self she has detected in the course of her detection. In this respect, she rejects Bazalgette as a guiding father figure: he brought her 'into the world,' but he will not determine her insertion into it. (Kestner 42)

Yet, Lea still faces the dilemma of telling her betrothed the truth about her suspicions and her surveillance, which she acknowledges "will deal the death blow to [her] own future; confession is equivalent to telling the man I love I am no longer fit to be his wife; I will not do this thing, I cannot, no woman could! Why should I not keep silence still? It would be a safe course" (Merrick 124). The concluding scenes of the novel revisit the issue of male versus female language. If men have made the language that people must use, as Miriam Lea has determined earlier, have women earned the right to use "strategic silence…as a mode of language and self-identity" (Kestner 43)? Does this silence allow Lea to retain at least some of her own identity, of her own secrets? In this narrative, Merrick achieved something rarely done before in the late 1880s. He created a character distinct and markedly different from Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes— an achievement in itself. However, Merrick realizes his achievement by making his detective a woman, by giving her an independent life, by abandoning the companion/narrator, by using the diary format, by granting his detective an erotic involvement, and most importantly, by constructing her as a woman unafraid to challenge patriarchy in all its forms, such as legal, religious, or moral.

While Leonard Merrick's novel may not be well known in many circles, perhaps because of her extreme challenges to established authorities, another female detective, published only four years previously, made her appearance to challenge authorities in her own ways. Catherine Louisa Pirkis' *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke: Lady Detective* became one of the most important female detectives of the late nineteenth century. The stories were presented in the *Ludgate Monthly* from February through July in 1893, and published as a collection the following year. As Michele Slung notes in her introduction to the Dover edition of the collection, Pirkis had published work before, but she and her husband had become increasingly

involved in social activism, particularly with the National Canine Defense League and the anti-vivisection movement; *Loveday Brooke* was her last book of fiction (Kestner 71).

Loveday Brooke, like many female detectives often goes under a different identity or disguise. In each of her cases she appears as someone's niece, an amanuensis, a nursery governess, an interior decorator, and in the last tale, as herself, a lady detective. Like her predecessor, Mrs. Paschal, Loveday Brooke

> gathers information by gaining confidence, or sometimes the indifference, of her prey. She adopts similar roles as her predecessor, but the characterization of lady detectives as a race apart is telling; like governesses, their class position is precarious, but for the lady detective this is an advantage rather than a personal and professional limitation. The female— or lady— detective's ability to pass as a member of the servant class provides her with access to secrets of the personal and domestic lives of her quarry; it also makes her virtually invisible, seemingly too inconsequential to be suspect or threatening. At the same time, her real identity— and higher class position— provides her with the confidence and authority to carry out her overt investigations, as well as the power to bring the guilty to justice. (Young 25-26)

Each of these identities allows her a certain level of access to the homes and inmates of those homes she is investigating, but they also allow her a certain level of respectability and authority. In each case, she increases her authority until she can at last appear as herself without a disguise, in which the true translation of her name is revealed. As Slung comments, "Loveday" is a translation of the Latin *dies amoris,* which "signifies a day set aside for the peaceful settling of disputes" ("Introduction" *Loveday Brooke* x). Not exactly the avenging angel role that many female detectives take on. Furthermore, Slung remarks that the name Loveday is a gender neutral name; it could apply to both men and women in the Middle Ages. So as a woman in a perceived "man's" field of occupation, Loveday Brooke blurs gender lines before readers even open the pages of her story. Pirkis deliberately plays with readers' expectations by providing a female detective with a name that could apply to either a man or a woman, and then applying the term "lady" to her main character; as Therie Hendrey-Seabrook notes, Loveday Brooke's name

> stands out as a semantically charged signal and alerts us immediately to an essential dualism in the character, preparing readers for the possibility of further dialectical complexity. The unusual first name— which resonates as very feminine—derives from the medieval custom of appointing a specific day to settle disputes and refers to the reconciliation reached on that day. Loveday, then, embodies a site of reconciliation, the impartial weighing-up of antagonistic elements— but what exactly does she reconcile?...she is a representative figure in whom the legal constraints on women can be played out and explored alongside the growing speculation about the justice of their taking up professional positions in society.
>
> Loveday's surname...may...remind us of George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* (1872)...Both experience the limitations placed on women but, a generation later, Loveday demonstrates the levels of independence, both intellectual and practical, that might possibly be achieved by the New Woman. (77-78)

Not only does Pirkis play with gendered notions, she plays with ideas of respectability with the term "lady," for those who as detectives may be "superior as a class, both in education and social standing" but they remain morally suspect "as to how far their duties are consistent or in conflict with a refined mind and social status" ("Women as Detectives" 507). Even Loveday Brooke realizes the social marginalization that female detectives face, labeling lady detectives much as Jane Eyre does governesses, "a race apart" (Pirkis 207). However, unlike the long-suffering governess, the female detective uses her dubious social status to her professional advantage, a potentially disruptive presence, much like male detectives, but lady detectives could exploit their femininity and apparent respectability to earn a living.

Loveday Brooke is employed by a private agency owned by Ebenezer Dyer, the "chief of the well-known detective agency in Lynch Court, Fleet Street" (Pirkis 1). Their relationship could be called spirited, at times contentious and antagonistic. As Kestner notes, "Pirkis introduces some additional connotations in his surname, which might be read as 'die-her' or 'dye-her,' the former suggesting potential oppression, the latter a compulsion to change the woman" (72). Yet, for the most part, Dyer seems to trust Brooke's judgment and allows her to follow the paths and clues mostly without much guidance from him. She may report to him on

the progress of her cases and he may send suggestions, but she for the most part does not take them. As for Mr. Dyer's potential oppression and attempts to change Brooke, that's all they will remain— potential.

Loveday Brooke is, as Slung observes, of the century's "odd women," so named in George Gissing's novel *The Odd Women* of 1893— "unmarried, self-sufficient, engaged in a profession, without attachments which might hinder or delay her work. In fact, Pirkis presents Loveday as not having any romantic interest in anyone. Even more striking is the fact that Loveday has no female friend or companion. She is completely self-defining and self-determining" (Kestner 72). Yet, we have seen this before in a slightly different form with Mrs. Paschal in *The Revelations of a Female Detective.* While Mrs. Paschal did at one time have a husband to "define" her role in society, she seems to cast off that part of her life and adopt a new way of defining herself as more of a detective than as a wife or a widow. Similarly to the other first female detective Mrs. G, Loveday Brooke is defined in an unusual way. While Mrs. G refuses to define herself at all with a series of "may-be's," Brooke is defined by a series of what she is not:

> Loveday Brook, at this period of her career, was a little over thirty years of age, and could be best described in a series of negations.
>
> She was not tall, she was not short; she was not dark, she was not fair; she was neither handsome nor ugly. Her features were altogether nondescript; her one noticeable trait was a habit she had when absorbed in thought, of dropping her eyelids over her eyes till only a line of eyeball showed, and she appeared to be looking out at the world through a slit, instead of a window.
>
> Her dress was invariably black, and was almost Quaker-like in its neat primness. (Pirkis 4)

Brooke's tendency to look at the world through slits in her eyes rather than windows allows her to take on the gaze without seeming to. Indeed, female detectives like Loveday Brooke with her legitimate police work and skills of observation offer a "corrective to the tendency toward

unilateral deployment of the categories of 'male gaze' and 'female spectacle'" (Miller 52). In fact, as a detective, it makes sense that Brooke's profession "underscores the poser of her gaze, despite her gender, and in this way Pirkis' stories register a larger shift at the end of the nineteenth century toward power through professionalism and specialized knowledge as opposed to power derived solely from social position" (Miller 52). And like many other female detectives, her fortunes turn and leave her with few options but to take on a career that society looks down upon:

> Some five or six years previously, by a jerk of Fortune's wheel, Loveday had been thrown upon the world penniless and all but friendless. Marketable accomplishments she had found she had none, so she had forthwith defied convention, and had chosen for herself a career that had cut her off sharply from her former associates and her position in society. For five or six years she drudged away patiently in the lower walks of her profession; then chance, or, to speak more precisely, an intricate criminal case, threw her in the way of the experienced head of the flourishing detective agency in Lynch Court. He quickly enough found out the stuff she was made of, and threw her in the way of better-class work-work, indeed, that brought increase of pay and of reputation alike to him and Loveday. (Pirkis 4-5)

As Arlene Young states, "She is no female Holmes ...there is nothing of the bohemian about her, nor does she solve crimes by unconventional means in defiance of police methods...She is, moreover, the perfect subordinate, achieving higher status and pay by working diligently and consequently bringing distinctly to her employer as well as to herself" (25).

And when questioned, her employer, Ebenezer Dyer is quick to defend her and her profession. In the defense, it seems Pirkis feels the need to confront the issue of the term "lady detective" as well as Brooke's unique qualifications, since in the previous passages, it seems as if Brooke does not give a particularly qualified picture:

> Ebenezer Dyer was not, as a rule, given to enthusiasm; but he would at times wax eloquent over Miss Brooke's qualifications for the profession she had chosen.
>
> "Too much of a lady, do you say?" he would say to anyone who chanced to call in question those qualifications. "I don't care twopence-halfpenny whether she is or is not a lady. I only know she is the most sensible and practical woman I ever met. In the first

> place, she has the faculty— so rare among women— of carrying out orders to the very letter: in the second place, she has a clear, shrewd brain, unhampered by any hard-and-fast theories; thirdly, and most important item of all, she has so much common sense that it amounts to genius. (Pirkis 5)

What is interesting in Dyer's description of Brooke's qualifications is his perception that she follows directions to the letter, yet as each of the stories unfold, Brooke proves over and over that this is untrue. And from the very beginning of the collection, Brooke's interactions with men frequently clash, particularly with her employer. Not long after he eloquently describes her particular "genius" for the work, during a briefing for a case, Loveday and Dyer come to one of the "occasions on which they were wont, so to speak, to snarl and each other" (Pirkis 5). Brooke refuses to get her "sailing orders" until she has all the facts of the case and that Dyer has all the facts of the case in front of them; it is at this point that Dyer is refusing to listen to Brooke's clear, shrewd brain that has identified an important clue in the case he is sending her to investigate. Dyer takes the clue as a hoax and dismisses it, but Brooke secretly investigates the clue while on the surface investigating the "little French maid and her various lovers" (Pirkis 8). Often during these discussions with her employer and with various policemen and detectives, Pirkis makes it a point to show Brooke in professional discussions, often correcting their assumptions of male superiority in reasoning. Loveday Brooke is not eccentric, nor is she exotic, but she is emphatic.

In the first case presented, "The Black Bag Left on a Door-step," Brooke undertakes an unsolved robbery which occurred at Craigen Court, the residence of Sir George and Lady Cathrow. The young French maid, Stephanie Delcroix, is suspected of the robbery, and unlike Loveday, the maid is said to go from one fit of hysterics into another (Pirkis 16). In the end, a man named Harry Emmett is found guilty of the robbery, after disguising himself as a curate in order to enter the house. The black bag of the title refers to his leaving his disguise at the door of

a spinster lady as a prank.

As Brooke arrives in Huxwell to investigate, she meets a detective from Scotland Yard, Jeremiah Bates, who tells her exactly how they can solve the case, with him "unearthing about" outside and she working "inside the castle walls" (Pirkis 10). Bates believes that because the young French maid is attractive and had a number of lovers, that she opened the window and unlocked the safe to enable one of them to rob her mistress. A likely scenario, but also a highly male gender-biased commentary on what little evidence he has produced. The housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, also subscribes to male superiority doctrines. When Brooke wishes to see a room in the home, the housekeeper cuts her off by stating that the "gentlemen detectives…spent over an hour in this room; they paced the floor, they measured the candles, they—" (Pirkis 17). Yet, Brooke insists, changing her attitude from "gossiping friendliness to that of the business woman hard at work at her profession" (Pirkis 17).

Brooke has to confront the overzealous Bates once more in this case. His deductions have led him to believe that the French maid and her accomplice will be captured at the train station, bragging that his mind is relieved of all anxiety (Pirkis 20). And yet, her intuition is more correct, noticing the stream that runs through the wood, which is exactly where the young woman is found nearly drowned by the man who loves her, the young farmer, Holt. The real culprit of the robbery Brooke will not let Bates pass on his incorrectness. By doing actual police work and discovering that Harry Emmett had been a footman in the neighborhood of the robbery and that he also had a penchant for performing recitations of poems and plays, and by connecting the curate's disguise left in the black bag to Emmett, Loveday Brook solves the case and brings in Dyer for the arrest. Brooke's methodology is a chain of reasoning, "step by step in her usual methodical manner," (Pirkis 26) yet it is her calm, self-assurance, and ability to read evidence

and clues in spite of male interference that allows Brooke to successfully close her cases.

The second case, “The Murder at Troyte's Hill,” begins with Brooke's employer debriefing her on the case: “Griffiths of the Newcastle Constabulary, has the case in hand...those Newcastle men are keen-witted, shrewd fellows, and very jealous of outside interference. They only sent to me under protest, as it were, because they wanted your sharp wits at work inside the house” (Pirkis 33). Dyer's statement is a typical issue that confronts many female detectives—conflicts with “territorial male officers and the ever-present pressure to keep her detective work ‘inside the house’” (Miller 47).

It is this “race apart” characterization that allows certain female detectives to be effective in their work. Yet like the lady detective, the middle class woman who wanted to work also had to undermine her social status. But the lady detective represented by Loveday Brooke and her predecessor Mrs. Paschal, takes the idea of the working woman to extremes, for “she is defined solely by her job, existing entirely outside the domestic sphere” (Young 27). We never see her in her home, nor with relatives or family members. In a way, the character we see on the page is a mask, an “inconspicuous persona and an unobtrusive manner of conducting her investigations, a radical version of female independence” (Young 27). She is in disguise; “Unlike the straightforward masquerades of male investigators, the women resemble Shakespeare's boy actors playing roles of women who disguise themselves as young men— double deceptions. The woman employed as a professional detective is already in disguise, for she is playing a part different from the particular one established for her by society” (Klein 69). Yet, Pirkis ends her collection with the strongest possible assertion of not only the detective's professionalism and independence, but a woman's as well. Through Brooke's frank discussions of the profession with her employer and local detectives, Pirkis reveals that she and her detective are both unafraid to

assume their place as indisputable equals among them, and the lack of a “romantic” ending, leaving Brooke one of the “odd women,” makes Pirkis one of the most forward-thinking of writers about the female detective and about late-Victorian culture.

While Pirkis’s “odd woman” was taking her place in the independent race apart from the majority of Victorian culture, Wilkie Collins was also busy creating female characters that defy the mores and values of Victorian society, such as the sensationally drawn villain/seductress/victim Miss Gwilt from *Armadale*. Drawing from the Gothic and Sensation fiction that had made him famous during the 1860s, Wilkie Collins turned to detective fiction, first creating one of the earliest examples of a detective novel *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. While *The Woman in White* does feature a woman in the role of investigator, she is only in part the one who brings about the conclusion. Collins’s 1875 novel *The Law and the Lady*, however, does feature a woman in the major role of a detective in more ways than one. Collins's novels tend to explore the themes of disorientation and identity anxiety during revelatory experiences that coincide with the nature of the detection process. For the characters in *The Law and the Lady*, the mysteries of self-knowledge, “the mysteries which are at our own doors” (James 594) become the stimuli to use detection to examine, control, and understand the world. However, the detection process is based upon gender as many critics have noted. And there is “in a sense in which the male detective works to contain crime and preserve the status quo, whereas the female detective effectively disrupts convention” (Beller 50).

The detective genre is often perceived to be a conservative genre, “which imposes order on chaos by solving, and thus eradicating, crime and ultimately offering a rational explanation for the world and its supposed mysteries” (Beller 50). In novels by Collins, the “containment or expulsion of crime” leads to the containment and expulsion of the threat of disruption to

dominant values. However, this remains mostly true for the male characters of Collins's novels; for the female characters who undertake detection, the goal is to disrupt the current status quo, the current situation, usually for the benefit of someone she loves. Often a female detective will disturb the traditions of traditional gender roles, "demanding change and insisting on her equal right to knowledge and participation. As Chris Willis has suggested: 'The Victorian detective-heroine presents an anomaly: as a detective she works to uphold the existing social framework, but as an assertive woman she threatens it. Whether amateur or professional, she steps out of the home to invade the strictly male domain of the law' (1)" (Beller 55). In *The Law and the Lady*, Collins returns to his "interest in women who refused to conform to the Victorian stereotype of docility and passivity" (Dupeyron-Lafay 142). Valeria does seem to be the Victorian ideal, the Angel in the house, yet she also displays characteristics that define the best of what makes a female detective— capability, determination, rationality, intelligence, and intuition. Collins re-envisions the heroines of the Sensation genre by exploring the intersection of the independent, intelligent New Woman figure, safely "ensconced...within the confines of wifely duty" (Harrington 20).

When Valeria Brinton (the narrator and protagonist) marries Eustace Woodville, she soon realizes that her husband has married her under an assumed name because of a shameful episode in his past: the mysterious death by poisoning of his first wife Sara, and the subsequent trial, and verdict. The verdict, not a straightforward guilty or not-guilty, as in an English or American court, is given as the Scottish verdict of "Not Proven," which leaves a taint upon his name and honor. In order to save her marriage and to prove her husband's innocence, which she is blindly and staunchly convinced of, she decides to launch her own inquiry in defiance of the law and her husband's forbiddance. In consequence of her persistence, Valeria temporarily loses her husband

when he runs away from her and refuses to correspond with her while she continues to investigate. Yet, Valeria's belief in her husband's innocence, with no real proof sustains her as she “patiently gathers clues, and resorts to persons likely to help her, such as Eustace's mother, and two male friends of her husband's: Major Fitz-David, and Miserrimus Dexter whose friendship actually turns out to be of a very dubious nature. Indeed, she initially uses rational methods of investigation (observation, induction, piecing together scattered elements, etc.) and restores the causal chain single-handedly until chapter xxi” (Dupeyron-Lafay 142). And though for a time, Dexter’s Gothic madness takes the stage, it is not long until Valeria’s rationality returns for the final chapters. And as Françoise Dupeyron-Lafay states, in Collins’s works, the law cannot function without the Gothic, for it is the Gothic that allows Valeria to piece together the motive behind the mysterious death for which her husband was blamed.

However, more importantly Valeria not only enacts the role of the detective, but the appellate lawyer as well, “using her critical reading skills to examine trial documents and construct a compelling case for the overturning of the Not Proven verdict that has shadowed her husband‘s existence” (Siemann 1). As a short glance of the highlights of the novel reveal, Valeria’s reasons for her investigation always remain with clearing her husband of suspicion and for their happy ending. Valeria's legal work remains unofficial because Britain's legal profession was not open to women until the Twentieth Century, much like detective work. This little fact, however, does not stop her from working with her husband's trial counsel, and “effectively reopening the case, finding suitable grounds for appeal and constructing a new narrative, the equivalent of an appellate brief, to replace the story set forth in his initial trial, and shifts the jury's verdict of Not Proven to an unofficial but very clear Not Guilty...effectively outmaneuvering the original trial attorneys, seeing through their legal storytelling to construct a

new narrative which supersedes the old" (Siemann 1).

Valeria insists upon withholding one piece of evidence from her husband— his first wife's suicide note that had been hidden— until after their child is born, knowing that it might drive him to despair, but also clear his name of murder. What is interesting about Valeria's insistence upon investigating her husband's past life is not that he lied to her and she wants to know, which is understandable, but it is the enthusiasm she brings to the undertaking. As Catherine Siemann notes, "Eustace's final acknowledgement of her efforts, by respecting her judgment with regard to Sara's letter, demonstrates a substantial shift in their relationship. His knowledge of and respect for her has grown in proportion to the good sense and determination she has shown in her role as appellate attorney" (2).

Like female detectives who were known as the petticoated police, Valeria is also looked down upon as a "lawyer in petticoats" (Collins 121), but does not let that slow her down. She begins as any good detective or lawyer would— by doing research to clarify the terms at hand, and to read the trial transcripts, to know the major witnesses and parties involved. Valeria's reaction to the definition of the Scotch verdict is to set it up as an independent entity, an enemy to oppose, "something more concrete than the abstraction of the legal system as a whole, and thus something manageable to her as an outsider seeking to engage in legal practice" (Siemann 2). While Eustace and his mother repeatedly state that they are resigned to the Scotch Verdict and just want to continue with their lives, Valeria refuses to give in, believing with all her heart that her husband is innocent, which if she is to be effective as a detective and lawyer, she must overcome to get at the real truth of the story. As Peter Brooks notes, "The law is all about competing stories" (16), and Valeria must enter that competition and sort through the existing stories to create one of her own.

Unlike the female detectives we have seen so far, Valeria has a tendency to diminish herself as her quest continues, even as she defies social norms in her engagement with the law. She calls herself "only a woman" (Collins 21, 63, 280) and "only an ignorant woman" (Collins 249), with as Siemann states, "tedious frequency" (5), all the while accomplishing what every man and trained lawyer in *The Law and the Lady* has failed to do. Perhaps, as in the case of many female detectives, Valeria must "self-abnegate" in order to lessen her transgressive behaviors and rebellions. As Siemann relates, "In suggesting her own powerlessness, Valeria is suggesting that others should not be threatened by her. At the same time, by insinuating herself into the public sphere, she makes herself powerful, and hence the preemptive defense begins to make sense" (5).

Furthermore, Collins makes use, like several authors of detective fiction who would follow him, of Valeria's stereotypically feminine qualities, such as her curiosity,

> which would be seen as disabling a woman from functioning in a male-dominated world, here these same personality attributes strengthen her legal and investigative work. Eustace sees Valeria's curiosity as a negative quality, bound to impede their happiness (Collins 54), and she refers to it as a female phenomenon (72), but surely curiosity is an attribute of the utmost importance to both the investigator and the appellate lawyer...Women are seen as illogical, but therefore, says Valeria, 'I alone refuse to despair; I alone refuse to listen to reason" (241) and accordingly, she alone continues her investigation and appeal when others have found it unreasonable to persevere. Jenny Bourne Taylor suggests that Valeria's logic is not absent, but differently gendered. 'She does not, like her male counterparts, depend on rational induction or scientific evidence, but is more likely to follow a different kind of logic, to act impulsively, to pursue random associations, to move in a dream- or trance-like state' (xvii). But Valeria repeatedly shows that she is supremely rational, as well as intuitive. She investigates and frames her appellate claim with a mixture of logic and inspiration, which in combination proves highly effective. (Siemann 6)

Not only does Valeria combine these qualities, but later female detectives use a mixture of inspiration, intuition, and logic to reach conclusions in their cases. While male detectives tend to dismiss the importance of intuition, they still use it, but they call it by a different name, such as

following their gut or having a hunch. However, intuition rarely makes an appearance in the detective fiction the feature men as the detective protagonist.

In the text, "being a woman implies having a particularly tenacious sort of strength" (Siemann 6). As Valeria herself states, "A man in her place would have lost all patience, and would have given up the struggle in disgust. Being a woman, and having my end in view, my resolution was invincible" (Collins 65). It is Valeria's devotion to her family and her feminine qualities that form her resolution to follow her investigation to the end. Not only this, but Valeria discovers she is pregnant midway through the novel, adding another level of importance to clearing her husband's name, because her child will carry the stigma of her husband's supposed crime. Instead of making Valeria vulnerable, the pregnancy serves as a direct source of strength. Late in the novel, Valeria turns over the case to her husband's lawyers to find the one missing piece of evidence left to find— Sara Macallan's suicide letter. Much like Valeria at the beginning of the case, digging through documents and evidence, the two lawyers must literally dig for evidence through the rubbish of the years and reconstruct a legible narrative.

Like female detectives of the 1800s there were very few real life models on which to base this type of professional character. In England, legal professions were forbidden to women until the twentieth century, but in the United States, there were real, if unusual opportunities for women to practice law as early as 1869.[11] Not to mention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had been working and debating legal matters in her father's law office for many years, long before the first woman was admitted to the bar.[12] Many arguments that prevented women from working as

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[11] For More information on women as lawyers in the United States during the Nineteenth Century, see Catherine Siemann's article "Appellate Lawyers in Petticoats: Access to Justice in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*. *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies* 8:2 (Summer 2012). Web.

[12] For more information on Stanton's life leading up to the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, see Judith Wellman's book *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and*

lawyers echo Eustace Macallan's protests against his wife's involvement in his own defense: "Think of those pure eyes looking at a man who has been accused (and never wholly absolved) of the foulest and vilest of all murders, and then think of what that man must feel if he has any heart and sense and shame left in him" (Collins 223), desiring that Valeria keep her natural "timidity and delicacy" away from the law (*Bradwell v. State of Illinois* 141). Yet, Valeria's reading of the trial report only affect her by increasing her devotion to and desire to help her husband.

Eustace clearly underestimates his wife's abilities and strength and a willful misunderstanding of her nature as a person and as a woman: "Does she still meditate that hopeless project— the offspring, poor angel, of her artless, unthinking generosity? Does she still fancy that it is in *her* power to assert my innocence before the world?" (Collins 224). Indeed, she does fancy it in her power. Eustace's mother may disapprove of her choice, but she also sees that Valeria is no fool and is determined to carry out her plans.

Not only is Valeria no fool, she is not artless and she is definitely not unthinking. Valeria is able to manipulate the notion of separate spheres in order to get the information and help that she needs. As Siemann explains,

> She approaches the men in the novel in a way that another man could not, freely admitting her helplessness and openly seeking assistance. she uses her feminine wiles to appeal to the susceptible Major Fitz-David, subjecting herself to the 'odious deceit' of 'paints and powders' which give her 'skin...a false fairness...[her] cheeks a false colour, [her] eyes a false brightness' (57) and is admitted into his presence solely because his servant finds her to be 'better than pretty' (59). The Major asks, 'What have beauty and grace to do with Trials, Poisonings, Horrors? Why, my charming friend, profane your lips by talking of such things?' (189). And yet he ends up providing Valeria with significant aid, making the published trial transcripts available to her, which enables her to begin the appeal process, and, subsequently, providing the opportunity for Valeria to make further direct inquiries regarding Helena Beauly. (8)

Similarly, Eustace's lawyer is reluctant to aid her, remarking, "I suppose it is unreasonable that a

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the First Women's Rights Convention. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004. Print.

young woman like you should share any opinion with an old lawyer like me" (283-284), distinctly defining her by gender and himself by profession. Valeria has taken the precaution of approaching him alone, observing that "in nine cases out of ten, a man will make concessions to a woman, if she approaches him by herself, which he would hesitate even to consider, if another man was within hearing" (271). But are these just roles they are playing, particularly Valeria? Other than the role she plays to elicit information from Major Fitz-David, Valeria seems to enjoy the role as a "lawyer in petticoats," investigating, reconstructing an incomplete narrative with one more definite and complete, with solid, convincing evidence. These roles that Valeria enjoys playing could possibly be a part of what Kathleen Gregory Klein argues is "a product of the social climate in which women can envision freeing themselves 'from rigid and limiting social structures'" (56). Indeed, Valeria's enthusiasm when she finds a link to the truth is catching and Collins goes to great lengths to make his protagonist intelligent and engaging. And as Ellen Burton Harrington states,

> Collins interrupts the discourse that links rationality and detection to the masculine, showing the suitability of the genre to wider realm of gendered discourse...The novel tries to mediate the apparent contradiction in the woman-detective figure through Valeria, who...incorporates intellectual and reasoning ability alongside her more exaggerated feminine traits and thus presents a determined detective cloaked in the garb of the domestic angel, a theme consistent with the repeated images of masquerade in the novel. (21)

Valeria's refusal to submissively accept her husband's secret, exposes his terms of remaining together as unacceptable: accept them and he will come home; investigate and he will remain away from her. According to Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan, the formula for Valeria's story influences later writers:

> Among the twenty or so women detectives who followed Valeria between 1875 and 1919, there is a large sprinkling of ladies who became investigators solely because they wished to redeem the reputations of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or fiancés. In the eyes of their readers this steadfast support for wronged male relatives made their

> incursions into non-domestic and possibly dubious male preserves respectable—especially if the women in question acted as unpaid enthusiasts rather than career detectives (fees and femininity did not go together in polite society). (21)

Further allowing readers to identify with these detective heroines, moral women acting necessarily defiant with a worthy purpose in mind. The mask, or masquerade, that Valeria enjoys putting on "creates a necessary space for women, providing protection from masculine mastery and allowing women to gaze" (Jacobson 305).

While the results are unofficial, at least in terms of the courts, and the Scotch verdict stands, the only resolution that matters is that the closest family and friends know of his innocence. She plays by the system's rules, sort of, taking another role denied to women and exercising her intellect and intuition, much like the female detectives who were barred from working as detectives until the twentieth century, triumphing over the doubt, the obstacles, and even the law that would prevent her from obtaining the truth and re-establishing her own domestic sphere because only the heroine can act for herself. And although Valeria fails to break away from traditional gender roles, by the end of the novel, she is more assertive in her marriage, taking the dominant role, even while Collins capitalizes on Eustace's weakness and femininity. In contrast to the opening of the novel, which begins with a reference to Sarah's obedience to Abraham, the novel ends with no punishment for Valeria's "Eve-like" disobedience and curiosity. In fact, she is rewarded for it with the dominant, "masculine" role in the renewed marriage bond.

In one of the more odd and significant texts published in the mid-1890s, Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's *When the Sea Gives Up Its Dead* (1894) features a similar storyline to *The Law and the Lady*. The narrative concentrates on the protagonist, an amateur sleuth named Annie Cory, and her fiancé's alleged theft of diamonds from the firm where he has been the

manager for eight years. The case is solved early through Annie Cory's detection; the real culprit is Hugh Stavenger, the son of one of the owners, who stole the diamonds to pay off his debts. Yet, Cory's fiancé is convicted and sentenced to five years' penal servitude. Only five years earlier, Corbett had published a novel in which she imagines what the Victorian world would look like if it were run by women. In this novel, women "eradicate disease, extend life-spans, improve prosperity and showcase women's ability to take part in public life" (Lake 65). While most of Corbett's other work seems to be taken more seriously as distinctly about the position of women in society, *When the Sea Gives Up Its Dead* presents multiple issues dealing with women, their roles in society, the moral ambiguity of detection, the threat of spying servants, and even cross-dressing. Even Corbett admitted in a letter to the *Women's Penny Paper*:

> I have seldom written anything in which I have not taken the opportunity of airing some of my views...
> A weekly perusal of the *Women's Penny Paper* has shown me that others are brave enough to denounce existing evils, and has encouraged me in my determination to write unflinchingly, in at least one book, about many things that have often roused my indignation. (Corbett "Letter" 66)

Clearly, not only theft and false imprisonment were part of those existing evils, but also doing nothing to denounce those evils would be to allow them to win, to continue to exist. It takes only the mere suggestion of sending a "principal lady detective" from a private detective agency into the home of the Stavangers to gather information to spur Annie Cory into action: "Not another word, I will turn detective, and beard these lions in their own den" (Corbett 16-17). The enterprise becomes a family affair, and instead of embarking alone as most female detectives find themselves, Annie Cory has plenty of backup; her father finds himself nominated as an amateur detective, "liable to be called upon for active service at any time" (Corbett 17). And while she receives assistance at times from her father and her fiancé's twin brother, Annie

eventually strikes out on her own as a detective, stressing that Annie is not like every other Angel in the house. Annie, instead of “moping at home and giving way to melancholy, was bent upon yielding efficient help as a lady detective” (Corbett 17). Cory’s aunt, Margaret Cory, also gives her some advice that emphasizes the moral ambiguities of taking on the role of detective: “when one takes up detective work, one has not to be too squeamish about ways and means” (Corbett 17). This warning, nor the potential ways and means, do not bother Cory, since she knows her cause is just.

Cory’s way into the house is as a governess to the Stavengers’ twelve-year-old daughter, which gives Cory opportunities to listen and observe her quarry. It does not take long for Cory to gather the intelligence she needs; she conceals herself behind the window draperies and overhears an interview between David Stavenger and his son Hugh. During the course of the interview she learns that Hugh stole the diamonds, but the parlour-maid Wear saw the stones and is blackmailing the family. Believing that Hugh will escape by sea, Annie convinces her fiancé’s brother to sign on board the ship as a crew member, regardless of his inaptitude for sea duties. As Kestner notes,

> there are two elements of significance in this early discovery of the guilty party: ‘First, the fact that the son is the thief demonstrates that there can be no separation of public from private morality; crime in the figure of the son has invaded the middle class home. Second, that Corbett reveals the true criminal so early in the text (Chapter 3) discloses that its real purpose is not to name the scoundrel but to detail the operations of its female detective.’ (85)

While Annie does take her aunt's dictum about scruples and the need to be daring in her detective work to heart, she still feels the impact of “playing the eavesdropper” (Corbett 26). While Corbett endorses Annie’s activities in the pursuit of justice, the parallels between “Annie Cory as the spying detective governess and Wear the blackmailing parlour-maid are unmistakable” (Kestner 86).

The issues of masks and masquerades, disguise and transvestite costume come into play more often in this novel than any other from this period. On board the ship Hilton Riddell is caught removing his disguise and is (supposedly) murdered for it. Annie and her father pursue Stavenger to Malta under assumed names and soon after, Annie resorts to disguising herself as a young man in order to follow him after their initial pursuit is foiled: "We must disguise ourselves effectually" she advises her father, "we have a great stake to play for, and we intend to win" (Corbett 111). The result of this conversation led to a

> complete change in appearance of both of them, and those who could recognize Mr. Cory or his daughter in the elderly clergyman who was supposed to be the tutor and travelling [sic] guide of the rather delicate-looking young Englishman who accompanied him would have to be extremely wide-awake. There was not cessation of watchfulness on the part of the so-called Rev. Alexander Bootle and Mr. Ernest Fraser. (Corbett 112)

Cory finds a new sense of daring and confidence in male attire:

> As time wore on, she became more brave, nay positively daring, and showed such skill in safely following up clues that her father no longer felt any uneasiness about her...She had retained her masculine clothing, without which it would not have been so easy for her to penetrate unobserved into all sorts of places. (Corbett 121)

Much like Irene Adler in Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia," the transgression of gendered borders empowers Annie, indicating that gender is merely a performance, a mask that one puts on to satisfy society. In fact, Annie is not even the first woman to don male clothing in the novel. Her father's sister and her aunt, Margaret Cory wears some of her brother's clothing in order to go to the docks to find the ship *Merry Maid*, on which Hugh Stavenger intends to sail. As Margaret explains:

> Women, at least respectable women, don't hang about the dock gates at night unless they are on the look out for some particular ship. I am not one to stick at trifles, but I did not want to be mistaken for somebody who wasn't respectable, and I did want to be as unnoticed as possible. So I just got dressed in one of your suits, put my hair out of the way — there isn't much of it— donned a long top-coat and took an old hat, and set off for Milwall. I took the Underground, and changed at Mark Lane. At Fenchurch Street I just caught a train starting for the docks. (Corbett 42)

Corbett strengthens this element of her narrative by indicating that Annie's assumption of male clothing influences not only her appearance but her responses and attitude. When Annie asks one of the investigating detectives, John Gay (the detective who had arrested her fiancé) a dangerous question, the narrator observes that Annie's "assumption of masculine garb made it more imperative upon her to keep her composure than would have been the case had she been figuring simply as Annie Cory" (Corbett 130). Annie's "pluck" and determination win admiration from other detectives, and even John Gay acknowledges that Cory does not conform to typical gendered expectations:

> She is game to the core…and if anybody can help the poor fellow [Harley Riddell] in gaol, it is his sweetheart, who, it seems to me, cannot be daunted. She is one in a million. Most girls would have sat down and fretted, instead of trying to remedy the evil. Well, good luck to her, say I. If a girl like that doesn't deserve to succeed, nobody does. (Corbett 132)

While Corbett's narrative focuses on the implications of the female detective's disguises and the confidence that they can impart, she also emphasizes the danger that a disguise can bring to the detective if she is incautious. Yet, what remains by the end of the novel is the depiction of a woman who assumes powers that she did not imagine she possessed in order to save her lover from an unjust sentence. In the beginning, Annie Cory is joined in her detection by her father and her fiancé's brother. But once she adopts the disguise of the woman painter Una Stratton, she is on her own, exhibiting a "daring, intelligence, and skill which delineate a breaking away from patriarchal systems of control" (Kestner 93), like so many of the fictional female detectives and the women of the nineteenth century who wanted the same opportunities to show exactly just what they could do.

For the next three years, there is a conspicuous gap in fictional narratives that feature female detectives. There are, however, some explanations for this brief hiatus. According to

Joseph Kestner, the temporary disappearance of Sherlock Holmes is to blame for the temporary absence of his “sisters”:

> It took writers a year of two after 1894 to absorb the consequences of Doyle’s decision to have Holmes supposedly die at the Falls. In effect, the putative death of Holmes opened the way for writers to advance the female and male detectives in fiction. In March 1894, the *Strand* published the first of Arthur Morrison’s tales involving the detective Martin Hewitt…By 1897, there was a genuine possibility for the reappearance of the female detective when George R. Sims published *Dorcas Dene, Detective*. (94)

Historical events and changes also took public attention away from detective stories. For example, Oscar Wilde’s two sodomy trials took place in 1895 and aroused intense public interest. Francis Galton’s *Fingerprint Directories* was published that same year and indicated new advances in forensic detection. Furthermore, in 1897, the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies was formed, which reinforced an emerging movement for women’s independence during the last few years of the nineteenth century.

Not only did Holmes’s disappearance allow for advances in new detectives, but modifications were made to the tradition of the Holmes tales in narratives about female detectives; for example, some authors chose to include an admiring narrator or observer to record the activities and adventures of the female detective. However, in many of these modifications, the narrator is often a male observer, often complicating the issues of the gaze and voice that female narrated tales attempt to correct.

George R. Sims’s collection of stories *Dorcas Dene, Detective* is one of the first collections to be published after the brief hiatus. During his lifetime Sims was a prolific writer, a journalist, novelist, dramatist, reporter, and fiction writer, important for “exposing social evils of the late nineteenth century, among them child abuse, slum conditions and urban blight,” as well as false imprisonment (Kestner 96). The eleven stories that feature Dorcas Dene encompass only five cases, but these five cases cover interesting territory: bigamy, jewelry theft, attempted

murder, false indictments, and murder.

The stories are recounted by the dramatist Mr. Saxon, who knew Dorcas Dene as Dorcas Lester, when she was an aspiring actress. The first story, "The Council of Four," establishes Dorcas Dene's uniqueness. As Saxon remembers, Dorcas was a "young and handsome woman" (Sims 1). Dorcas was with the acting troupe for only half the run of a play, when Mr. Saxon records that he "understood that she had married and quitted the profession" (Sims 2). However, after a time span of about eight years, Mr. Saxon unexpectedly recognizes Dorcas as she is leaving the office of a well-known solicitor. His friend is only too happy to brag that "That, my dear fellow, is Dorcas Dene, the famous lady detective…with our profession and with the police, she has a great reputation" (Sims 2). Like most female detectives after the first official collections, Dorcas Dene has no official position with the Criminal Investigation Division of Scotland Yard; instead, she works "entirely on her own account" (Sims 3).

Dorcas Dene, like her predecessor Loveday Brooke, is eminently qualified to be a detective; her background as an actress, particularly with mimicry gives her an edge. And like many of her "sisters" Dene is a respectably domestic heroine, at first refusing the job offer, shocked that her friend would want her to "watch people" (Sims 10). It is this reaction that allows Sims to transform a potentially radical character into an acceptable domestic angel, which as Carla Kungl argues, authors of female detective narratives must do: "when seeking to establish professional authority for their female detectives… [authors] relied primarily upon socially accepted traits as a means of incorporating women into male-dominated spheres, regardless of their own beliefs about those traits" (81).

Dene's story is "dipped rather deeply in sentiment," as Leroy Panek remarks, revolving around the death of her poor artist father, and the blindness of her artist husband, which compels

her to find a means of earning a living. Her first instinct was to go back to what she knows— the stage— yet, a neighbor a retired superintendent of police who had become a private investigator offers her a job. At first, she is shocked and resists; but this neighbor, Johnson, reassures her:

> I have too much respect for you and your husband to offer you anything that you need be afraid of accepting. I want you to help me to rescue an unhappy man who is being so brutally blackmailed that he has run away from his broken-hearted wife and his sorrowing children. That is surely a business transaction in which an angel could engage without soiling its wings. (Sims 10-11)

What is interesting about Dene's acceptance of the job is that she does not tell her husband at first, not exactly the obedient wife conservative readers might expect. She first must find out how *she* feels about the job before she tells him anything of it:

> I accepted — on one condition. I was to see how I got on before Paul was told anything about it. If I found that being a lady detective was repugnant to me — if I found that it involved any sacrifice of my womanly instincts—I should resign, and my husband would never know I had done anything of the sort…That was how I first became a lady detective. I found that the work interested me. (Sims 11)

Sims works overtime to present Dorcas Dene as a maternal figure, taking a job to care for her family, even referring to her husband as "my poor boy" (Sims 8), taking care to present her work as anything but radical, and even negotiating her professionalism by consulting "in all business matters" with Paul Dene and her mother, "a plain, straightforward, matter-of-fact" woman (Sims 17) and solving cases from the comfort of her living room, with her dog Toddlekins curled up at his master's feet (Sims 16). Implicit in Paul Dene's remarks about the "Council" Dorcas and the family make up is that she needs the corrective of a straightforward approach.

Yet, it is possible, that Dorcas is only humoring her husband and her mother. There are other moments where it is clear that Dorcas can undoubtedly handle herself and her cases without help that it seems the council is more for her husband's benefit than her own, which would consequently de-radicalize Dene for some of the more difficult decisions she makes.

Dene's mother does say that Johnson's stories "made her nervous" and that she soon began to "believe that every man and woman she met had a guilty secret" (Sims 8-9). Indeed, as in the situation with the Stavengers in *When the Sea Gives Up Its Dead*, it is possible that every man and woman does have a guilty secret and, as several critics have noted, the appearance of a detective "causes one to wonder if everyone is potentially criminal. Furthermore, there is a strong suspicion that the entire culture is permeated by concealed criminality and guilt, that morality is a veneer" (Kestner 97). When Dorcas asks Saxon to assist her in getting backstage to get close to a person of interest in a case, he observes, "Not even in the days of my youthful romance had I waited so eagerly for the hour and the lady, as I waited for eight o'clock and Dorcas Dene" (Sims 19).

Dene's first case involves the disappearance of the son of Lady Helsham, whom his mother believes is on the verge of suicide. The son is in love with an actress, Nella Dalroy, while his mother wishes him to marry her ward, which he refuses to do: "His lordship informed his mother that the idea was entirely repugnant to him" (Sims 26). The news of his potential suicide seems a shade too relieving to the mother, and Dene suspects that there is some damaging secret that is disturbing the mother and son, which Della Dalroy confirms; a visit to the theatre where she works allows Dene to see letters in which Lord Helsham states, "a terrible discovery" made it impossible to marry her (Sims 32), which confirms Dene's suspicions about the terrible secret.

Dene confronts Lady Helsham's sister in Scotland and learns that this sister had had a son at the same time Lady Helsham had had a daughter. To secure the title and estates, the two sisters switched children. As Dene describes the confrontation:

> Had [Lady Helsham] confessed that her child was a girl she would have had to give up everything— except her allowance under the will— to her husband's brother… The

> sisters had by that time agreed on the fraud… Lady Helsham had, it seems, in her rage at her supposed son's refusal to marry her real daughter, whom she loved and desired to benefit, involuntarily revealed her secret, threatening the young fellow with the loss of everything if he refused… Thereupon he quitted the house, but he feared to tell the truth, because he would be giving up his own mother to a long term of penal servitude. (Sims 36-37)

Although the "son" had "unwittingly dispossessed another of the title and estates" (Sims 35), he felt the guilt that his mother should have felt. Dene helps arrange a false suicide and the disappearance of the young man, and the real Lord Helsham settles an income on him and allows him to emigrate to America with Nella Dalroy. Lady Helsham leaves England to live abroad.

Although Sherlock Holmes sometimes did let criminals go without having to face the justice system, often they had faced punishment enough through their experiences. In this case, however, Dorcas Dene conspires in the entire concealment of Lady Helsham's and her sister's guilt. It is she who decides what is "the best to be done to avoid scandal" (Sims 34):

> No good purpose would have been served by prosecuting the two women. The new Lord Helsham insisted on a written confession from all concerned, which he retains for his own protection. As I was employed by one of the guilty parties, it would have been unprofessional of me to give them to justice. (Sims 38)

Although Saxon realizes that under the arrangement "the new Lord Helsham is compounding a felony" (Sims 38), Dene seems unconcerned, shrugging her shoulders and replying, "My dear Mr. Saxon…if everybody did the legal thing and the wise thing, there would be very little work left for a lady detective" (Sims 39).

While some critics seem intent on classifying Dorcas Dene as so adverse to detective work as to take on only sentimental, and therefore feminine, cases that take her away from her true calling as a housewife, Sims's interesting placement of this particular case as his introduction to his heroine is telling of how we are to read her. This is a complex case; "Dorcas Dene conceals the fraud and guilt of a titled woman, endorsing the real Lord Helsham's solution

which does constitute the compounding of a felony" (Kestner 99). Dene's complacency in this plan hardly reflects the angel that could not soil its wings when she first begins. Sims includes several of Saxon's observations that attempt to reinforce Dorcas's femininity that contrast with her complicity in the fraud, yet Dorcas's own ability at impersonation suggests her own sympathy or affinity with Lady Helsham's deceptive strategies. Yet, Saxon's awareness of her participation in the scheme becomes the reader's awareness. If he wished, he could have concealed his final conversation with Dorcas about the case, or even exposed her plan to the police.

In the next two cases, one concerning an assault on a woman near her home, and another concerning jewelry theft, issues of marriage and deception abound. In the stories "The Man with the Wild Eyes" and "The Secret of the Lake," a young woman named Maud Hargreaves is found assaulted by the side of a lake near the family's home. Dorcas is called in to keep the matter out of police hands and she goes to the home in disguise as a nurse and Mr. Saxon as her assistant to investigate. As the case progresses, Dorcas learns that while Maud's father was in India, she had met and married Victor Dubois, the son of her French tutor. Shortly after their marriage, Maud's husband met with an accident which severely injured his head, and like his father, became insane. Maud determined to keep the marriage secret in order not to distress her father to learn she had married a madman (Sims 74). When Maud's husband returns to find his wife, she refuses to leave with him. In a rage, he attempts to strangle her and throws her in the lake. Believing he has murdered his wife, he drowns himself. After finding Victor Dubois's body, Dorcas shocks even Saxon in this tale by declaring that she has searched the body of the dead man. At the conclusion of the case, Dorcas "only has eyes and ears" for her husband, seemingly reinforcing the domestic angle of the Dene family's lives. The Colonel takes his daughter Maud

abroad after the conclusion of the case and all seems well.

Yet, this case and the next both serve as reminders of the secret torments of marriage. In the next case, a wife comes to Dorcas to investigate missing jewelry. Like in the previous tales, a son figures prominently; yet here it is the slightly profligate son, Claude Charrington Jr., who has then loses money regularly: “Mrs. Charrington tells me that her stepson has lately caused his father considerable anxiety owing to his extravagance and recklessness. He has just left Oxford and is going to the Bar, but he has been very erratic (Sims 83). The two stories that cover this case narrate the inter-familial tension within the Charrington family. The relationships are complicated and inter-related:

> The second Mrs. Charrington discovers she has lost a pendant, bracelet, and diamond lizard pin, given to her for her birthday by her husband, Claude Charrington Sr. Claude Jr. is in love with a Miss Dolamore, a singer lodging in Fitzroy Street in apartments kept by an Italian, Carlo Rinaldi, who is married to an Englishwoman. As Dorcas Dene learns in her investigation, Claude Sr. had given the jewels to Rinaldi’s English wife when she was his mistress. She had had to pawn some of them to get money for Rinaldi, who gambles at The Camorra.
>
> Furthermore, the former mistress had sold the diamond lizard pin to Claude Jr to give to Miss Dolamore. Through an unfortunate accident, a clerk had given these jewels, pawned by the former mistress in Charrington’s name and then redeemed to provide cash for Rinaldi, to the second Mrs. Charrington when Claude Sr. was out of town on her birthday. This mistake led to a dangerous situation: ‘When her husband returned to dinner he was horrified to find his wife wearing his former mistress’s jewellery [sic]’ (111). (Kestner 102)

Yet, Dorcas does not expose the husband’s nor the son’s indiscretions or “thefts” to the wife. Even Dorcas’s husband wonders why she does this. Instead of “mak[ing] her unhappy by telling the truth” (Sims 112), Dorcas concocts a story that the jewels were imitation. Thus preserving the Charrington family, proving the wasteful son innocent of theft, and concealing the husband’s past indiscretions. As Kestner argues, the “implications of the story are more than disturbing, as both father and son have given the same diamond pin to their lovers…Even though the son becomes engaged…at the tale’s conclusion, he exhibits all the deceiving tendencies of his father

and will probably be engaged in similar deceptions and connivances. As with the marriages presented in the first two cases, the marital institution is gerryrigged to remain standing" (102).

The next three tales, "The Mysterious Millionaire," "The Empty House," "The Clothes in the Cupboard," reveal that Dorcas is far from the submissive wife that she shows to the world. These tales present Dorcas Dene saving Lady Anna Barraclough from her bigamous husband Judkins Barraclough, an abusive criminal who has made his fortune in South America. These tales also reveal that Saxon is far less courageous than Dorcas; after gaining access to a suspicious house rented by their suspected bigamist, Saxon states, "I am ashamed to say that in my overwrought nervous condition I couldn't help giving a little cry of alarm" (Sims 141). This statement comes after Saxon and Paul Dene convince Dorcas to take Saxon along for safety, to which she replies, "Of course, if *you* wish it, dear…Honestly, I shall be glad of your company" (Sims 122-123, author's emphasis). Kathleen Gregory Klein sees this statement as an abandonment of "her independence, her judgment, and her conclusions" (64):

> The functions of both the detective as formulaic character and the protagonist as one of the novel's structuring elements are reduced in this novel as Sims replaces them with the combined presence of the male team— narrator and husband. Dorcas Dene, woman and detective, is submerged within the confines of patriarchal marriage. (Klein 64)

However, I would argue that Dorcas's inflection when she refers to her husband's rather formal request implies that she also might be teasing, and just possibly rebelling with complete "self-awareness of, even self-irony at her role as Victorian wife" (Kestner 103). And even though she may know "her business better than [they] do" (Sims 122), she is no fool and knows the dangers of going into a strange house alone near midnight.

The situation that Dorcas Dene uncovers is not only a case of bigamy, but of cruel and horrible imprisonment. Dorcas finds that Barraclough has chloroformed his first wife, Marian Judkins, and is keeping her locked in a cage in the middle of a room in the house that she and

Saxon go to investigate. His plan included only giving her liquor to drink so that she would die in an alcoholic stupor:

> As the light illuminated the apartment an extraordinary sight met our eyes. The centre of the room was entirely occupied by what looked like a huge wire cage. Wire netting nearly six feet high was stretched from side to side of the room on ropes which were fastened in the walls by iron rings…In one corner of the cage, on a rug, covered over by a scarlet blanket, lay a woman. (Sims 147-148)

And as Dorcas explains to Saxon:

> 'She is caged in order to keep her from beating the walls, and she is dosed with chloral in order to keep her from moving about…She might in an excess of delirium tear down her cage and get free. No— kept here without food and with a plentiful supply of brandy she will die slowly of alcoholic poisoning. But she must die quietly— hence the chloral.' (Sims 150).

As Kestner explains, this episode "outdoes Brontë in this depiction of female imprisonment, determined to show the extent of the malevolence of some men under the guise of marriage" (104). Unlike the other stories contained in the collection, this tale does not "gerryrig" a marriage to stay together. In fact, it takes the part of both "wives," much like the protections promised in the various Married Women's Property Acts, lobbied for by women like Caroline Norton, and other legislation that would protect women from abusive situations.

The final case is presented in the last two stories, "The Haverstock Hill Murder" and "The Brown Bear Lamp." The case deals with a murder and the false accusation of the woman's husband, who seems to have had a mental breakdown. However, during the course of the investigation, Dorcas finds that the murdered woman had been married before to Charles Drayson, who had been presumed dead in a Paris fire. He, in fact, did not die in the fire and had broken into the house to find money that he had concealed in a brown bear lamp. His former wife caught him, and he killed her. With the help of Drayson's former financial partner, Dorcas and Saxon disguise themselves and capture both Drayson and his criminal partner. The accused

husband recovers his senses and is released from the mental institute.

At the beginning of the story, Saxon records that "Paul [Dene] had not been very well lately," which reinforces the pressure on Dorcas Dene to persevere, to continue in her career, one specifically labeled in the final line of the book as a "profession." Perhaps her profession is, as Kestner labels it, a "feminist calling," given her noted alliances with distressed women, and particularly women with children, or in exceptionally bad marriages. While Sims does present the Denes as a traditional Victorian married couple, besides the fact that the wife is the breadwinner, they are in fact, far from the typical couple, discussing crimes, and potentially their own criminal activity if Dorcas runs *all* of her ideas by her husband. Dorcas Dene, while still maintaining a traditional marriage, is in fact a rebellious, mischievous, intelligent, *professional* detective.

In contrast to the professional female detectives that revived the genre in England, there were also authors contributing to the genre in the United States. Several, like the yellow backs for the railways were rarely saved for posterity; some, like Albert W. Aiken's *The Actress Detective: or, The Invisible Hand. The Romance of an Implacable Mission*, survived. The story involves a convoluted narrative about a secret society engaged to assassinate a young actor who is heir to a fortune, and the beautiful, but rough around the edges, actress, Hilda Serene. Hilda had been raised in "the West," where she had learned to drink, shoot, and throw a punch, skills which come in handy at opportune times during the course of the narrative. She comes to New York to pursue the stage, but in the end, when all is resolved, her ultimate goal is revealed— to become part of the secret police. While entertaining, this narrative doesn't do much for the advancement of women's causes.

More interesting is Anna Katherine Green's female detective Amelia Butterworth, who

first appeared in 1897 in *That Affair Next Door*, and in two further sequels before 1900. Miss Butterworth is an interesting construction because she does not fit into any of the earlier models of female detectives, that were, as some critics claim, dismissible. She was a spinster, like Loveday Brooke, but unlike many of the other female detectives presented, Miss Butterworth came from a genteel, distinguished colonial family. But more importantly, she was financially secure, and could do as she pleased with her time and money— an independent woman who answered to no one but herself. Amelia Butterworth becomes involved with crime and detection because she is infinitely curious about people, or as some would say, nosy.

Because she is a spinster and a sleuth, two words that provide a contradiction in images and opportunities for snide laughter at the elderly woman's expense, usually enjoyed by the official detectives on the case. However, in Amelia Butterworth's case, Green aims her ridicule not at the spinster, but at the obtuseness of society and its perceptions of age and gender. In the end, it pays to listen to and respect a woman like Amelia Butterworth. As many critics have noticed, Anna Katherine Green's Miss Butterworth is clearly a feminist character and Green is clearly a feminist writer. She certainly fits Marty S. Knepper's definition of a feminist writer:

> a writer, male or female, who shows as a norm and not as freaks, women capable of intelligence, moral responsibility, competence, and independent action; who presents women as central characters, not just as "the other sex" (in other words, not just as the wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, lovers and servants of men)…who explores female consciousness and female perceptions of the world; who creates women who have psychological complexity and transcend the sexist stereotypes that are as old as Eve and as limited as the lives of most fictional spinster schoolmarms. (399)

Amelia Butterworth appeared nearly thirty years before Agatha Christie's famous spinster detective Miss Marple; in fact, Miss Butterworth is clearly one of Christie's influences for her creation, for many of the same characteristics become some of Miss Marple's most defining features. Miss Butterworth begins her detecting in Gramercy Park neighborhood of New York

City, coming to the assistance of New York City police detective Ebenezer Gryce, himself a hero from Green's previous work *The Leavenworth Case* and seven other novels before Miss Butterworth's appearance.

Miss Butterworth is the narrator in two of the three novels in which she appears and she first comes to life in *That Affair Next Door*. We first hear Miss Butterworth's voice in a denial of her most defining characteristic: "I am not an inquisitive woman, but when, in the middle of a certain warm night in September, I heard a carriage draw up at the adjoining house and stop, I could not resist the temptation of leaving my bed and taking a peep through the curtains of my window" (Green 1). As she narrates we see her reasons and rationalizations, such as why she looks out the window: "First: because the house was empty, or supposed to be so…and secondly: because, not being inquisitive, I often miss in my lonely and single life much that it would be both interesting and profitable for me to know" (Green 1).

Miss Butterworth is wealthy, fashionable, and disciplined. And openly independent. When she is investigating, she makes lists, orders her questions, and collects evidence: "having, as I thought, noticed some few facts in connection with it [the case], from which conclusions might be drawn, I amused myself with jotting them down on the back of a disputed grocer's bill I happened to find in my pocket" (Green 24). In spite of her independence, Miss Butterworth realizes when to be silent and when to voice her opinions. When she first meets Gryce, she wants the men to lift the heavy cabinet that has been pushed over onto a woman's dead body, but "not being a man, and not judging it wise to irritate the one representative of that sex then present, I made no remark" (Green 11). Miss Butterworth knows that in order to investigate and satisfy her inquisitiveness (that she doesn't have), she "must establish a close, unlikely relationship with the official investigation as to be privy to all the latter's discoveries" (Binyon

48).

Early in the novel, Miss Butterworth announces her sense of self-worth; she has changed her name from “Araminta” to Amelia she says, because she is a “sensible woman and not the piece of antiquated sentimentality” that her given name suggests (Green 23). Cheri L. Ross observes, Miss Butterworth’s

> [d]ignity, intelligence, and inquisitiveness mark the strength of her self-image, though it is marked by irony…The irony [in her opening declaration] is exquisite; clearly, Miss Butterworth does not miss much…The discrepancy between Miss Butterworth’s actions and her description of herself seems to include her behavior as a stereotypical ‘nosy, old maid.’ She asks question after question, and in general ‘proves to be a thorn in the sides of everyone connected’ with the murder…The astute reader, however, soon learns that Miss Butterworth’s character goes far beyond this negative stereotype: her inquisitiveness and curiosity are instrumental in bringing the true criminal to justice. (79)

Gryce engages her competitive spirit when Miss Butterworth’s persistence in inserting herself into the investigation by offering to trade clues for information with Gryce seems to backfire, and because she has noticed some inconsistencies in the case that Gryce has not. Gryce seems appalled by her suggestion that they work together. As Miss Butterworth remarks, “What to me seemed but the natural proposition of an energetic woman with a special genius for his particular calling, evidently struck him as audacity of the grossest kind” (Green 58). She informs him that she believes the murder weapon was a hat pin, and he invites her to look for the missing piece of it, knowing that the scene has been thoroughly searched. Miss Butterworth eventually realizes that he is only amusing himself and being sarcastic. However, she does find the missing piece. And although Gryce does show her “suitable deference” for this contribution, it will be a long time before he truly appreciates her abilities.

When the police arrest a young man who Miss Butterworth believes is innocent, she confronts Gryce with extremely logical reasoning. However, he belittles and denigrates her reasoning even though she has provided important help so far. Miss Butterworth takes amused

and condescending attitude as a personal challenge; she responds, "If I meddle in this matter at all it will not be as your coadjutor, but as your rival" (175). Miss Butterworth firmly intends to force Gryce to acknowledge her as his equal, and uses all of her cunning in her dealings with the police, such as taking a complex path to meet with the chambermaid at the murder scene to throw off any surveillance. Miss Butterworth convinces the maid to give her the information she had withheld from the police, which was that there was another woman in the "vacant" house. She also successfully tracks the other woman. However, it is the other woman who melodramatically identifies the murderer in a conclusion that Craig and Cadogan categorize as the "significant rendezvous" which is "a rudimentary form of the climactic gathering of later detective fiction when the murderer's identity is disclosed" (41). Both Gryce and Miss Butterworth are incorrect in their theories, yet, by the end of the novel, Miss Butterworth does prove to be Gryce's equal and has humbled him. She revels in her success: "I admired him and I was sorry for him, but I never enjoyed myself so much in my whole life" (317).

By forcing the men involved in the investigation to admit her "genius," Anna Katherine Green contributed to the advancement of not only the genre of female detective fiction, but of women's rights by "breaking the stereotypical boundaries of acceptable behavior for women" and sending "a strong feminist message about women's possible roles in society" (Ross 83). By reveling in the irony of her own presentation, and the fun of investigation, Amelia Butterworth stands among some of the strongest, most intelligent, independent women, proving that women can succeed at anything, even the most "unsuitable job" for a woman.

At the end of the nineteenth century one of the most engaging and interesting female detectives emerged to prove that the unsuitable job of detection could be carried out by unexpected characters. Dora Myrl appeared at the center of twelve serialized stories in two sets

of six in *Pearson's Weekly* from 27 May 1899 to 26 August 1899 and then in book form in 1900. *Pearson's* had a long history in dealing with crime fiction when M. McDonnell Bodkin, a Queen's Counsel from Ireland brought them the *Dora Myrl* narratives. The first story, "The False Heir and the True," introduces Dora Myrl through the eyes of Roderick Alymer, who sees a "dainty little lady leaping from a" bicycle and wonders "that schoolgirl a Cambridge wrangler and a Doctor of Medicine!" (Bodkin 1) could be the person for whom they sent for help. Unlike some of the tales that feature a first person narrator or those that took up the "Watson as narrator" formula, Bodkin provides a third person narrator to describe his characters and comment on their situations: "There was certainly nothing of the New Woman, or for that matter of the old, about the winsome figure…The short skirt of her tailor made dress twitched by the light wind showed slim ankles and neat feet cased in tan cycling-shoes" (Bodkin 1-2). Although the narrator denies the connection to the term "New Woman," clearly Dora Myrl is meant to figure as this type of character; as Kathleen Gregory Klein notes, "In appearance, education, occupation, and recreation, Dora Myrl corresponds perfectly with the Girton girl whose independence so challenged her countrymen…The protagonist's background is not so unusual for a detective but markedly different than most women's in her time" (58). Much like Anna Katherine Green's Miss Butterworth, who denies her inquisitiveness even as she nosily peeks out her window at the neighbors, Bodkin denies that Dora is a New Woman as he confirms the fact.

Myrl's background is made explicit when she tells Alice Alymer about herself and her past:

> My father was an old-fashioned Cambridge don who married late in life. My mother…I never saw. She gave her life for mine. My father grieved at first that I was not a boy. Afterwards, I think, he liked me better as I was. It was his whole ambition that I should be a lady and a scholar. He waited in this world three months beyond his time, so the doctors said, to see me a Cambridge Wrangler, then he died content, leaving me alone at the age of eighteen with two hundred pounds and my wranglership for a fortune. I had no

> taste for the humdrum life of school-teaching, so I spent the little money I had in making myself a doctor. (Bodkin 5-6)

The details that emerge from Dora's explanation of her background are important, including that she is a university graduate and even a physician because of her father's encouragement. According to Joseph Kestner, "the absence of the mother…at least since the time of Jane Austen's fiction, is a sign that the young woman must define herself in a patriarchal world without the mother present as a stifling paradigm" (171).

Dora, like the protagonist of Grant Allen's series featuring the "adventuress" detective Lois Cayley, rejects school-teaching as a profession. Similarly, since she becomes a physician, Bodkin makes the link between detection and medicine, as it is in another of Grant Allen's narratives about the nurse Hilda Wade. For example, Myrl discovers the disturbance in her first client as a detective, "like a skilled physician searching a patient's body with a stethoscope when he finds the lurking disease at last" (Bodkin 7).

At the same time, Bodkin subtly commenting on the prejudice against women as doctors in the further discussion of her background: "But practice didn't come, and I couldn't and wouldn't wait for it. Within the last year I have been a telegraph girl, a telephone girl, a lady journalist. I liked the last best. But I have not found my vocation yet" (Bodkin 6). Kestner believes that this allows Bodkin the advantage of showing Myrl rejecting various "female" occupations "while still leaving open for the reader's curiosity the choice of profession for his Cambridge woman" (171). Indeed, this does leave some mystery open for the readers. However, Bodkin does hint at what Myrl will be good at. She states that she liked being a journalist the best of all the occupations she has tried, which indicates that she is already combining the abilities that she has developed as an investigator/diagnostician and interviewer. These skills will become useful as she develops her own methods for investigating crimes.

The first two tales are unremarkable, except as introductions to Dora and establishing her business. The third tale, "How He Cut His Stick," however, is much more famous and thrilling. In this story, a young man, Jim Pollock, is asked by the owner of a banking firm to be a courier on the train for some of the bank's gold deposits. During the journey, Pollock is attacked and chloroformed by a thief who was hidden underneath the seat in the locked train carriage. The thief, McCrowder, swings out from the carriage by means of a notched, crooked stick, which he uses to grasp some wires of the telegraph. The case is complicated and, naturally, the police have it all wrong. This is also the first case in which Myrl chooses to subvert the established authorities. Sir Gregory, the owner of the bank, does not believe the police report and encourages Myrl's investigation. The case is intriguing for being both an "impossible crime," since the criminal escaped from the carriage at sixty miles per hour, and a "locked room mystery," since the carriage is locked, with no through corridor.

Dora Mryl gets Pollock released from prison long enough to help her capture McCrowder, which she does by pursuing him in a "rather furious bicycle chase" (Kestner 173). When she arrests him, she does so with a revolver; she had previously told Pollock that "I'm not too bad a shot" (Bodkin 50) and when she confronts McCrowder, she is resolved in her purpose: "[McCrowder] looked again. The sunlight glinted on the barrel of a revolver, pointed straight at his head, with a steady hand" (Bodkin 54). She is no fainting maid who needs the assistance of a male associate at all times.

The next case, "The Palmist," involves one key agenda that Bodkin returns to in a later story, that of the male sexual predator. While the case involves a physician, Dr. Phillimore, poisoning his wife by putting arsenic in her chocolate, it also involves unwelcome advances he has made toward the companion of his ward. Myrl disguises herself as a palmist and when

Phillimore comes to the parlour, she has him arrested. Speaking in the persona of the palmist, Myrl tells the killer: “You took your pleasures freely without regard to [your wife’s] jealousy. Your ward’s governess, Miss Graham, inspired you with a fierce, devouring passion!…You proposed to Mabel Graham to become your mistress, and she refused indignantly and left the house the same day…You resolved to get rid of your wife without danger to yourself, and make an Irishwoman, Honor Maguire, the scapegoat” (Bodkin 77).

Besides Phillimore’s murderous experiment to test his own philosophical and ethical theories, he has a puzzled contempt for lady detectives, even laughing when Eveline proposes bringing Dora Myrl to dinner: “Oh, the lady detective, bring her by all means” (Bodkin 67). When he meets Dora, he informs her, “Still, you must confess it is a somewhat incongruous— I won’t say comical— profession for a charming young lady” (Bodkin 73), followed by a veiled threat, “You, of course, are the exception, Miss Myrl. But do you think that women can fairly pit themselves in mind and body against cunning and strong men, and the so-called criminal classes as a rule are both?” (Bodkin 73). As the exchange continues, Myrl vindicates her position that “Women are clever and men are confident; their confidence betrays them” when handcuffs are placed on the killer.

On many occasions, Myrl is referred to as a “slip of a girl” or a “dear innocent little thing” (Bodkin 82), yet on other occasions she reminds her clients she is anything but a “girl.” She is a professional, her time is valuable, and she can take care of herself. No matter the threat, such as Phillimore’s open threat: “Let us suppose for a moment that I was your criminal. I never go a step without a loaded revolver, and I’m a dead shot. But I would not need that. I could crush the life out of you with my naked hand” (Bodkin 73), Dora Myrl is not afraid to challenge diabolical predators. And with a smile and a simple “Oh, I’d manage it somehow” (Bodkin 73),

Dora Myrl reminds us that it doesn't matter how a detective gets to the conclusion, as long as she gets there.

Chapter 7

"There is a woman in the case": Female Detectives 1900-1920

The turn of the century was marked by several changes in history and in detective literature. The year 1901 witnessed the end of the Victorian era, with the death of Queen Victoria and the accession of Edward VII. According to Joseph A. Kestner, "the first ten years of the century had the highest murder rate of any decade before 1970" (181), seemingly related to social anxieties about England's position on the international stage. Yet, unsolved murders and crimes, such as the Whitechapel murders by Jack the Ripper, haunted the police even into the new century. These anxieties influenced the creation of even more female detectives, particularly after the first ten years of the century had passed and World War I was just around the corner. From the earliest conceptions, the female detective, according to some critics, was meant to encourage the official (male) authorities to question their own efficacy, and often, at least in the fiction, female detectives humiliated the men who were supposed to officially close the case. During the 1890s, authors resurrected the female detective who had disappeared for twenty years. Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan found

> a number of reasons [authors chose to make their detectives female]: novelty; dramatic effect (making the least-likely-person the sleuth instead of the culprit); in order to justify an unorthodox method of detecting; because the figure could be presented fancifully…and because nosiness— a fundamental requirement of the detective— is often considered a feminine trait. (13)

Not only do these reasons make sense, but more than just novelty must have played a part in creating these women, for even in popular fiction, authors reflect changes in society, or the changes they wish to see. Some of the most famous female detectives displayed traits of the New Woman, and Grant Allen, the author of one of the most famous New Woman novels, *The*

Woman Who Did, created two female detectives himself, which reinforces the link between the concept of the New Woman and the female detective.

In the early years of the Twentieth Century, authors continue the legacy of skillful detection established by their predecessors. And yet, at the same time, these detectives anticipate the achievements of their Twentieth Century successors, such as Frederic Kummer's Elinor Vance (1924), Agatha Christie's "Miss Felicity Lemon" (1934) and Jane Marple (1930), and Gilbert Frankau's Kyra Sokratescu (1931). As Kestner notes, "By the time of the publication of Ellery Queen's *The Great Women Detectives and Criminals* in 1943, the fictional female detective had been established as a major tradition of the detectival genre. More importantly, because of these fictions, the female detective was in fact no longer a fiction" (184).

One of the most significant writers of detective fiction in the Edwardian period was Emmuska Orczy, more famously known as the author of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1905). Her collection of tales, *The Old Man in the Corner* (1909), features a woman, Polly Burton, listening to a strange man recount cases that he had analyzed and solved. Burton is a journalist who encounters the old man in a tea shop and listens to his stories, but what is disturbing about his accounts, is the number of times that the criminals escape capture. Polly, although a perceptive listener, is not an active investigator in these stories.

However, Orczy's next creation, Lady Molly Robertson-Kirk of *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*, is, in fact, an active investigator. In this case, it is clear that Lady Molly was created as a reaction against the passiveness of Polly Burton in Orczy's previous work. Lady Molly is an active, energetic, insightful detective. Like Miss Paschal in 1864, this creation is significant because the idea of a female detective working at Scotland Yard in the early twentieth century is total fantasy. As Michele Slung observes, "there were no women actually attached to the

Metropolitan Police in London until 1883, when two women were appointed to oversee women prisoners" (15). And it was not until 1922 that a female "uniformed sergeant was transferred to CID in December 1922 and became the first detective sergeant. This was Lilian Wyles, who was later to be the first woman detective inspector" (Rawlings 16). However, Wyles was not assigned any detective work; that honor went to a woman police constable, Louisa Pelling, "who was appointed to Special Branch at about the same time" (Rawlings 151). There were no other women appointed to the CID until 1932, and there was no direct entry into the CID; "All were recruited from the uniformed constables in the force," much like promotions had been handled for generations (Rawlings 151). So when Orczy created Lady Molly, an aristocratic woman who pursued detection she did so in spite of the fact that no historical basis existed for the creation of such a character. But, as we have seen, that never stopped any of the authors of female detective fiction before.

The twelve tales that comprise the collection are narrated by Lady Molly's "Watson," Mary Granard, who began as "maid to Lady Molly Robertson-Kirk" (Orczy 142), is now her devoted friend (Orczy 147). She is skilled at taking shorthand, which she does both for Lady Molly and at the Female Department of the Yard: "I made excellent shorthand notes of the conflicting stories I heard" (Orczy 114);"Lady Molly was at work with the chief over some reports, whilst I was taking shorthand notes at a side desk" (Orczy 129). Mary Granard is "determined to obey like a soldier, blindly, and unquestioningly" (Orczy 76), observing Lady Molly's commands "like a soldier…to the letter" (Orczy 78). As time passes, Mary's situation changes, and she "sever[s] her official connection with the Yard. Lady Molly now employed [her] as her personal secretary (Orczy 27). Mary's most pronounced characteristic is her loyalty to her "dear lady" as she frequently refers to Lady Molly. And in the tradition of Holmes and

Watson, Mary can be a little obtuse and imperceptive, often stating that she doesn't understand what Lady Molly means, but going along with whatever she says (Orczy 56, 61), but in sharing a flat with Lady Molly, in recording her cases and discoveries, and in being an associate in her investigations, she is like the famous doctor.

The history of Lady Molly emerges as the tales continue, but the opening story begins with a little mystery unto itself. In the first tale, "The Ninescore Mystery," Mary Granard records,

> Well, you know, some say she is the daughter of a duke, others that she was born in the gutter, and that the handle has been soldered on to her name in order to give her style and influence.
>
> I could say a lot, of course, but "my lips are sealed," as the poets say. All through her successful career at the Yard she honoured me with her friendship and confidence…
>
> Yes, we always called her "my lady," from the moment she was put at the head of our section; and the chief called her "Lady Molly" in our presence. We of the Female Department are dreadfully snubbed by the men, though don't tell me that women have not ten times as much intuition as the blundering and sterner sex; my firm belief is that we shouldn't have half so many undetected crimes if some of the so-called mysteries were put to the test of feminine investigation. (Orczy 1)

When Lady Molly goes out into society, "none of these people knew that she had anything to do with the Yard" (Orczy 22). Unlike previous female detectives, with the exception of Mrs. Gladden from Andrew Forrester's 1864 collection of stories, Lady Molly is able to keep her career a secret, although it seems her close relations know of her career.

Lady Molly's history is only gradually revealed as the stories progress, and in the final story, "Sir Jeremiah's Will," Mary Granard announces

> Many people have asked me whether I knew when, and in what circumstances, Lady Molly joined the detective staff at Scotland Yard, who she was, and how she managed to keep her position in Society— as she undoubtedly did— whilst exercising a profession which usually does not make for high social ranking. (Orczy 139).

She has known all this information, and even told us that she knows it, but promised that she

would not reveal anything until Lady Molly has given her leave to. Since she makes this announcement, we can assume that Lady Molly's situation has changed and that she has lifted Mary's restrictions.

The story begins with a tale of a love triangle between Sir Jeremiah Baddock, the grandfather of Captain Hubert de Mazareen. Sir Jeremiah lives at Appledore Castle since he is a shipowner in Liverpool; he creates a will in 1902, in which he leaves his fortune to his grandson. However, Sir Jeremiah had married a "pretty French actress, Mlle. Adèle Desty" (Orczy 139), who eventually ran away with the Earl of Flintshire and has a child, Lady Molly Robertson-Kirk, with whom Captain de Mazareen falls "desperately in love," "the one woman in the whole of England who, in his grandfather's opinion, should have remained a stranger, even an enemy, to him" (Orczy 139). Although Sir Jeremiah establishes, supposedly in a later will which remains unsigned, that Captain Hubert loses all of the fortune if he marries anyone connected with the Flintshire family, Captain Hubert and Lady Molly defy Sir Jeremiah and marry in 1904.

As the story evolves, Alexander Steadman, Sir Jeremiah's solicitor, is found murdered at Appledore Castle. Captain Hubert, in spite of his heroic service in the Boer War, is immediately arrested the day following his marriage to Lady Molly, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment at Dartmoor for twenty years. Interestingly, Lady Molly is the one who proposes marriage, knowing that he will be arrested immediately, since the weapon used to kill Steadman is Captain Hubert's weighted walking stick:

> 'Hubert…I want you to marry me. Will you?'
> 'Will I?' he whispered…
> 'But… I mean as soon as possible— to-morrow, by special license. You can wire to Mr. Hurford to-night, and he will see about it the first thing in the morning. We can travel up to town by the night train. Father and Mary will come with me. Father has promised, you know, and we can be married to-morrow… I think that would be the quickest way.' (Orczy 145)

After her husband's arrest, Lady Molly

> applied for, and obtained, a small post on the detective staff of the police. From that small post she has worked her way upwards, analysing and studying, exercising her powers of intuition and deduction, until at the present moment, she is considered, by chiefs, and men alike, the greatest authority among them on criminal investigation. (Orczy 147).

Mary stresses Lady Molly's intuition throughout the tales, which reinforces the gender stereotyping of the time period that men were more rational and women intuitive. According to critics, Lady Molly's agenda is a conflicted one: "on the one hand she is independent, has a career, and takes risks; on the other, she is married and intuitive more than rational" (Kestner 186). And as Slung notes, "lady detectives were forced to trade on natural deductive abilities, on what might be termed a practical application of their never to be doubted 'women's intuition,' this quality elicited alternate scorn and admiration from colleagues, clients, and criminals alike" (17).

However, Mary often does not understand how Lady Molly reaches her conclusions and therefore attributes them to intuition or "bold guesses" (Orczy 95), or she misses the action and must make guesses as to what Lady Molly was up to (Orczy 48). Not to mention the fact that Mary records that Lady Molly practices, studies and analyzes cases while she is working her way upwards in the department. Lady Molly does face conflicts in duty; when her husband briefly escapes from prison in 1906, Lady Molly is the one who turns him in to the police, stating "I am of the police, you know. I had to do my duty" (Orczy 151); she then determines to prove her husband innocent.

In the final story, aptly titled "The End," Lady Molly carries on flirtations with two men, Philip Baddock, Sir Jeremiah's son, and his associate Felkin, a male nurse in league with Baddock. Mary records her disapproval of Lady Molly's behavior (Orczy 153, 157, 159), but

Lady Molly does not confide all to Mary; her plan is to set the two men against each other in order to discover the killer of Sir Jeremiah's solicitor. Felkin eventually reveals that he impersonated Sir Jeremiah and dictated the new, unsigned will to Steadman in a darkened room in 1904. Steadman never suspected the deception. Philip Baddock killed Steadman, but not before signing a letter naming Felkin as an accomplice. Baddock sets a fire at Appledore Castle to destroy the proofs of his guilt, but Felkin throws the documents and Lady Molly snatches them and gives them to Inspector Etty to prove her husband's innocence. Philip Baddock shoots himself, and Captain Hubert de Mazareen obtains "His Majesty's gracious pardon after five years of martyrdom which he had borne with heroic fortitude" (Orczy 164). As a result, "[Lady Molly] has given up her connection with the police. The reason for it has gone with the return of her happiness, over which I— her ever faithful Mary Granard— will, with your permission, draw a veil" (Orczy 164). When her husband is freed, Lady Molly ceases to be a professional detective, which as Kestner argues, "engages Edwardian gendered conceptions in an ambivalent manner: she is independent enough to have a career, yet abandons it when her marriage can be pursued without difficulty" (187), a situation that reflects the different attitudes about female autonomy and authority, especially just before the "outbreak of militant suffragism" (Kestner 187).

While Mary attempts to create an atmosphere of equality and mutual goodwill among the men and women of the Yard, there are definite moments when the chief disparages women, or even Lady Molly. When the chief replies to Lady Molly's remarks "somewhat testily" after a woman makes a statement for a case, she responds with an "enigmatical statement" that "effectually silenced the chief" (Orczy 128). And when the chief follows his own inclination to arrest and prosecute an innocent young woman, instead of trusting Lady Molly, the police are

mocked by the public for its incompetence, and the chief is obliged to give Lady Molly a "free hand" (Orczy 134).

What sets these stories apart is the emphasis Orczy places on female criminals. Lady Molly's actions reveal that she does not believe in the stereotype of the Angel in the House. She firmly believes women quite capable of committing murder. In these stories, women can be dangerous, callous, and even sexual, which Orczy openly and willingly discusses. Even across class lines, whether of the lower classes or an heiress, women are revealed as potentially treacherous; even Lady Molly exhibits this characteristic when she sets the two accomplices in the murder of Alexander Steadman against each other. Perhaps that is Orczy's ultimate goal. Rather than a female detective that transgresses boundaries and questions authority, Orczy explores the transgressions of female criminals. Unlike Doyle's Holmes narratives of the sixty stories, fewer than ten relate instances of women committing murder or being suspected of it. As Virginia Morris observes, "Doyle's violent heroines are not threats to the social order but avengers of misuse" (151). But in Orczy's narratives, women are decidedly criminal, and Orczy is not particularly inclined to provide extenuating circumstances or excuses for their behavior. And although Orczy tempers her detective's transgressions with an end to her professional life, Lady Molly's natural temperament, given the examples provided in the rest of the narratives, is not likely to change.

While Orczy's collections focuses on the transgressive nature of women, and especially of criminal women, Richard Marsh's collection of narratives about Judith Lee, a young woman whose ability to read lips gets her into and out of trouble, focuses on a woman who begins her narrative by establishing her rebellious nature and her desire for avenging wrongs. Richard Marsh is more known for his 1897 horror novel *The Beetle*, yet he was a hugely prolific writer

who published more than eighty books in a twenty year career. Marsh's own history with crime and prison gives him the perfect background to create detective and mystery stories. During his early career, however he spent most of his time writing a variety of materials in different genres, such as horror, one in which a villain uses zombies to fulfill his nefarious plans, and humor, such as *Curios*, in which two treasure hunters compete with each other. Marsh's later years were taken up with creating two recurring characters, one a solicitor's clerk Sam Briggs, and of course, Judith Lee.

Judith Lee first appeared in the August 1911 issue of *The Strand*, in what Jean-Daniel Brèque calls a "stunning story," called "The Man Who Cut off My Hair," which is an origin story, so to speak. In this story, the heroine reminisces about her first case, which she solved when she was "between twelve and thirteen years of age" (Marsh 17). Lee's narrative style is direct and straightforward, setting the scene and explaining everything that needs to be explained quickly directly:

> My name is Judith Lee. I am a teacher of the deaf and dumb. I teach them by what is called the oral system— that is, the lip-reading system. When people pronounce a word correctly they all make exactly the same movements with their lips, so that, without hearing a sound, you only have to watch them very closely to know what they are saying. Of course, this needs practice, and some people do it better and quicker than others. I suppose I have a special sort of knack in that direction, because I do not remember a time when, by merely watching people speaking at a distance, no matter at what distance if I could see them clearly, I did not know what they were saying. In my case the gift, or knack, or whatever it is, is hereditary. My father was a teacher of deaf and dumb— a very successful one. His father was, I believe, one of the originators of the oral system. My mother, when she was first married, had an impediment in her speech which practically made her dumb; though she was stone deaf, she became so expert at lip-reading that she could not only tell what others were saying, but she could speak herself— audibly, although she could not hear her own voice.
>
> So you see, I have lived in the atmosphere of lip-reading all my life. When people, as they often do think, my skill at it borders on the marvelous. I always explain to them that it is nothing of the kind, that mine is simply a case of "practice makes perfect." This knack of mine, in a way, is almost equivalent to another sense. It has led me into the most singular situations, and it has been the cause of many really extraordinary adventures. (Marsh 17).

Judith Lee is unique in that her ability to lip-read does cause many of her adventures, mostly because she simply cannot mind her own business, one of the most noticeable traits of a detective. However, the stories contained in the entire collection of Judith Lee narratives range from mysteries, to thrillers, and adventures, during which Lee meets "some dastardly devils, some poor damsels in distress…a good number of cads and shady sportsmen" (Brèque 12). Marsh, like Doyle, knew that to make a mark in the field of detective fiction, "he needed strongly-plotted yarns, great variety in subject matter and a memorable lead character. Judith Lee is that in spades" (Brèque 13). Indeed, Lee's confidential storytelling makes readers feel as if she is telling her stories to them alone, "making [them] privy to her professional and personal life. For our Judith is a working girl, and quite devoted to her trade, too— you'll see her helping the deaf and dumb to become proficient, but also giving conferences in Britain and abroad. And, although she can be a bit self-deprecating, she has a keen sense of observation and an excellent memory— capital when you want to be a detective" (Brèque 13), not to mention a "brilliant intellect" (Baker ix).

Judith Lee is an odd choice for this discussion, for she is not so much a detective as she is an infernal busybody, using her talent for lip-reading, often unconsciously, to know everybody's business. Much like other detectives who use surveillance to pick up on clues, Lee uses lip-reading to "pick up signals and mentally record crimes as they happen," which is "itself a form of detection" (Godfrey 138). However, because Lee observes what is said, but must construct meaning out of contextual information, she does fit the image of a detective, particularly several of her adventures, as she calls them. What Lee records as her ability is, as Kestner explains, synesthetic, combining the senses of sight and sound, which leads to declarations such as, "I only saw the fag-end of the sentence" (Marsh 18) and "I could see what he said" (Marsh 33).

And like many other female detectives, Lee is both an insider and an outsider. She is described by her enemies as “a half-bred gipsy-looking creature” (Marsh 59) or a “black faced devil’s spawn” (Marsh 215). However, Lee is also the narrator of her own story; she has no “Watson” to mediate or interpret her voice or conclusions for her. She alone is in control of her image and what she allows readers to see. Furthermore, in addition to her profession of teaching and her extraordinary skills she exercises, Lee is “distinguished by never being involved in any personal romance, nor does Marsh end the series with a satisfying marriage to compel Judith to be under the control of a man” (Kestner 199), nor does she work with a detective agency, which possibly makes her one of the most independent investigators produced within the fifty years of this study. Not only is she independent as an adult, but she is required to be her own mistress at an early age, traveling on her own and often not telling anyone where she is going.

In the First story, “The Man who Cut Off My Hair,” Lee witnesses a robbery as a young girl. One of the thieves threatens to cut her throat, but instead cuts off her knee length hair, an act that enrages Lee rather than depresses her. While traveling alone at the age of twelve, Lee witnesses a conversation between two thieves planning to rob Myrtle Cottage, where a Mr. Colegate keeps a vast collection of antique silver. Lee goes to cottage and is caught looking into the window, not knowing that she is witnessing a robbery in progress until too late. She is tied up, and then:

> Just as I made sure he was going to cut my throat he caught hold of my hair, which of course, was hanging down my back, and with that dreadful knife sawed the whole of it from my head…And to think that this man could have robbed me of it in so hideous a way! I do believe at that moment I could have killed him. (Marsh 20)

Lee is left tied up in the house all night, until Colegate returns. As she remembers what the men said as they were leaving, she directs detectives to Victoria Station and finds a bag full of feminine clothing and jewels, which belong to the Duchess of Datchet. Lee is relentless in her

pursuit of the man who has cut her hair. The rage she feels in that first moment spurs her on. She sees the man who cut her hair whisper another direction to his partner, and again directs detectives to their hideout. The thieves are apprehended and stolen property recovered; the men are convicted and sent to prison, while Lee is never called to testify, since the men had committed many more horrible crimes than what had been done to her, as far as the police are concerned.

But this is not the case for Lee. She reflects on the theft of her hair, which the detectives treat as a joke, but in reality is a symbolic rape, a taking of "the glory of a woman" (Marsh 20):

> The big man laughed. He seemed to find me amusing; I do not know why. If had only understood my feeling on the subject of my hair, and how I yearned to be even with the man who had wrought me what seemed such an irreparable injury…I do not think it was a question of vengeance only; I wanted justice. (Marsh 26)

And the police do not acknowledge the violation nor her outrage:

> It was the cutting my hair that did it. Had he not done that I have little doubt that I should have been too conscious of the pains caused me by my bonds…to pay such close attention to their proceedings as I did under the spur of anger…It was the outrage to my locks which caused me to strain every faculty of observation I had. (Marsh 26-27)

In spite of Lee's claim that it was not a case of vengeance, but a case of justice, her actions as the criminals are apprehended speaks otherwise:

> On the table, right in front of me, I saw something with which I was only to familiar. I snatched it up.
> 'And this is the knife…with which he did it!'
> It was; the historical blade…I held it out towards the gaping man.
> 'You know that this is the knife with which you cut of my hair…You know it is.'
> I dare say I looked a nice young termagant with my short hair, rage in my eyes, and that frightful weapon in my hand. (Marsh 27)

Yet, the evidence of the criminal's symbolic act is present even in her final summation of the case: "I endeavored to console myself…that, owing to the gift which was mine, I had been able to cry something like quits with the man who in a moment of mere wanton savagery had

deprived me of what ought to be the glory of a woman" (Marsh 28). And still she retains "something of that old rage…which had been during that first moment in my heart— what I felt when I was tied to that chair in Myrtle Cottage" (Marsh 28). No other female detective up to this point had had such a motivation beyond her professional skill for her heightened sensitivity to criminal behavior in this nightmarish assault on her liberty and her body as a young girl.

In the next episode, Lee is traveling with her friends the Travers in Switzerland at the age of seventeen. Two individuals, a Mr. Reginald Sterndale and his sister, are guests at the same hotel. These two rob everyone in the hotel and blame it on Lee while the Travers are on a mountaineering excursion. In the end, Lee unmasks them, and the Sterndales, who are not brother and sister as they had announced, turn out to be professional jewel thieves. Among the missing jewelry is a diamond pendant belonging to an unpleasant woman, Miss Goodridge, a set of diamonds belonging to Mrs. Anstruther, and a set of pearls belonging to Mrs. Newball. Lee would not have known that she was being framed for this crime had she not seen the Sterndales speaking about some of her own objects in her room:

> Mr. Sterndale had been talking to me. Presently his sister came through an open French window from the lounge. Her brother went up to her; I sat still. She was at the other end of the terrace, and when she saw me she nodded and smiled. When her brother came up to her, he said something which, as his back was towards me, of course I did not catch; but her answer to him, which was very gently uttered, I saw quite distinctly; all the while she was speaking she was smiling at me.
>
> 'She has a red morocco jewel-case sort of a thing on the corner of her mantelshelf; I put it under the bottom tray. With the exception of that gold locket she is always wearing it's the only decent thing in it; it's full of childish trumpery.' (Marsh 30)

When Lee goes to check the jewel-case, she finds Miss Goodridge's diamond pendant, which she attempts to return. However, since she cannot really explain how she knew where the pendant was, she is labeled a thief and accused of the other robberies as well.

Lee's narratives are unlike any of the other female detective novels or collections

published before, with the exception of Arthur Benjamin Reeve's *Constance Dunlap, Woman Detective*, which records the cases of a woman who had committed crimes before turning to detective work. Like the previous narrative gives Lee an additional motive for using her ability against criminals, this narrative records the distress of the falsely accused person in such clear terms:

> I was all alone; I had never thought that anyone could feel so utterly alone as I did in that crowded lounge…The feeling [was] that I was so entirely alone, and that there was not a soul within miles and miles to whom I could turn for help…These things were hard enough to bear; but they seemed to be as nothing compared to that man and woman's [the Sterndales'] treachery. (Marsh 35)

However, confident in her ability as a lip-reader and the evidence she has gathered from watching the Sterndales, Lee faces her accusers in front of the hotel guests:

> Then [Miss Sterndale] went up to her brother, and he whispered something to her, and she whispered something to him. Only three or four words in each case, but my heart gave a leap in my bosom…courage came into me, and strength, and something better than hope: certainty; because they had delivered themselves into my hands. (Marsh 40)

The jewels are discovered, as Lee detects partly concealed in the clothing of the Sterndales. Although they are released once the owners regain their property, the Sterndales are apprehended the next night for another theft at another location.

Judith Lee's next adventure, entitled "Conscience," is a unique railway crime story dealing with a serial killer of women that spans more than two years. According to Kestner, "its purpose is indisputably to express female if not feminist outrage" (201). On the train, Lee keeps re-encountering John Tung, a man with a Mongolian appearance, who has been murdering women on trains for years. In the end, Tung is driven to suicide by letters Lee sends him that inform him someone knows of his criminal activity. Lee is at Brighton when she first reads/hears the description of a designated victim: "Mauve dress, big black velvet hat, ostrich plume, four-thirty train" (Marsh 46). The next day, Lee reads in the *Sussex Daily News* that a

woman matching that description was found lying on the line, as if she had fallen out of a train. On another occasion, the same thing happens; Lee learns of the imminent death of a woman in a white dress, and later a woman's body is found in the courtyard of the Embankment Hotel. Later another woman is murdered on the Great Western Line near Exeter station.

And though Lee warns Tung that his crimes are known, the police fail to capture him. However, Lee's evidence is so slight that she even admits that she would have a hard time proving the connection between the murders and what John Tung had said on the trains:

> I was perfectly conscious that from the point of view of the law I had not the slightest right to pen a single one of the words which were on the sheet of paper inside that envelope. For all I could prove, Mr. Tung and his friends might be the most innocent of men. I might find it pretty hard to prove that the Mongolian-looking gentleman had whispered either of the brief, jerky sentences which I had seen him whisper; and, even if I could get as far as that, there still remained the difficulty of showing that they bore anything like the construction which I had put upon them. (Marsh 54)

Lee's letter hits its mark; Tung's reaction reveals that Lee is correct in her detections. And yet, still she does not alert the police, trusting to her own abilities and tactics to save a woman's life. Since the letter's worked for a short time, Lee believes that she has beaten the murderers. However, a month later, Lee encounters Tung on another train station platform:

> The sight of him inspired me with a feeling of actual rage. That such a dreadful creature as I was convinced he was should go through life like some beast of prey, seeking for helpless victims whom it would be safe to destroy— that he should be standing there, so well dressed, so well fed, so seemingly prosperous, with all the appearance about him of one with whom the world went very well— the sight of him made me positively furious. (Marsh 57)

At this moment, Lee sends another letter to Tung, which happens to synchronize with the appearance of a constable and a plain clothes police officer. Thinking that the police were coming to arrest him, "he blew his brains out…killed by conscience" (Marsh 58), which finally leads police to investigate, yet the other two men escape without Lee's further involvement in the affair.

This story, according to Kestner, is a “scarcely veiled discussion of the Ripper case” from the female point of view, which “suggests the much more extensive practice of Marie Belloc Lowndes when she writes *The Lodger*” (202). However, it is also a revenge fantasy in which a woman is responsible for saving other women from certain death, even if they are unappreciative or unaware of the help. In this story, Lee reveals the extent of the power her ability gives her over other people, particularly when they are unaware of the surveillance. Just as the first female detectives reveal, surveillance in the most visible invisibility can be a valuable tool for an investigator, even if she never intends to inform the official authorities of her and the criminals’ activities.

The next story, “Matched,” takes the opposite line from the previous story. In this tale, Marianne Tracy is a serial wife, who marries men, and takes their money and the wedding gifts, fooling men. She, however, does not deceive, Judith Lee, fitting with many other narratives that proclaim women are better at catching female criminals because they cannot deceive them. The story begins at Charing Cross Station, when Everard Brookes is about to begin his honeymoon, when his new wife Clare, rushes from the train, claiming that she has left something behind. Instead, she disappears with all of his money and portable property with her. Lee notes, “The thing was very well done; Mr. Brookes found that he had been robbed in almost every direction in which he could have been robbed” (Marsh 63).

Marianne Tracy’s deceptions of men are numerous and global. Later, Lee encounters Tracy on a cruise near Gibraltar, during which Tracy has her removed from the ship and cast off in a small boat, suspecting that her schemes have been discovered. Again, Judith Lee is “consumed with rage” and dreams of revenging herself on the team of con artists who put her in “that ignominious position” (Marsh 66). Later on, an American, Alexander King falls for

Tracy's artifices, which leads Lee to conclude that men are besotted about women: "Where women are concerned, men are the most amazing things. What all those men, of different ages, different tastes, different altogether, saw in her was beyond my comprehension…What absolute idiots [are] all sorts and conditions of men, old and young,…over a woman" (Marsh 72, 74). An interesting comment considering that throughout the tales Lee frequently states that she falls in love with several women (Marsh 114). However, Tracy gets away to deceive and marry again and again, taunting Lee as she does so.

Judith Lee's fifth tale, "The Miracle," is the first to be described as an actual "case." In this story, a young man, Cecil Armitage is being blackmailed by a man, Clarke, preventing him from marrying the woman he loves because he needs to get the money somehow. Armitage's scheme is to marry a rich old maid, Miss Drawbridge. However, due to Lee's intervention, an American businessman, Fred Curtis, who wishes "to do some one a good turn" with "a certain amount of money [that] would mean the difference between heaven and hell," gives Armitage the money to enable him to marry the woman he loves rather than Miss Drawbridge (Marsh 86).

This story is revolutionary in its focus— the commodification of men. Cecil Armitage is forced to marry Miss Drawbridge, he tells Clarke, flipping the experience of commodification that women often experienced in the marriage market:

> I'm going to marry the woman I'm going to marry because I'm a thief, and because I'm such a cur that I shrink from paying the penalty. She's such a wretched old fool who comes all to pieces…[B]ut she's got money, and she's willing to give me money, enough to be rid of you and save myself from the treadmill…If you only knew how I hate the woman…Heaven knows how far it will go by the time we're married. I shouldn't wonder if I were to murder her on our wedding night. (Marsh 78)

Lee knows it is not any of her business, but she does not wish to let Miss Drawbridge enter into marriage without knowing that Mr. Armitage is not sincere in his feelings. Yet, Miss Drawbridge does not wish to be rescued:

> That sort of thing is quite common with a man— you must take a man at his own valuation, my dear. We should never get one at all if we took them at ours… You don't think I'm very much to look at, do you? I'm not; I never was. Time has not improved me, either outside or in. When I was young I was very poor. For seven years I was governess… I couldn't expect to get married on that, could I? And no one wanted me anyhow, though I wanted to marry very badly…I wonder how many women would make it if they told the truth…Don't suppose that my desire to marry grew less as my years grew more; that's a silly notion which some young girls seem to have. If I have to advertise for a husband, I'm going to have one before I die…I'm quite aware that he isn't fond of me. But he's so young…Of course, I shall have to pay for him— you needn't tell me that; my experience is that one always has to pay for anything that's worth having— and generally through the nose. I expect to have to pay through the nose for him… I don't suppose for a moment that he isn't what I've seen described as "shop soiled"…I've grown out of all of my illusions…It's all a question of making it worth their while… How many really honest men do you suppose there are, it the truth were really known? (Marsh 83-84)

As Lee reflects on her choice to acquaint Miss Drawbridge with the dishonest marriage arrangement, she truly never supposes that there were women "such as she existing in the world" (Marsh 84). Yet, there are men such as Miss Drawbridge in the world, and as previous narratives have proven, women can be just as criminal minded as men, sometimes even more. It should come as no surprise that women can be just as mercenary as men in their choice of spouse, particularly in Miss Drawbridge's case. As she states, she was not particularly attractive when young, and not much better now that she is older, except that she has money. In both Mr. Armitage's and Miss Drawbridge's cases it is a business arrangement. He gets the money he needs; she gets a young, attractive husband.

When a young woman, Margery Stainer, arrives at the resort at Dieppe and falls into Cecil Armitage's arms, Lee perceives the genuine lovers: "in an instant they were in each other's arms. I had to stop and look at them, because this was the girl I had met on the quay, to whom I had lost my heart. They were silent for quite a perceptible period, as if each was content to know that the other was there" (Marsh 87). Margery seems to know the situation and Armitage's plan, but not what to do about it. But thanks to Lee's ability, she has read Mr. Curtis's wish to help

someone. The wealthy couple give Judith Lee the money enabling Margery and Cecil to marry and emigrate to America. Meanwhile, Lee confronts Clarke, buys back to forged bill, and dissolves the engagement between Armitage and Drawbridge. Miss Drawbridge does not seem to mind, as she has found someone even more dishonest than Armitage to marry. Armitage is given a post in Mr. Curtis's business, and proves himself "to be an excellent man of affairs; hard-headed, shrewd Mr. Curtis both trusts and likes him" (Marsh 93).

While the story ends on the happy marriage of a couple in love, the real focus of the text is the commodification of males, a subject not frequently dealt with in female detective fiction. As an innovation in the genre, Marsh comments on the issues that rarely make appearances in literature. While the commodification of women was a frequent topic of discussion in the literature, as it should be, the opposite should have been as well. Women such as Miss Drawbridge certainly existed, and situations that forced men into marriages for money, rather than love did occur, though they were rarely discussed because of the perception that men did not care for love, or sentimental reasons when choosing a mate. Marsh reveals the opposite and questions the generally accepted notion that men should only care for mercenary reasons, such as looks, money, social position, when choosing whom to marry. Not only this, but Judith Lee reaffirms her own decision to remain unmarried and out of the marriage market herself when Mrs. Curtis writes that she hopes one day to see her with a husband of her own: "She never, never will. Never, never, never!" (Marsh 93). And Lee holds to this promise, stating in a later story, after the uncle of one of Lee's students falls in love with her, and fancies Lee in love with him, "I, at an early age, made up my mind to live and die an old maid, and if anything could strengthen my resolution it is the fact that there are in the world such funny little men as you, and that some women, poor souls! have to have them as husbands" (Marsh 151).

"Mandragora" begins with Lee wondering if events happen "by what seems by accident, or caprice of chance" (Marsh 168). This reflection comes about because Lee goes to Easthampton to rest, because she "had been threatened by one of those nervous collapses which do come to me when I have been overworked" (Marsh 171). During this case, she learns that a young man, George Young has been falsely accused of embezzling securities from a firm of solicitors and sent to prison for fourteen years. Lee has seen the two men, Michael Hutton and Thomas Walker, who framed Young speaking in a restaurant, and wonders, "Had they been sent to that particular table, and had I been directed to watch them, by what almost seemed to be a special Providence?" (Marsh 176). However, given Lee's pattern for people watching, and general nosiness, Providence seems like a stretch.

Lee follows and corners Michael Hutton, and recognizing that he is tortured by the frame up and near suicide, she announces that she is the "voice of the avenging angel" (Marsh 180), and gets him to sign a full confession. Lee also prevents Hutton from committing suicide, saving his life in the process of saving the life of George Young. When Lee confronts Walker, however, things go differently. Walker's nature was much different than that of Hutton's. Instead of waiting for the police, Lee goes to confront Walker by herself:

> It did occur to me as I observed him that it would have been the part of discretion to have postponed my visit until I was accompanied by the person whom my telegram had brought from town; but I had all at once become convinced of this man's utter baseness to such an extent that I was consumed by a desire to bring him to book on my own account, before to law began to deal with him… 'The business which has brought me here is to tell you that you are a contemptible, cowardly, murderous, scoundrel, and that the hour is struck in which your sins are going to find you out.' (Marsh 182-183)

Lee, feeling the sudden rage at the cruelty dealt to the Youngs, continues to speak her mind in spite of the danger Walker poses. When Walker assaults her, Lee reveals that she can take care of herself without the aid of a man or a gun; she practices jiu-jitsu on him: "I am a woman, but I

am no weakling" (Marsh 185). What is not answered is Lee's question of Providence, but what is clear is that it takes a woman to remedy "the injustices wrought by men on men through the male-administered 'justice' system" (Kestner 208). As in the Caroline Norton letters and pamphlets, men had made the laws which left women unprotected. But, not only that, the laws that left women unprotected also left interpretation and loopholes to be exploited by those who know how to work the system, as Walker in this narrative obviously did, and these exploitations leave everyone vulnerable to the male-administered justice system, not just women.

The last story in the original collection, "The Restaurant Napolitain," is a fitting ending for the collection because it echoes Lee's first narrative. The story features the Italian Mafia, a love triangle, and murder. Lee has been in Italy to help found an institute for instruction of deaf-and-dumb students, so Lee has learned to lip-read Italian. In the story, Lee goes to an Italian dance. After the dance, she finds that an assassin, Gaspare, has killed a young waiter, Emilio, who had been in love with Lucrezia, who is being forced to marry the Mafia restaurateur and villain Alessandro. At several points in this narrative Lee experiences outright rage at the events surrounding her: "I do get into great furies sometimes. It seems to me that horrible wickedness forces one to be furious" (Marsh 204).

Lee follows Gaspare from the ball, but she is too late to save Emilio. She sees the pay-off and follows Gaspare to Alessandro's restaurant, where she confronts Alessandro alone, imprudently: "I had no clear plan of action, I just felt that I wanted to strike— and I struck" (Marsh 206). Inside the restaurant, Lee realizes that she cannot see her way, but Alessandro "must have had cat's eyes" (Marsh 207). He locks her in a room upstairs, where Lee attempts to control her feelings of rage and fear:

> For some seconds I stood shaking with rage and gasping for breath. I realized what an idiot I had been in saying nothing to Dr. Rodaccini, to the police, to anyone, before

> turning out on this mad adventure…When I again became, in some degree, mistress of myself I tried to think what was the best thing I could do. My first impulse was to resort to the feminine device of screaming, to make the night hideous with my yells and screams. My feelings would have been relieved if I had done so if no other benefit had ensued. But I caught my tongue between my teeth just as I was starting, and waited for the impulse to pass. (Marsh 207)

Since she is in complete darkness and a "matchless" woman, she has to feel her way through the case, as indeed she does through every case. She finds the light switch, and a weapon— a poker standing next to the fireplace. As she continues her search, she also finds a telephone, which she uses to call Inspector Ellis at Scotland Yard; when she informs him of what she knows and where she is, he responds with a "cheery voice": "That's all right…We've had an eye on Signor Alessandro and his Restaurant Napolitain for a good long time. I'm obliged to you for putting the game into our hands. We shall probably be with you inside ten minutes" (Marsh 209-210).

Before the police can reach the restaurant, Alessandro returns, but with the poker in hand, Lee turns off the light and hides beside the door. When the door opens, Lee strikes the man over the head with the poker hard enough to stun him. Alessandro is blocking the way downstairs, Lee runs to the next floor up and finds Lucrezia. They barricade the door and Lucrezia informs Lee of the crimes that Alessandro, Gaspare, and the rest of their organization commit:

> Strange things have happened in London— they happed still, though the people of London do not think it: what do they know of their own city, the people of London? This house could tell them tales— to which they would not listen. The police— they guess— but without proof— what can the police do without proof in London? And they have never had any proof at all, only what they guess. (Marsh 213)

Lucrezia concludes, "For my part, I have no faith in the police, they always come a little too late— I know" (Marsh 215).

When Lee is assaulted by Gaspare in the final attack of the story, she beings to agree with Lucrezia if the police would be too late; the ten minutes that Inspector Ellis had mentioned had come and passed. The illustration by J. R. Skelton that appeared in the original publication is

shocking, particularly in the violence shown to the women, showing the murderous Gaspare grasping at Lee's skirt as she tries to drive him off with the poker. The entire scene is sexual in connotation, suggesting the metaphorical rape of "The Man who Cut Off My Hair," but with much more dangerous consequences:

> I could not get away from him; and presently he had me, just when I least expected it. I had pushed a chair in his way and he fell over it, and in falling he caught me by the skirt with so sure a hold that he all but dragged me over backwards…I struck him again and again, but though he was still in difficulties with the chair I could not make him loose his hold…He held me with his left hand; suddenly I felt something prick me— I knew he had struck me with the knife which was in his right…I wondered what would happen if my skirt gave way. It was made of one of those flimsy stuffs which one uses for a dance dress. If I relinquished my skirt, could I get out of it, leave it, without me inside, in his hands? (Marsh 217-218)

During the fight, Lee's skirt does give way and she is stabbed three times, plus the minor cuts about the neck and shoulders Gaspare is able to inflict; Lee reels and nearly dies, but the police force the door open just in time to stop Gaspare from finishing Lee with one last stab wound. Every stab wound Lee receives is a reminder of her victimization, and she carries the scars upon her chest, yet unlike Marsh's other female characters, such as the traumatized Marjorie Lindon in *The Beetle*, Lee is able to overcome her victimization as a more powerful, independent woman. The scene in which Lee relinquishes her skirt echoes the first female detective's removal of her crinoline in order to pursue a criminal more efficiently. However, in Lee's case, relinquishing her skirt is an act of survival that is a necessity, not just a question of efficiency in investigating.

Marsh's creation is one of the most unusual and most empowered female detectives of this study. She is memorable not only because of her profession, but because she is adventurous, willing to defend herself mentally and physically, quick to perceive female criminality, and has absolute independence. Throughout her investigations, Lee never needs a "Watson" or male or female companion to keep her company or to record her adventures. Often Lee wonders what

life would be like if she did not have the ability to read lips, yet it is precisely this gift of "entering into people's confidence, even against their will, [that] has occasionally placed" Lee in exactly the right place and the right time to save both men and women from their own natures or from the malice of their associates, or even from serial killers or global criminal organizations (Marsh 61). Lee's adventures stand as a testament in crime analysis in the Twentieth Century, but not only this, Lee stands as a testament to the independent, patriarchal authority questioning empowered woman that can save others and save herself.

Only two years later, Hugh C. Weir published his collection of narratives that featured a different take on the female detective than those that had come before. *Miss Madelyn Mack, Detective* features an American detective and assistant relationship that is the most closely based on Holmes and Watson than any other female detective and companion published previously. Before the turn of the century, women applying to state governors were "early and enthusiastic supporters of professions that served and protected and many expressed desire to take part in them" (Panek 149). But after, women apparently became more forceful; a piece in the November 16, 1911 issue of the *Washington Post* ran the headline "WOMEN SEEK POLICE JOBS Office of Indianapolis Mayor is Stormed by Applicants" and the story that follows goes:

> The idea of appointing women detectives grew out of the supposed murder of Dr. Helene Knabe and the inability of male members of the department to find the murderer. Suggestions from a number of women that female detectives would be better equipped in such cases led the mayor to suggest such appointment. But the rush to the office was so great that he slipped out by a back door and told his secretary to send all inquirers to the police superintendent. (qtd. in Panek 150).

According to LeRoy Panek, Weir opposes the idea that "the presentation of a woman committed to progressive ideas…must necessarily be an angular, grim-visaged virago" (*Origins* 174):

> I had vaguely imagined a masculine-appearing woman, curt of voice, sharp of feature, perhaps dressed in a severe, tailor-made gown. I saw a young woman of maybe twenty-five, with red and white cheeks, crowned with a softly waved mass of gold hair, and a

> pair of vivacious, grey-blue eyes that made one forget every other detail of her appearance. (Weir 4)

With his description of Mack as being both smart and beautiful, Weir tries to cover all the bases, to make Mack seem both normal and routine and Sensational and exotic at the same time, which shows up particularly in how he presents Mack as a detective. On one hand, Mack is an organized, energetic, successful businesswoman, which is how Nora Noraker, the Watson of the narrative first describes Mack:

> She had just returned from Omaha that morning, and was planning to leave for Boston on the midnight express. A suitcase and a fat portfolio of papers lay on a chair in a corner. A young woman stenographer was taking a number of letters at an almost incredible rate of dictation. (Weir 4)

Mack protests that there is nothing at all "unusual or abnormal" about her being a detective or about what detectives do (Weir 5), in part because Weir based Mack on a real person— Mary Holland. Mary Holland, the woman to whom Weir's narrative is dedicated, was the United States' first fingerprint instructor and presented expert testimony at the first trial that hinged on fingerprint evidence. In his dedication, Weir announces that this is Mary Holland's book:

> It is you, woman detective of real life, who suggested Madelyn. It was the stories told me from your own note-book of men's knavery that suggested these exploits of Miss Mack. None should know better than you that the riddles of fiction fall ever short of the riddles of truth…I pray you, however, in the fullness of your generosity, to give Madelyn welcome— not as a rival but as a student. (Weir iii)

Mary Holland's successes as a detective came not from "genius" as most fictional detectives work, but from hard work and determination, and this is how Weir distances his heroine from Sherlock Holmes, even after distinctly invoking Mack's masculine ancestor: There are only two real rules for a successful detective: hard work and common sense— not uncommon sense such as we associate with our old friend Sherlock Holmes, but common, *business* sense (Weir 5,

author's emphasis). Yet, Mack also states that imagination has also played a part in her success, which links back to the dedication to Mary Holland, and what Weir seems really interested in—the exotic: "What plot of the novelist could ever equal your affair of the Mystic Circle, or the subtleness of your Chicago University exploit, or the Egyptian Bar" (Weir iii). Mack is no ordinary, "normal" detective, nor is her expertise an ordinary achievement and Weir knows it. Just as Mack is telling Nora that success depends on hard work and common sense,

> she acts like Sherlock Holmes, tantalizing her companion (and readers) with enigmatic clues that she unbridles at the end of the stories. And in the stories themselves, Weir inclines toward the novel and bizarre— the pistol hidden in the piano rigged to shoot when a specific note is played, the hashish loaded in a secret part of the victim's pipe. And, perhaps, more difficult of solution, several of the Madelyn Mack short stories turn on complex marital relationships, a field usually impervious to either common or business sense. (Panek 175)

However, Weir does follow a more "cerebral, less emotional route" (Klein 89) than most female detectives, except for Nora, who indulges quite a bit in the feminine "weakness" of "a good cry." Kathleen Gregory Klein notes the similarities between Holmes and Mack:

> The comparison seems to take little account of their different genders. Madelyn Mack resorts to cola berries as a stimulant, relies on music to assist her thinking processes, and becomes quickly bored with no new or interesting case is available. Like Holmes, she pays careful attention to tobacco ash (and "nicotine addicts") and claims to deduce logically and ratiocinative as she reconstructs her methods and insights at the conclusion of each case…In addition, Mack has her own Watson narrating these five cases…Like Watson, she suffers from hero-worship. (89)

Klein raises some interesting questions about Mack's own statements about a woman's imagination being a helpful tool in a detective's arsenal, since, other than Nora, Mack keeps a staff of all men. However, perhaps, Mack is a bit more like Holmes than the obvious comparisons; Holmes and Mack both clearly appreciate the hero-worship of their respective Watsons, so it is not a stretch to think that Mack would feel even more distinguished among a staff of only men.

Nora clearly has usefulness to Mack, or she would not work with her. However, Mack frequently leaves Nora out, or even shuts her out of a room when she is searching for clues or observing the suspects, which as the narrator, leaves Nora, the reader, and often the police out of the loop on how she forms her deductions until the conclusion. Coupled with her energy, Mack uses her "impeccable social credentials" to work her way into some cases. However, as Panek states, these social credentials are "so impeccable…that they are a license for the kind of unorthodox behavior that they use to solve crimes" (*Probable Cause* 58). Mack's only need for the police was as an admiring audience or to haul the guilty to jail at the close of the narrative, yet, for female detectives often this admiration does not come, or it comes only grudgingly. One detective is amazed to find himself apologizing to "a petticoat detective" (Weir 93); another mockingly describes her as "Miss Sherlock Holmes at work!" (Weir 181); a third refers to her "pink tea wisdom" (Weir 83). Only one gives her credit as he dodges the compliment: "I was wondering how long you would wait for that question. It is when we drift away from the ear-marks of the professional criminal, where the card-index methods of headquarters are of no avail, that the lack of imagination in the police department is evident" (Weir 323).

Mack is so thoroughly comfortable in her own skin that Nora must remind her that she is a woman, or Mack simply does not care what the world thinks of her gender. She clearly knows how to dress fashionably and femininely, whether that is her goal or not. Yet, her persona is so obviously of the Holmesian tradition it is difficult to ascertain whether she is simply a female Holmes as Klein suggests or a feminist rebel.

Klein's argument that Weir's strategy of dividing the female role between the two women is an interesting one, and one that seems to be supported by the text. However, when compared to other female detectives that appeared roughly the same time, Madelyn Mack does

not seem to be so very masculine after all. True, she isn't interested in marriage. She is bright, energetic, Holmesian. But that in itself does not make her a man, or masculine. In fact, Judith Lee falls in love with more women than possibly any male character in these narratives combined and most definitely is not interested in marrying any man at any time of her life, a little detail that seems to have been overlooked by a lot of critics, and still she is regarded as an empowered, independent woman without question. Why then do we question one who has no intention of doing exactly the same thing— establishing a career, experiencing life, living "in the spirit of optimism, of joy in herself, and in her life, and in her work, the exhilaration of *doing* things" (Weir 4, my emphasis)? Noticeably absent from Weir's title is the word woman, female, or lady in front of detective. Madelyn Mack doesn't need to advertise that she is in fact a woman to be a detective. She has brains, whether the men around her believe it or not. She has money; she has time; and she has cases to solve.

In 1915, Anna Katherine Green added to her already impressive literary resumé with another detective heroine— Violet Strange, the young private detective that became the prototype for the "girl" sleuth like Nancy Drew. As Patricia D. Maida states, Green delighted readers because she offers "imaginative conundrums as readers joined in the game of detection [with her detectives]….While observing the conventions of detective fiction, Green moved beyond the constraints of form to develop both environment and character" (2). Just as her spinster sleuth Miss Butterworth offers glimpses of New York's Fifth Avenue society, Violet Strange opens the doors just a bit wider. Unlike Miss Butterworth, however, Violet Strange is young and works at detection for pay. Yet, like Lady Molly's work, Violet's detecting is kept a secret from most of society, except from those who need her help; concealing her activities from her wealthy father, Violet accepts cases from a private detective agency because she needs

money. The reader is told there is a reason for working as she does, but Violet's history is kept a secret until the last story in the collection.

Violet could easily have been related to Miss Butterworth in social status and ethical values, yet she is much younger and much more liberated. According to Maida, Green's daughter was about the age of her detective heroine at the time of publication, which made it easier for Green to access the attitudes of the younger generation of American women. Strange's clientele comes mainly from the upper levels of society, from people who would trust her as one of their own, and trust her not to gossip about their cases, because she has her own secret to keep. At first glance it would seem that Violet Strange might not be as liberated as many of the other female detectives in this study, due to her social constraints and the patriarchal family situation she faces. Yet, the recurrence of "domestic tyrants, husbands, and fathers" implies that Green felt the need to address the difficulties of women in certain domestic situations. And certainly, in the Amelia Butterworth novels Green discusses these issues from a unique perspective. But in the Violet Strange narratives, we see a young woman who seemingly has everything, yet must work for money, often having nightmares about the scenes she must investigate. However, this does not stop her from working to reach her monetary goal; in fact, one critic calls her a "remarkably sagacious bloodhound" in pursuing her cases (Murch 164).

Strange's first case, "The Golden Slipper," emphasizes the aspects that make Violet an effective detective; she is small and unassuming and she is already accepted in the social circles of the people she is investigating, which allows her a certain level of access that a person from a different social class would not have been granted. Strange's method is also scientific; she observes people and situations carefully, making no assumptions until all facts are gathered, she collects evidence, analyses it, and makes judgments based on that evidence.

The final story reveals the true reason Strange works as a detective. Violet has an older sister toward whom her father has "limited his generosity" by cutting off all support (Green *The Golden Slipper* 403). As a child, Violet witnessed an argument in which her father had caught her older sister speaking to a man whom he had not chosen for her to marry, one who was not of her social status. After the argument, Theresa leaves the house and marries the man she was seen speaking to, although her siblings know nothing of what happens to her; their father tells them to think of her as dead. After a few years, Violet learns that her sister and her husband have come back to the city and she begins her first "case" as a detective— tracking her sister. Because her sister is proud, like their father, she would not take the money that Violet had gotten from him. But through Violet's work, she is able to support her sister, and help her make her singing debut in Europe.

While both of Green's female detectives "may be shaken by the secrets they uncover, dismayed by the deception they must practice from time to time, and frightened by the situations they find themselves…they never doubt their right to be detectives" (Nickerson 34). While Miss Butterworth is invited into her first investigation to advise Ebenezer Gryce based on her "woman's eyes for woman's matters" (Green *That Affair* 59). In Green's worlds that she constructs, everything belongs to "woman's matters" in some way:

> Women are vulnerable to the greed and ambition of men seeking to constantly increase their wealth and social standing in the Gilded Age. In her tales of murder, women are deserted after marriage or jilted after betrothal, they are trapped, literally and metaphorically, in their homes by the mores of the time, they are unable to control their money or their property. Depending on their father's or husband's class position, they may work themselves to the bone in menial labor or be forbidden to earn an independent income. Green's detectives recognize the effect of male arrogance and ambition on women, and draw readers' attention to this general inequity as they pursue the perpetrators of specific crimes. (Nickerson 35)

Just as in Richard Marsh's Judith Lee narratives, the mercenary motives of many characters

come to light as Violet investigates her cases. However, what Green does differently is instead of portraying a rather openly independent and rebellious young woman, she presents readers with the subtle portrayal of defiance, for although Strange loves and respects her father, she also loves her sister, who raised her after their mother's death. Green's difficulty with openly portraying women's rebellion and independence may stem from her own experience keeping her writing secret from her father. And indeed, as Kate Watson notes, the Pennsylvania legislature refused to believe that Green's first published work was written by a woman, commenting that "the story was manifestly beyond a woman's powers" (qtd. in Watson 119). Yet, it is precisely Green's ability to create realistic psychological scenarios even while adapting Sensational and melodramatic British tropes into her work that allows her fiction to stand out among the rest. Even Wilkie Collins acknowledged Green's skill and approaches to detection:

> Her powers of invention are so remarkable— she has so much imagination and so much belief (a most important qualification for our art) in what she says…Dozens of times in reading the story I have stopped to admire the fertility of invention, the delicate treatment of incident— and the fine perception of event on the personages of the story. (qtd. in Watson 120)

As Catherine Ross Nickerson notes, Green was portrayed as a mixture of contradictions: "Interviewers liked to play her subject matter, mayhem, off her demeanor, which was conventionally feminine" (*Web* 62). Perhaps this singular mixture of the ladylike and gruesome, the Gothic and the logical is what troubles so many critics.

Because Green herself was never openly supportive of women's rights, many critics find it difficult to label her as a feminist writer, particularly because she does marry Violet off in the concluding tale. However, Violet Strange left a definitive mark on the field of detective fiction. Strange demonstrates that a woman, even a young and privileged one, is capable of stimulating and courageous work. Strange's methods indicate talent for logic and mathematical puzzles,

which goes against the notion that female detectives are "all heart" (Maida 77). Yet, Green's singular mixture of American realism and British Gothicism, logic and emotion, feminism and femininity, and authority and autonomy actually empower Violet Strange in unexpected ways. In fact, Violent Strange is empowered beyond the marriage plot that other authors typically use to finish off their heroines, or punish them for their rebellion. As Maida notes, "The detective for Green was a heroic human being— not a physically powerful person, but an individual of moral power" (77), which empowers Violet Strange to use her intelligence and her moral strength to solve other people's problems in hopes of solving her own.

While the previous narratives in this chapter have dealt with the higher levels of social classes, which for the first part of the twentieth century seemed to take control of the majority of crime narratives, the last narrative in this chapter deals with women who are decidedly of the lower class. And, while it is not a detective story in the traditional sense, it does contain a murder and the search for evidence to prove motive. Susan Glaspell's short play *Trifles* deals with the conflicts between two sets of investigators; one set, the men, who have official authority on their side, believe they know exactly what happened at the scene, except for motive; the other, the wives of the officials, know exactly what happened because they understand psychologically where to look for evidence. As Linda Ben-Zvi notes, Susan Glaspell, whose work was once dropped from canonical study as women's lives became "no longer riveting but routine," presents case studies of a decidedly feminist cast, featuring "strong women, personae whose consciousness of themselves and their worlds shape her plays and fiction. The plots invariably turn on their experiences, relationships, and attempts to wrest at least a modicum of self-expression and fulfillment in societies that impede, if not prohibit, such possibilities" ("Introduction" 2). Unlike many narratives that feature glaring sentimentality, *Trifles* pares

everything down to the bare essentials, yet packs such a short play with a multitude of expressions, symbols, images, and experimentalism.

The story of two nearly silent women who, in the process of accompanying their husbands to the isolated farmhouse in which a woman has been accused of murdering her husband, "read the signs of her thwarted life, motives for murder, and their own constricted existences and potential for violence— all writ clearly in kitchen things the men dismiss as 'trifles'" have helped make the play and its subsequent short story become feminist classics (Ben-Zvi 2-3), partly because of their very simplicity, and partly because of the issues of gender, class, and societal differences and communication, as well as the potential for violence that exists if conditions are right. As Ben-Zvi observes, Glaspell avoids closure in her works, and, indeed, *Trifles*, conforms to this pattern. Yet, the play also gives a hint that justice has been served; perhaps not in the minds of the male-administered justice system, but in the minds of the women whose eyes notice the details that give life to the living victim in the case. As Megan Terry states, "The wry warmth of her mind, the compassion of her heart combine with the architecture of her play to give a total feeling of these Mid-West people. The work is suffused with the sense of justice, wit, and fairness Glaspell must have possessed as a person" (qtd. in Ben-Zvi 17). In contrast to the female detective that has been explored as rebellious, in the case of Glaspell's play, it is both the killer's and the female investigators' potential to disrupt the social order that causes fear, because for the most part, in previous works the female criminals have been detected and punished. However, in this case, the female "detectives" choose to cover up the incriminating evidence that would give the official authorities the ammunition they need to convict Mrs. Wright of the murder of her husband. As it stands, her story does not add up. However, because the men do not see the features of society that have led to and created the

circumstances of the crime, the ending lacks closure. We are never sure if Mrs. Wright will be convicted based on what the men find in the house or if she will get away with killing her husband.

As Ben-Zvi observes, “Women who kill evoke fear because they challenge societal constructs of femininity— passivity, restraint, and nurture…Her behavior *must* be aberrant, or crazed, if it is to be explicable. And explicable it must be; her crime cannot be seen as societally driven if the cultural stereotypes are to remain unchallenged” (“Murder She Wrote” 19). Indeed, this seems to be the case in Glaspell’s play, at least from the male perspective. If this was the only perspective viewers were given, Mrs. Wright’s behavior would certainly seem to be mentally disturbed in some way. The historical basis for Glaspell’s play came from the actual murder of a sixty-year-old farmer named John Hossack on December 2, 1900, in Indianola, Iowa. As a journalist, Glaspell covered the case and the trial, and was an active participant in shaping public perception of the woman accused of murdering Hossack. Ben-Zvi describes the case as simple at first, much like the opening of Glaspell’s play:

> Sometime after midnight on December 2, 1900, John Hossack, a well-to-do farmer, was struck twice on the head with an ax while he slept in bed. Margaret Hossack, his wife of thirty-three years, reported that a strange sound, “like two pieces of wood striking,” wakened her; she jumped out of bed, went into the adjoining sitting room saw a light shining on a wall, and heard the door to the front porch slowly closing. Only then did she hear her husband’s groans. Assembling the five of her nine children who were still residing at home, she lit a lamp, reentered the bedroom, and discovered Hossack bleeding profusely, the walls and bed sheets spattered, brain matter oozing from a five-inch gash, his head crushed…It was assumed that prowlers must have committed the crime, but, when a search of the farmhouse failed to reveal any missing items, a coroner’s inquest was called. Its findings were inconclusive. However, after discovering the presumed murder weapon smeared with blood under the family corn crib, and listening to reports and innuendos from neighbor, who hinted at a history of marital and family trouble, the sheriff arrested Mrs. Hossack “as a matter of precaution” (Dec. 5), while the funeral was still in progress, or as Glaspell would more vividly report, “just as the sexton was throwing the last clods on the grave of her murdered husband” (Jan. 14). (“Murder” 23)

The details that emerged over the course of the trial may not have convinced the jury that the

"frail mother of nine" (Ben-Zvi "Murder" 32) was guilty of killing her husband, but "she was certainly guilty of questionable female behavior: she had left her husband, discussed her marital troubles with neighbors, and, most damaging, had been pregnant before marriage. To have found such a woman innocent or to have explored the question of justifiable homicide would have been unthinkable in the Iowa court of 1901" (Ben-Zvi "Murder" 33). Even the Supreme Court's ruling on the case acknowledged John Hossack's repeated beatings of his wife, both with his hands and with a stove lid: "The family life of the Hossacks had not been pleasant perhaps the husband was most to blame [sic]. He seems to have been somewhat narrow minded and quite stern in his determination to control all family matters" (qtd. in Ben-Zvi "Murder" 33). Yet, the court also argued that the prior relations in the family should not have been brought up in the original trial because domestic harmony had been reestablished for a year prior to the murder. John Hossack had been a "pillar of the community," nominated for public offices, and known by all of the twelve men on the jury, who, according to Ben-Zvi, "had a vested interest in protecting his good name, if they could no longer protect his person" ("Murder" 33).

The women who attended the trial, such as the sheriff's wife who supported Mrs. Hossack during the trial, most likely could have provided a different story to the one given in court, since the abuse was mentioned, but not pursued as a defense. Not even in her newspaper accounts did Glaspell give Mrs. Hossack or any other woman the opportunity to provide an alternate reading of the case. However, fifteen years later, Glaspell offers the women of the case the chance to be heard when she publishes *Trifles*.

The play begins at the isolated farmhouse of John and Minnie Foster Wright. A murder has been committed. A man has been strangled while he slept— and his wife, who claimed to be sleeping beside him at the time of the murder, has been accused of the crime and taken to jail to

await trial. Those prosecuting the case, County Attorney Henderson and Sheriff Peters return to the farmhouse to search for clues that "show anger or— sudden feeling" (Glaspell 15), which would explain the "funny way" Mr. Wright was murdered. The man who found the body, Mr. Hale, accompanies them, as well Mrs. Peters, who is charged with bringing the accused woman some of her things, and Mrs. Hale, who keeps her company in the kitchen while the men search the house.

As the women look through her things for the objects Mrs. Wright wants, they piece together her life and guilt, like a quilt. Based on the scenario before them, the women imagine Minnie Wright as a

> lonely, childless woman, married to a taciturn husband, isolated from neighbors because of the rigors of farm life. When they discover a bird cage, its door ripped off and a canary, its neck wrung, they have no trouble making the connection. The husband has killed the bird, the wife's only comfort, as he killed the birdlike spirit of the woman. (Ben-Zvi 34)

However, because of the differences in "women's eyes for women's matters," as Anna Katherine Green's male detectives first begin their relationships with female detectives, the women recognize the exigencies of Minnie Wright's decision and her actions, and although they find her guilty, they dismiss the charge of murder. In the process of judging Mrs. Wright, they also find themselves judging their own actions and complicity that led to the crime, "Mrs. Peters recognizing her own disenfranchisement and her own potential for violence, Mrs. Hale recognizing her failure to sustain her neighbor and thus her culpability in driving the desperate woman to kill" (Ben-Zvi 34).

Glaspell's removal of certain elements actually adds more layers of meaning to the implicit rebellion against authority portrayed in the play. For example, the play on the name Wright emphasizes the lack of rights that Minnie Wright has in her marriage and implies the

right that she takes to free herself from the societally authorized right of her husband to control the family, a right that Glaspell's coverage of the Hossack trial makes clear. Not only this, but the men in the play present a united front as gender transcends class distinctions when the male characters, including Mr. Hale, who has no legal right to be in the house, leave the women to worry over "trifles," such as the exploded preserves, and they go upstairs to do the "important" work of finding legal evidence.

Just as quickly as Glaspell establishes their official authority, legal empowerment, and rights, she summarily dismisses them to roam on the periphery of her tale, their presence only marked by shuffling sounds overhead or the occasional appearance as they move out to look in the barn. Yet, this united front of authority is also ineffectual and incompetent, their authority undercut as their sanctioned power cannot seem to understand why anyone would kill an upstanding man of the community.

Glaspell also carefully chooses the two women who undercut the authority of legal agency. Mrs. Peters, the wife of the sheriff, is patterned after Sheriff Hodson's wife from the Hossack trial, whose acts of kindness to Mrs. Hossack seemed to stick with Glaspell. At first, Mrs. Peters echoes the masculinist view, and the voice of her husband, defending the search of the home as a "duty" of the law. Yet, gradually, she realizes that marital distinction, as the wife of the sheriff, offers her no more freedom than it does Minnie; in fact, as Ben-Zvi notes, "it completely effaces her as an individual. Glaspell illustrates this by having the women identified only by their surnames, while, at the same time, they seek to particularize Minnie by referring to her by both her first and her maiden name" ("Murder" 37). To the men however, each of the women is just another man's wife. Minnie is John Wright's wife; Mrs. Peters is the wife of the sheriff, married literally to the law. Even Mrs. Hale assumes that Mrs. Peters will share her

husband's views on the case.

However, as Mrs. Peters slowly discovers each additional fact about Minnie's life with her husband— the childlessness, the isolation, the potential abuse— and conflates the experiences with her own early married life, she begins to identify and sympathize with Minnie; "[i]t is when she comes upon the bird cage and the dead canary that she makes the most important connection: the understanding of female violence in the face of male brutality" (Ben-Zvi "Murder" 37):

> When I was a girl— my kitten— there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes— and before I could get there— (*covers her face in an instant*) If they hadn't held me back I would have (*catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*) — hurt him. (Glaspell 22)

It is significant that Glaspell assigns to Mrs. Peters the memory of a murder with a hatchet, the weapon in the Hossack case, and that she reverses the roles of justice and has Mrs. Peters act in lieu of her husband— dispensing her verdict based on her reading of the case and the evidence in front of her. It is also significant that Glaspell's characteristic use of dashes here appear at a time when Mrs. Peters is groping for words for which traditional novels and books on female behavior failed to provide. There are no words, no script, no way to articulate her feelings while the official authorities ridicule her hesitant forms of communication.

When the men return from upstairs, failing to understand what the women so clearly read in the little details of Minnie Wright's life, Mrs. Peters does what the wife of a sheriff, or any law-abiding citizen should not do. She hides the evidence. In doing so, Mrs. Peters destroys the notion that a woman is her husband, as the men seem to think. She also demonstrates what a woman may become when legal authority fails, when the "upstanding" public citizens push too far in private life, and the victim may also be the killer.

Trifles takes what the domestic novels and even the myth of the heroic pioneer spirit

delineated as the ideal American farm wife and turns it on its ear. Domestic novels of the time, as Veronica Makowsky states, “advocated what has become the cult of domesticity: the idea that woman’s sphere was limited to the home, but that within this sphere she was empowered to create a haven of morality, order, comfort, and sympathy. When joined with the pioneer myth, this tale envisions a frontier woman heroically creating such a domestic refuge in the wilderness” (51). As with most of Glaspell’s work, *Trifles* does not shy away from revealing what most people would have hidden, the disordered kitchen, the physical, and probably emotional abuse, suffered at the hands of her husband, and the isolation from neighbors, when she was once a social and happy person. However, the men read the scene as they would a sentimental domestic novel, with scorn and amusement at the women’s concern for Minnie’s hard work gone to waste. Glaspell, who played the part of Mrs. Hale in the original production, comments on the unfairness of “trying to get [Minnie’s] own house to turn against her” (Glaspell 15). The injustice stems from the fact that Minnie, like so many other victimized women, is not at fault for failing to conform to the ideals of a sentimental novel because she has had her authorship, her autonomy, her authority wrested away from her by her husband (Makowsky 52).

When the women decide to wrest that autonomy back, things can go in the direction of Minnie’s action, or in the direction of Mrs. Peters’ action. While the murder of Minnie’s husband might set her free from her oppressive marriage, it does deliver her into the hands of a male-administered justice system, which based on the example of the Hassock trial, does not seem to lean in favor of a woman who claims to have slept through the brutal murder of the man sleeping next to her. However, because of the difference in the way men and women communicate, it is possible that due to Mrs. Peters’ realization that all women have the propensity toward violence given the right circumstances, particularly when faced with the

brutality of men, Mrs. Wright will face the same fate as Mrs. Hossack. However, since she has begun on this road of manipulating the case, how far will Mrs. Peters go? But like all of Glaspell's works, closure is a luxury, and not of real life. The ending of the play leaves the rest unwritten, for not only the women in the play to take control of and to author themselves, but for readers to take and to read as they see it, to author the ending based on the evidence, and possibly that justice may be served.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, female detectives existed in as many different forms as there were occupations. There were amateurs, official police detectives, nurses, adventuresses, private detectives, and undercover operatives. However, one thing remained consistent no matter what form they took. All female detectives, even if married off by the end of their narrative or choosing to remain single for life, if they caught their villains or not, if they themselves became criminals in the process of solving a case or not, they all questioned the authority that told them they were not allowed to be detectives, that they were "too ladylike," or too feminine for a man's job. In many ways, what these detectives see in their cases, murder, forgery, organized crime, and much more, are the worst things a person can see, let alone a woman. However, it is because of their unique talents, and ways of reading the world, of authoring their own stories that they are able to solve the puzzles set in front of them. Although the female detectives at the turn of the century tended to represent upper class society more than the majority of American and British people, the important issues discussed in works like Susan Glaspell's play should not be dismissed. Her emphasis on reading the world through different sets of eyes and communicating on different levels forces readers to author their own conclusion to the case. For while we may know who committed a crime and why that crime was committed, we don't always know what the outcome of that case will be. By leaving the ending open for her

characters and her readers to construct the rest of the story, Glaspell metaphorically leaves this study open to the female detectives who come after her, whose fictions may have seemingly retreated into the "cozy" mysteries, and then became hard-boiled, and from there even more rebellious. The groundwork laid by the first female detectives, from the first on-page removal of a crinoline in pursuit of a criminal to the sheriff's wife hiding evidence from her husband, the issues of authority and women as detectives become clear, women will not be forced into a man-made mold. Instead, they will break it and make their own.

Epilogue:

"We need not be held in forms molded for us"

As Maureen T. Reddy states, the crime fiction form has "been fairly rigidly defined according to a masculinist model, which by 'objective,' distanced rationality is the highest virtue…The classic crime novel begins in disorder or violation of order and proceeds more or less linearly to order; it is therefore essentially reassuring" (5). However, narratives featuring female detectives often end in just as much disorder as they began, or in giving the appearance of order on the surface. The authority of female detective character itself is an anomaly, at least during the beginnings of the genre. While there were female detectives working during the 1860s, none of them were officially attached to the police departments either in Britain or the United States. For writers who wanted to capitalize on the novelty of the character, the conservative genre posed a number of obstacles. One in particular, how does an author create an interesting female character who has adventures and solves crimes, but does not tarnish her reputation beyond what it already is, for a woman who is forced to become a detective must have some disrepute in her background? And yet, the conservative form allowed authors to covertly present rebellious women, whose crime-solving and compassion reach beyond that of the male-administered justice system.

Many of these authors, while not female writers, did present female characters who gave readers ideals to reach for even while working within the confines of a conservative and "rule bound" form. Others, like Susan Glaspell, followed the path of other "reclaimed" women writers, writers who had been pushed aside from canonical consideration at the end of their careers and lost for a period of time, that is, until critics dug them out of dusty old tomes in long-forgotten aisles of libraries and gave them new life. Others, like Anna Katherine Green, whose

career spanned the end of the Victorian era into the twentieth century, present a challenge to critics who see her female detectives as forerunners of the feminist movement, yet also see resistance to women's rights in Green's personal life. Yet, her characters exist and were popular with readers. The words cannot be unwritten; the authority that Miss Butterworth and Violet Strange fight for and establish for themselves cannot be taken away, even if Green herself felt doubt as to what rights a woman should have.

In several of the narratives featured in this study, the criminals are never prosecuted, at least by the male-administered justice system already in place, such as in Judith Lee's memoirs. Often the criminals get away without prosecution, but at other times, Judith is the "avenging angel," either driving men to suicide or compelling a confession from an accomplice. In others, the detectives become criminals themselves in order to circumvent the established authority of male dominated justice. For example, in the collection of stories about Dorcas Dene, the very first narrative introduces Dorcas in such a way that it is impossible to see her in any other way than as a revolutionary. By compounding a titled woman's felony, assisting in a false suicide, and not reporting the original crime to the police, Dene reveals that she is not the "angel" who cannot soil its wings when she first began.

The women who feature as detectives before the Golden Age of Detection, with their moral ambiguities, rebellious natures, and successful careers, would have a difficult time adhering to the Golden Age rules for too long without mounting some sort of overthrow of the restrictions, just as Agatha Christie could not refrain from creating a narrator who both murders the victim and assists her famous detective Hercule Poirot in his investigation, a clear violation of one of the fair play rules. However, the rules of the Golden Age are not what are important in this study. For a short time, the rules controlled how authors presented narratives and detectives,

allowing readers and the detectives they followed the same chance to arrive at the conclusion at the same time. However, because detectives, and in particular, female detectives often bucked tradition and defied authority we can claim the advances in fiction and in women's rights that happened over the generations since the 1920s. The ground gained by showcasing smart, resourceful, and yes, usually attractive, women making progress, personally and professionally, in male dominated fields, even if made in baby steps, remains an important and useful measure of subtly changing minds regarding women, their abilities, and the roles they have the right to play in society and its detection and correction, even if it never conforms to what the actual law says they should do or say.

Because this study ends at a crossroads of an important narrative, where the revolutionary actions of several fictional female detectives end just as the "cozy" fictional detective begins her short reign, and real women were making actual inroads in the fields open to them in the fiction of the nineteenth century, this project has much more to explore. For a period, the cozy mystery became the most popular trend in detective fiction, featuring just as many revolutionary women in the detective role. For example, Miss Marple, in spite of remaining a spinster (and the same age) in all of Agatha Christie's novels and stories, has an extraordinary insight into human nature and life itself. Her friends and relatives seem shocked when she mentions sex, or even hints that she knows about it, simply stating that the young people "don't know as much of life" as she does (Christie 13-14), which implies that she may have more experience than her spinsterhood indicates. Miss Marple is an expert at reading people and knowing their secrets, most of the time because she is the quintessential nosy old woman. However, she does appear to have a knack for understanding human behavior and being able to draw from her own store of knowledge to explain exactly complicated psychology in bold and simplistic terms. Quite the revolutionary

figure.

However, the 1930s also brings another revolutionary figure that would last into the twenty-first century— Nancy Drew. Even younger than the lady detectives of the nineteenth century, Nancy Drew becomes the most recognizable teenage detective in the twentieth century not only because of her essentially detective-like nosiness, but for her age and her ability to establish her own authority as a detective and command respect for her skills at her age. And much like the lady detectives had inspired the creation of Nancy Drew, once she appeared in print, other teenage detectives began to follow, such as Trixie Belden and the Hardy Boys, creating another sub-genre of detective fiction and expanding the audience for mysteries even further. Not only does the teenage detective become popular during this time, but as the world changed in the aftermath of World War II, detective fiction changed with it, often featuring characters who have been hardened by circumstances.

However, the gender and age transgressions extend from spinsters and lady detectives to Nancy Drew and Trixie Belden and even into the twenty-first century portrayals of women detectives. As a cultural icon, Nancy Drew has had a contested and paradoxical journey through history. In 1975, Bobbie Ann Mason's study *The Girl Sleuth: A Feminist Guide* praised the character's "original independence and adventurous spirit… [but] criticized what she had become" (Chamberlain 1). Mason's issue with Nancy Drew was that over the years, the character's revolutionary spirit had been lost and she had become too conventional, "obvious and expected" (138). The character herself is complicated, giving the impression that "they can have the benefits of both dependence and independence without the drawbacks, that they can help the disadvantaged and remain successful capitalists, that they can be both elitist and democratic, that they can be both child and adult, and that they can be both "liberated" woman and "Daddys' little

girls" (Chamberlain 3). Nancy is, as many critics note, a perfect heroine: intelligent, confident, talented, capable, attractive, and always taken seriously by the adults she shares her ideas with. And as Chamberlain notes, there is no task to which Nancy is not equal:

> In her first adventure alone, *The Adventure of the Old Clock*, 16-year-old Nancy can repair motorboats, fix flat tires, maneuver her car on slick roads during dangerous thunderstorms, administer first aid, and offer psychological diagnoses. (After all, the reader is told, she had "studied psychology in school" [88].) During the 1930s, when the books are at their most class conscious, Nancy manages her father's household and hires, directs, and trains servants as needed. As the series progresses, more talents come to light— Nancy can ride horses bareback, sightread music, use Morse code, translate Chaucer, dance a ballet; skate a waltz; shoot straight; act; draw; and play bagpipes, golf, and piano. In the original *The Mystery of the Black Keys,* she even endures torture with barely a murmur. (3-4)

In the early volumes, Nancy seems more like a mother than a friend to her companions, which makes sense given all her talents and duties around her father's house. Yet, Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, who took over the basic plotting of the Nancy Drew stories after the first few volumes, stated that she felt the early versions of Nancy were "too bold and bossy" (Billman 101). Yet, this is precisely what allowed Nancy to be revolutionary and to lead to changes in how girls and young women were perceived. However, once these qualities were changed, Nancy Drew became less of the revolutionary character and more of a "blank slate on which new generations could write their own versions of the Nancy myth" (Chamberlain 4). As both Chamberlain and Mason identify, Nancy Drew allows girls to project their own ideals and desires onto a character that is always in a state of becoming, a state between childhood and adulthood, between independence and domestic protection, between revolution and convention, much like many of the female detectives that have come before.

However, in one review of a recent edition of *The Secret of the Old Clock*, Sara Paretsky, the author of one of the most feminist female detective characters, V.I. Warshawski, states, "Nancy Drew and her blue roadster have been symbols of freedom for little girls

since…1930...Today's girls emerge from adolescence with a much lower sense of self-esteem than boys… Nancy's adventures appeal most to girls of ten or eleven. After that they move— is it on or backwards? — to stories where romantic conflict plays a bigger role and where heroines aren't as invincible as the girl detective." Paretsky's review of Nancy Drew's role in a young reader's life allows for an interesting correlation between more recent feminist detectives and criticism and the girl detectives of the mid-twentieth century. It is the qualities that have been traditionally claimed as masculine that draw new readers to these characters— boldness, resourcefulness, strength, independent, fair and just; yet, these characteristics are not just masculine qualities. As the examples provided in the nineteenth century reveal, women have been searching for the means of providing proof of these qualities for generations and have been repeatedly told that they have not these qualities, that they only care for their appearance, for the household, for domestic issues, not justice, or an economic position outside of the home, or even a legal position.

As Julie Campbell writes in the third book of another successful girl detective series, *The Gatehouse Mystery* (1954), Trixie Belden and her best friend Honey Wheeler decide early, and after successfully solving two other mysteries, that they want to become private detectives. In reply, Jim Frayne, an older boy who has already benefited from Trixie's investigations, "hoots" and jokes that she would then be a "Moll Dick" (135). Yet, Jim's response is not uncommon when males discover that a woman (or a girl) is or wants to be a detective. And as Kathleen Chamberlain explains, we are indeed "supposed to recognize the gender and age transgressions— perhaps even the gender contradictions— inherent in the very idea of a *girl* detective" (Chamberlain qtd. in Cornelius 1). The contradiction inherent in the word *moll*, meaning "soft" or "mild" to refer to a woman, or even "to refer to a prostitute or a woman of

villainous repute, as in the case of Mary Frith (c. 1584-1659), a notorious thief in London who went by the nickname of Moll Cutpurse. Later in the nineteenth century, the term came to refer to a female companion or girlfriend, especially the girlfriend of a gangster or mobster" (Cornelius 1-2). In contrast, the term "dick" has generally had masculine connotations, first as a shortened form of Richard, and used to refer to any generic boy or man. And as Michael G. Cornelius relates, the word was "so staunchly male-centric that by 1891 it was recorded as a slang word for the male genitalia, a usage commonplace to this day. It was not until 1908 that Joseph M. Sullivan, in his compendium *Criminal Slang*, recorded the slang usage of "dick" to mean a cop or detective" (2).

Bobbie Ann Mason , in contrast to her opinions on Nancy Drew, classifies Trixie Belden as feminist rather than feminine, citing Trixie as "the most liberating" (98) of the girl sleuths and her tomboy clothing and nature as symbols of the changing attitudes toward women in the twentieth century. And as Steven J. Zani notes, the history of the term girl-sleuth leads us down interesting paths:

> Arguably, all girl-sleuth narratives revise, or outright reverse, the familiar sexist cultural understanding of masculinity as active and femininity as passive, and the genealogy of the term *sleuth* itself provides a clue to what is at stake. *Sleuth* comes originally from Middle English; the word means a track, or path— girl-sleuths, then, are those who follow paths, while others stay home. The legacy of the girl-sleuth…translates into thousands of narrative variations of confident, active young women, traveling different paths, including many into unexpected spaces. (51)

What is truly interesting about these later paths, these girl-sleuths and their stories, is that they also return to the ideas that the readers' anxieties and fears can be embodied in both the mystery and in the characters. As Zani explains, "These stories appeal to us because they contain not just Trixie's anxieties, but also our own. The letter always reaches its destination, as Lacan says, because it is the destination that determines its message— the readers' own anxieties and

interests will determine whether the content has any value for them" (56). Even in Nancy's adventures the readers' own identification with and projection onto the heroines the issues of belonging come into play. Betsy Caprio notes that readers of different races and classes to do some "mental gymnastics" to identify with the heroine, yet one African American woman, Edith, recalled her "pleasure in reading the Nancy Drew books she borrowed from the white girl whose family employed Edith's grandmother as a domestic worker: 'It may seem funny that a black girl like me would use WASPy Nancy Drew as a role model, but she was *the only exciting young female I had ever come across*…I remember how we both raised an eyebrow over the parts that put down blacks, and I was glad to hear that these were cleaned up later. I really believed I could be like Nancy… and today I'm a social worker at a university near my old home'" (21). Edith's belief in Nancy's universal qualities overrode her divisive elements in order to inspire all, or at least most, girls to embrace the values and advantages that they possessed or could develop.

Like the readers, Trixie often feels the same anxiety that she is not good enough; she is only thirteen, after all. However, as critics have noticed, she learns as her stories move forward. Often, as Zani notes, the "mysteries" of a Trixie Belden mystery is no mystery at all. In fact, the fun of the story is the actual sleuthing that she does: "The Trixie narratives similarly enact a mystery that is not a mystery, a truth that leads away from the truth. But that fundamental deception is the key to understanding the entire narrative— the "sleuthing" itself, the path, is where meaning is to be found" (58). In following these paths, we find the "amalgamation of the qualities perceived to be finest in both boys and girls…this potent combination of will, desire, intelligence, and a healthy dash of fearlessness" that made and continue to make these characters, these young liberators of twentieth-century female minds, so popular.

As a continuing project, I would continue to explore the myth of the teenage detective

and how it connects both to previous examples of female detectives and to future examples, such as V.I. Warshawski, Kinsey Milhone, and even Stephanie Plum, a hapless bounty hunter, who always seems to get the bad guy in the end. And much like the beginnings of female detective fiction, there seems to be an ever expanding selection of female detectives to choose from and explore. And now, there are authors who are returning to the time periods that generated many female detectives and who are creating new detectives with feminist attributes and interesting cases. For example, Kerry Greenwood's Phryne Fisher mystery series set in 1920s London and later on, Melbourne, Australia, features a bored, but charming socialite who involves herself in local cases to ease her level of boredom; particularly because she is a bit wild and reckless and amoral, Miss Fisher will do nearly anything to catch the culprits. As a character, she is fascinating. As a female detective related to the issues of authority, she is invaluable, as are so many more. In many ways, this project will never be completely finished. However, I believe that there is more to be discovered, particularly in rediscovering the lost texts of the nineteenth century as well as in comparisons with modern texts that have had the benefit of history to reflect upon the cases and circumstances surrounding women.

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